

JACKSON COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

Date: November 19, 2024								
Time Begin: 5:21 pm								
Time End: 5:51 pm								
Location: Jackson County Public Library, Genealogy Study Room								
Members	Present	Absent		Present	Absent		Present	Absent
Susan Leveille	X		Jane Eastman	X		Michael Moore	X	
Bill Crawford	X		Luther Jones	X		<i>Vacant</i>		
Brandon Core		X	Pam Meister		X			
Celeste Pratt	X		Beth Parris	X				

Staff Present:

Michael Poston, Planning Director
 Ashley Clapsaddle, Planner I
 Allison Kelley, Administrative Assistant III

Call to Order and Quorum Check

Vice Chair Luther Jones called the meeting to order at 5:21 p.m. and a quorum was present.

Approval of the Agenda

Michael Moore made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Susan Leveille seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes

Jane Eastman made a motion to approve the minutes from August 13, 2024. Michael Moore second the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Jane Eastman made a motion to approve the minutes from September 17, 2024. Michael Moore second the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Public Comment (3 minutes per speaker)

There were no public comments.

New Business

a) Staff Updates

Mr. Poston introduced the Planning Department’s new Planner I, Ashley Clapsaddle to the Commission. Ms. Clapsaddle has been with the department since September and has been with the County for about three years now. In addition, Ms. Clapsaddle had worked in the Environmental Health Department and worked with restaurants, pools and on-site systems. She has experience enforcing rules and regulations, but has a background more in policy. Ms. Clapsaddle will be helping to staff the Historic Preservation Commission and leading the Commission to help achieve the goals they have set out to achieve.

Mr. Poston stated they wanted to begin discussing Historic Preservation Month, which is in May and what ideas the Commission may have regarding highlighting some of our historic places within the County. He inquired if they wanted to focus on one site and grow it over time. In addition, he stated Brandon Core came to talk with Ms. Clapsaddle and discussed using Historic Preservation Month and Mountain Heritage Day to cross promote each other to attend each event.

The Planning staff brainstormed some possible ideas regarding Historic Preservation Month and presented those to the Commission as follows:

- There are five weeks within the Month of May and we could potentially do five sites, however it may be easier to do just one site to see how it goes.
- We could include an educational component and blend local history along with information regarding what is the National Register of Historic Places.
- We could display and include information that has already been produced for the Commission such as building features, coloring pages of some of our historic sites in the County, How to Conduct Your Own Survey, along with displaying places for people to utilize for researching historic sites.
- We could ask the owners of the historic sites to provide additional history of the site along with a memory of why they bought the historic site to blend real stories with the historic structures.

Mr. Poston stated for example, there may be some opportunity engaging with our partners such as Balsam Mountain Inn as they have new ownership and have been trying to be more active to bring more people into their space. There may be an opportunity to have some sort of programming in May to talk about the history of that site and allow them the opportunity to discuss what it is important, why they bought the place or why they think it is interesting, etc.

Other historic sites where there might be some opportunities include the Appalachians Womens Museum or the Zachary Tolbert House in Cashiers, etc. In addition, they could also consider highlighting the fishing weir on the Tuckasegee River and possibly bringing groups to that site. During Historic Preservation Month they do not just have to focus on historic homes or buildings but they can consider other elements that are unique to the Jackson County area.

The Commission provided some ideas for the Historic Preservation Month in May as follows:

- Airing of the Quilts at the Appalachian Women's Museum.
- Poster contest at the schools that is a historic preservation theme (such as describing what is a weir, etc.) and they could acknowledge the winner by display their poster at a historic site.
- If a historic site has enough space or a porch they could incorporate historical entertainment such as musicians and storytellers.

Mr. Poston stated for the poster contest they could engage with the art teachers or history teachers to involve their students. There may be an opportunity to get experts on a subject matter to go to the schools to talk to the students.

Ms. Eastman stated one of the archeologists with the Office of State archeology in Raleigh has done a lot of work with weirs and rivers, and some around here. Mr. Poston stated he believes that Ken Brown use to do something with the Watershed Association of

the Tuckasegee River (WATR) group that was not just about the weir but about the ecology of the river and how the weir played a part.

Ms. Pratt stated they should have the schools engaged in April and lead up into May due to all of the end of year testing. Ms. Eastman stated they could aim to announce the winner of the poster contest in the month of May. Ms. Pratt stated having the poster on display at a historic site would help draw families out to that historic site. Mr. Jones stated they could consider using one site for the schools in this area and as you get closer to Cashiers they could choose a different site to draw in people.

Mr. Poston recapped that the Commission is wanting to revive the poster contest and to look at a couple sites, and reach out to the Appalachian Women's Museum about when they plan to do the airing of quilts and if there is some ability for us to highlight that event. In addition, they can also reach out to other sites that are open such as the Webster Methodist Church or the Webster Baptist Church that may be interested in collaborating with the Commission.

Mr. Jones inquired if the Commission had any kind of a budget that they could pledge to Historic Preservation Month. Mr. Poston stated no, but that does not mean we cannot find money depending on what we are looking to do. In addition, he stated that also does not mean we cannot have a budget in the future or ask for funding. If the Historic Preservation Month is intending to grow and if there are associated expenses, the planning staff would need to know what those expenses would be by the beginning of the year as they are preparing their budget for the next year.

Ms. Leveille stated in the Norton community, which is after Glenville there were a fair number of hand weavers still working up in that area and she was not sure if there were any homes that we identified in that area. She stated she is thinking about the Walker sisters' cabin in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, and she is unsure if it is on some kind of registry or not, but at least it was saved by the Park Service and they probably should be finished with their renovation of that building. Ms. Leveille stated she needed to hike up to that building because a weaver told her it was very evident years ago of where the loom sat on the porch because it was a big piece of equipment. In addition, she stated today they make them out of cherry and they were such a big piece of equipment that you need room for them inside and if they redid that porch that evidence is all gone now.

Mr. Jones stated when the park service does a restoration like that, they are supposed to leave as much of as they can. He stated if you look at the old mill, originally the shingles were split white oak and now they are cedar, the building probably is still about 70% of its original wood structure. However, over the 140 years, with the repairs on the structure they have changed some of it. The same thing applies with the Walker sisters house and the reason their house is there is because they would not move.

Mr. Poston stated staff would begin working on outlining our poster contest, and reach out to schools throughout the County about how that would work and if they would be interested in being a part of that. Staff would also reach out to the owners of the historic sites within the County to see if they are doing any programming in May and if they would be interesting in collaborating with the Commission for Historic Preservation Month. In addition, staff would reach out to Ms. Eastman's contact from the state archeology office to discuss the weir site.

Ms. Leveille stated she believed Mr. Jones mentioned at one of their past meetings that there was a weir or remnants of one in Cullowhee. Mr. Jones stated there use to be one

where the old Chinese restaurant use to be, which is not there anymore, it was near the river house. Ms. Eastman stated the best weir to probably see is the one on River Road in Webster, because if the river is low enough it is really apparent.

Mr. Jones stated we are talking about historic preservation month, which is national and are we limited to only Jackson County? For example, Mountain Discovery School approximately about half of those students are from Jackson County. Mr. Poston stated the Commission can discuss on who and if they want to limit the poster contest to. In addition, he stated those that participate in these events can be open ended, but the history and the places that we describe would be more Jackson County centric that way those within the area can go see the site. This Commission is a preservation group for Jackson County and we want to bring attention our resources and assets that exist in the County. Mr. Jones stated he is more referring to what if some of the other schools wanted to participate and whether they are looking at more of an open competition versus a closed competition with just Jackson County schools. Mr. Poston stated that would be up to the Commission to decide how they want to structure the poster contest.

Mr. Poston stated if the Commission has any ideas regarding Historic Preservation Month to please reach out to staff. Staff will bring all of those ideas back to the Commission at their meeting in January since they will be cancelling the December meeting to allow more time to reach out to people.

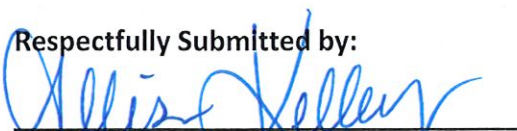
Ms. Leveille stated we have so much in our history, and she wishes Joe Rhinehart was still around for Webster as he had incredible knowledge along with others in those communities. She stated Mr. Rhinehart told us the fact that the best clay for brick making was in Webster, but they do not know where that happened. Mr. Poston stated they did try to track that down, and what we think happened was they mined the clay, and they went to a Brickyard but they did not make the bricks locally. Mr. Crawford stated there was a brick factory that sat down from the Baptist church, where that little park is when you go down the river and it belonged to my great grandpa. In addition, he stated that it washed away in the 1940 flood. Ms. Leveille stated there was a woodworker down there that made furniture further down. Mr. Crawford stated that was the same man. Ms. Leveille inquired how many businesses did he have besides the bricks and the furniture. Mr. Crawford stated that was about it.

Mr. Poston stated they hope to have a better idea in January of what we want to try to accomplish. Historic Preservation Month is an entire month and there may be some building blocks they could do by starting to build a foundation of an annual event and then adding to it over time as they become more experienced finding what works and what does not work. The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 21, 2025 at 5:15 p.m. with the venue to be determined based on its availability.


Adjournment:

With no further business, Michael Moore made a motion to adjourn. Jane Eastman seconded the motion, and the meeting adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:


Allison Kelley, Administrative Assistant

Approved by:


Brandon Core, Chair