



**Meeting Agenda**  
**Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission**  
**7pm – County Commission Room, Charles Town Library**  
**Charles Town, WV**  
**April 12, 2023**

Approved by unanimous vote, June 7, 2023

Present: Jefferson County Commissioner Jennifer Krouse

Guest: Ms. Jamila Jones, Chair, Economic Development, Jefferson County NAACP

HLC Commissioners: Martin Burke (Chair); Ray Benzinger (Treasurer); John Demer (Secretary); Jim King; and Addison Reese

I. Public Comments

*Partnership with JCHLC.* Ms. Jamila Jones, chair, economic development, Jefferson County NAACP introduced herself and described many historical Black preservation groups she is a part of. She is participating with the Appalachian Regional Commission on ways of advancing participation among newer Black organizations with mainstream groups formed years ago. She wishes to establish a partnership with the JCHLC, something JCHLC commissioners agreed with. She seeks advocate support and increased networking.

*New food bank.* JCHLC commissioner Ray Benzinger stepped out of his commissioner role to announce formation of a food bank on the southern side of the Shenandoah River. To be patterned after a successful food bank for those living in zip code 25443, Mr. Benzinger hopes the food bank can begin operation in summer, 2023, to benefit children not able to receive breakfasts and lunches in school. The proposed program received a boost from the Episcopal Bishop for West Virginia who will allow the food bank to operate from St. Andrew, an Episcopal chapel across the street from the community center on Route 115.

II. Approval of minutes from February 8, 2023 – Mr. Demer

Subject to minor changes to correct spelling of a name and to clarify George Rutherford's compliments to Addison Reese, minutes were approved. *Motion to approve by Mr. Benzinger; second by Mr. King; approval unanimous.*

III. Treasurer's Report – Mr. Benzinger

Since February 8, 2023, income totaled \$6,313.61 and expenses were \$5, 361.70. Current balance: \$29, 218.32. All bills are paid as of April 12, 2023, and all JCHLC accounts are current and in order. Also, of note, the Commission received last month (March 2023) two grants of \$1,000 each, both to benefit Duffields Depot. The grants were from CSX Transportation and the Jefferson County Historical Society. *Motion to approve by Mr. Burke, second by Ms. Reese, approval unanimous.*

IV. Election of Officers for 2023-2024

Martin Burke, Chair

Ray Benzinger, Treasurer

John Demer, Secretary

*Motion to approve by Ms. Reese, second by Mr. King, approval unanimous.*

V. Reports and Announcements

a. JC Courthouse National Historic Landmark status. Mr. Burke reported that the Secretary of the Interior has not appointed an advisory board. The nomination cannot be approved until a board is appointed and reviews the nomination.

b. Status of Social Media: Website, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube. Ms. Reese reported that Patrick Fuller, our recent AmeriCorps intern is maintaining our website on contract. Ms. Reese posted Facebook data on the Halltown Church and school that Blacks built, many who supposedly worked at the Halltown Paper Mill. Mr. King reported trying to get permission to see historical records but without success. Comm. Krouse asked Mr. King to specify what he is looking for so that she could try to get permission for the JCHLC to examine the records. Mr. Burke reminded that milling had occurred at the Halltown site since 1760 and that the JCHLC is making an effort to expand its landmarks nominations to include industrial Jefferson County.

V. c. Status of Jefferson County cemeteries – Ms. Reese. Ms. Reese, along with concerned family members, are currently working to clear a Black cemetery in Middleway. Burials date back to the late 1800s and occurred as recently as 2018. A parcel adjacent to the old burying ground was sold to a private owner in 1967 even though it contained existing burials (the oldest marked burial being 1949). Burials continued until the descendants of the original purchaser refused any further burials after acquiring the property. With the intention of placing a home on the property, applications for a well and septic were submitted and approved by the Jefferson County Health Department in February. The home is slated to be placed among marked and potentially unmarked graves. Exposed bones have been identified at the site but a pathologist is required to confirm if they are human or animal. The well has already been drilled and effluent from the well has spilled across the property line into the known graveyard. Ms. Reese described what she feels is desecration of graves.

d. Status of National Register and Jefferson County Landmark nominations.

1. *Route 340 mitigation for Shady Grove.* Mr. Burke reported that Maral Kalbian is about half finished with the report and has submitted an invoice for \$4,000 that he approved, and Mr. Benzinger paid.

2. *Boundary expansion for the Haines Farm to include Susan Thornton House.* Ms. Reese and Mr. Demer described the relationship of the Susan Thornton House to the Nathan Haines House. Commissioner Krouse had questions about the property – its age, sole ownership by a married woman, size, and construction. She shared mutual dismay that the Thornton family had to move when their leased land was sold in 1917. Ms. Reese detailed the many questions and answers she continues to uncover on the Thornton family. Ms. Reese volunteered to present the nomination for approval by the West Virginia History and Archives Commission in Mercer County on June 2. Mr. Burke assured Ms. Reese reimbursement of her expenses.

3. *Shenandoah Plaining Mill/ Winchester Cold Storage.* Mr. Demer reported a site visit and plans to complete a draft county nomination by the next JCHLC meeting in June.

4. *Isaac Clymer House.* Mr. Demer reported he's communicated with property owners Mark Schiavone and John Restaino and that both are progressing on their draft.
  5. *Keller Furnace.* Mr. Demer reported a site visit and progress on updating the site's West Virginia Historic Property Inventory Form.
  6. *Waltz House.* Mr. Demer reported a phone conversation with Mrs. Waltz, original owner from 1957, who has deeded her house to her grandson. Mr. Demer has written to the owner who has not responded. Mr. Demer recommends a windshield survey to update the WVHPIF. Mr. Burke concurred.
  7. *Fair View, Rees-Daniels Farm.* Mr. Demer left a phone message for the owner who has not responded. Mr. Demer recommends a windshield to begin a new WVHPIF.
- e. *Status of Concept Plan and Reviews.* Mr. King reported receiving a 40-page document for review for a fourth solar farm to be located in eastern Jefferson County near Flowing Springs Road.
- f. *Folder for Morgan's Historic District.* Mr. Demer reported slow progress on a folder for Morgan's Historic District challenged by the need to summarize text and images into a relatively small space. Mr. Burke said the West Virginia Highway Department requires a folder before it can place an historical marker.
- g. *JCHLC Properties.*
1. *Peter Burr Farm.* Mr. Burke reminded that the Peter Burr House is the oldest wooden building in West Virginia. Mr. Burke added that he spoke with head baker Wayne Braunstein who hopes to do a trial bake in May, then decide whether he can continue through the season. One of his bakers has moved from the area and another is recovering from broken wrists.
  2. *Duffields Depot.* Mr. Burke reported that Patrick Shunney will lay more flooring soon. Bit by bit the JCHLC continues to renovate the stationmaster's house to an eventual small museum. The sump pumps must run near constantly to remove water from the basement caused by ground water pressure.
  3. *Shepherdstown Battlefield.* (a) The Keeper of the National Register, National Park Service, has entered the James Osbourn Farm into the National Register of Historic Places. (b) The JCHLC awaits approval to receive title to the James Osbourn Farm from the American Battlefield Trust. (c) A special meeting of the JCHLC may be necessary to approve the transfer of title. (d) Park cleanup day is scheduled for Saturday, April 15, from 9am to 2pm.
- h. *Status of special projects with Jefferson County Schools.*
1. *Interpretation of life in the mid 1770s.* Mr. Burke reported that Deborah Rochefort Ph.D., spoke for an hour to all fourth-grade classes in public schools in the county on life in the county in the mid 1770s. She wore a replica of historical dress. Mr. Burke and Ms. Reese attended two sessions and report that students seemed to like the sessions.

2. *Teaching with Historic Places*. In summer, 2022, Mr. Burke met online and in person with eight social studies teachers to discuss methods of teaching with historic places. Mr. Burke patterned a format from the National Park Service’s successful program of the same name.
  - i. *Change of meeting date for June 2023*. Mr. Burke will be unavailable on the regularly scheduled meeting date and asked if the meeting could be rescheduled. Commissioners agreed on a date of June 7 in the county commission room.

Respectfully submitted,

John Demer, Secretary