



Meeting Minutes
Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission
County Commission Room, Charles Town Library
Charles Town, WV
August 9, 2023

Present: Jennifer Krouse, County Commissioner, Jefferson County.
JCHLC Commissioners Martin Burke (Chair); Ray Benzinger (Treasurer); John Demer (Secretary);
Jim King; Addison Reese.

Mr. Burke called the meeting to order at 7:03.

- I. Public Comments: None.
- II. Approval of Minutes from June 7, 2023. Mr. Burke submitted minor edits. Mr. Benzinger corrected “through” to “though.” Motion to approve: Mr. Burke; Second: Mr. Benzinger. *Vote unanimous.*
- III. Treasurer’s Report. Mr. Benzinger. Since June 7, 2023, income totaled \$18,944.32, and expenses were \$2,837.02. Current Balance: \$43, 293.36. All bills are paid as of August 8, 2023. All JCHLC accounts are current and in order. Mr. Benzinger noted an unusual item in accounts for this period, a bequest from Jane Rissler for \$13,875.89. Motion to approve: Mr. Burke; Second, Mr. Demer. *Vote unanimous.*
- IV. Final FY-24 budget. Mr. Burke provided a line-by-line summary of the budget for FY2024 (attached). He underscored dedicated amounts: \$17,000 for Route 340 mitigation set aside for Maral Kalbian, and \$13,876 from the Jane Rissler bequest (see paragraph “V,” following). He provided estimates for income from the hotel/motel tax of \$23,000 but felt that figure may increase with training at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in operation post-Covid. We will pay more for our audit because we were a pass-through for \$972,291 to the American Battlefield Trust for the James Osbourn Farm in November 2022. For proposed expenditures, the Osbourn house needs repairs to be paid from rental income; we hope \$5,000 is sufficient to reside the utility building at the Peter Burr Farm, and we hope funds for Duffield’s Depot will cover expenses. Dave Brittingham Builders have just begun work there. For clarity, NAPC is the National Association for Preservation Commissions that provides training throughout the year; PAWV is the Preservation Association for West Virginia that helps supply our AmeriCorps member; and the NTHP is the National Trust for Historic Preservation whose members are allowed to apply for grants.
- V. Bequest from Jane Rissler. The late Jane Rissler, curator of Jefferson County Museum, devised three percent of her brokerage account to the JCHLC in appreciation for the work JCHLC Commissioner Addison Reese has accomplished at the Boyd-Carter Cemetery. The amount transferred to the JCHLC was \$13,876. At its meeting in June the JCHLC deferred a decision to its meeting on August 9 on how to use the funds. Sense of the JCHLC is that Ms. Rissler

respected burials of all non-whites in the county and not just those interred at Boyd-Carter. Ms. Reese remains in discussions with stakeholders, but she prefers to recommend decisions on the Rissler bequest to the end of 2023. Specifically, Ms. Reese sees a need for ground-penetrating radar to help pinpoint locations of internment. Ms. Reese reports that descendants of those interred want ground-penetrating radar to identify undocumented remains. *Decision deferred to December 2023.*

VI. Resolution to accept James Osbourn Farm. Mr. Burke asked for discussion of a draft resolution to accept the James Osbourn Farm from the American Battlefield Trust. He circulated a draft for review. Mr. Benzinger noted the JCHLC was referred to as a “Corporation” when in fact it is a “Commission.” Although a seemingly minor point in 2023, Mr. Benzinger cautioned that in the future someone might claim the agreement deficient and void. Mr. Benzinger recommended substituting the word “Commission” for “Corporation.” *Consensus to accept the edits recommended.*

VII. Reports and Announcements.

a. Jefferson County National Historic Landmark nomination status for the Courthouse. Mr. Burke reported that the National Park System Advisory Board will meet August 15 and 16 to review and vote on the nomination of the Jefferson County Courthouse as a National Historic Landmark. Assuming the Board’s approval, the nomination then goes to Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, for final approval.

b. Status of Website, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Ms. Reese reported someone working on Fairview Cemetery having experience with website design. Commissioners agreed to defer social media expansion until the appointment of an AmeriCorps member.

c. Status of JC cemeteries.

Fairview Cemetery. Ms. Reese reported a successful workshop July 25 at Fairview Cemetery featuring Atlas Preservation. Atlas Preservation, headquartered in Southington, Connecticut, sends a professional gravestone conservator to one site in each of the 48 lower United States. Fairview Cemetery was its West Virginia site this year. Addison reported about twenty participants from the County and others from Frederick, Maryland. Atlas said the number was ideal allowing careful instruction and universal participation.

Middleway Cemetery. Ms. Reese reported continual frustration at Middleway in part because the Jefferson County Health Department appears indifferent to following its rules on where wells can be drilled and drain fields located. Ms. Reese described County Commissioner Krouse asked Ms. Reese to provide her with specifics. Ms. Reese reported sludge pouring over graves. Mr. Burke expressed a similar frustration because the small, privately-owned lot at Duffields Depot lacks space to drill a well, much less locate a drain field, and the Health Department is unresponsive.

d. Status of National Register and Jefferson County Landmarks.

1. Route 340 mitigation -- *Shady Grove.* Maral Kalbian has completed all background research on the property. Mr. Burke will send the data to Cody Straley at the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (WV SHPO) to determine whether the site needs Section 106 clearance.

2. *Waltz House.* Mr. Demer reported a conversation with owner John Bryant who will provide a photograph and more documentation on the property.

3. *Isaac Clymer House.* Owners John Restaino and Mark Schiavone are putting final touches on their draft. Draft will be reviewed by John Demer.

4. *Keller Furnace*. Mr. Demer has completed a West Virginia Historic Property Inventory Form (WVHPIF) for Mr. Burke to send to the WV SHPO.
 5. *Fairview-Rees/Daniels Farm*. Mr. Demer has completed a WVHPIF and will forward it to Mr. Burke. The site is top priority for a National Register nomination.
- e. Status of concept plan reviews and zoning changes. Mssrs. Burke and King circulated concept plans for additional buildings at Valley Storage on Shepherd Grade and a major housing development proposed for a parcel of land near the Peter Burr Farm. They also reported applications for two cell towers, one in Bakerton and the other in Shannondale. Mr. Benzinger observed that the tower proposed for Shannondale is where the community has its Fourth of July fireworks every year. A cell tower and fireworks are incompatible. The cell tower proposed for Bakerton would visually defile the viewscape. Mr. Burke reminded that Leetown disguised its cell tower in a silo.
- f. JCHLC properties.
1. *Peter Burr Farm*. Bread baking. Headed by Wayne Braunstein, the Peter Burr bakers continue to bake in an outdoor oven rustic sourdough and a featured blend every month from May to October. Their presence is multifold: they demonstrate the time-honored historical skill of dough preparation, oven heating, and baking; and they draw attention and visits to the oldest surviving wood frame house in Jefferson County. The Jefferson County Parks and Recreation used the site this summer for two activities: archery and as venue for an American Girl Doll gathering. The archery instructor described the site as “great” and a hidden gem.
 2. *Duffields Depot*. Mr. Burke has applied for a \$66,000 Transportation Alternatives Grant to continue work on the depot. The grant is a 80/20 match, meaning the JCHLC will have to match twenty percent of an award. The JCHLC should hear of an award by December 2023. Presently Dave Brittingham Builders are working on west gable end replacing an emergency repair made in 2018.
 3. *Shepherdstown Battlefield*. Mr. Burke reminded that the American Battlefield Trust bought the James Osbourn Farm November 30, 2022, but they need approval of an easement before they can get \$300,000 from the Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund. The JCHLC would like to tear down part of the corn crib that is not original to the period of interpretation. Mr. Burke reported that a recent windstorm dropped a tree on two vehicles owned by a tenant, Butch Sanders. Mr. Burke will call Matthew Rushizky, executor of his father’s estate of about 86 acres that adjoin the Osbourn Farm and part of Shepherdstown Battlefield.
- f. Recruiting for AmeriCorps member. Mr. Burke reported three candidates have applied for our AmeriCorps member vacancy. He will have the third interview August 14 and will select by Friday, August 18.

Adjournment. A vote to adjourn at 8:27 was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

John Demer, Secretary

PO Box 23, Charles Town, WV 25414 | jeffersoncountyhlc.org | landmarkscommission@jeffersoncountywv.org | 304-728-3195