



Meeting Minutes
Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission
7pm – County Commission Room, Charles Town Library
Charles Town, WV
October 11, 2023

Present: Jefferson County Commissioner Jennifer Krouse
Guests: Mr. Greg Coble; Ms. Claire Tryon, Education and Planning Officer, West Virginia SHPO
HLC Commissioners: Martin Burke (Chair); Ray Benzinger (Treasurer); John Demer (Secretary);
Addison Reese; Jake Blackall. Excused absence: Jim King.

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

- I. Introduction of Jacob (Jake) Blackall – AmeriCorps Member for 2023-2024. Mr. Burke introduced Jake and asked him to say something about himself. Jake described himself as a mature student who will finish his degree in history at Shepherd University in December. Mr. Burke said Jake currently works on deed chains for early National Register properties that need them. He has also assisted the bread bakers at the Peter Burr Farm and will assist Ms. Reese in graveyard care.
- II. Public Comments: None.
- III. Approval of minutes for meeting on August 9, 2023. In section IV, Mr. Benzinger clarified the need to reference Jane Rissler’s bequest in section V where it is discussed more fully. A note will suffice. Ms. Reese clarified that only one person represented Atlas Preservation. With these corrections made, commissioners accepted the minutes. Motion to approve: Mr. Benzinger; second: Ms. Reese. *Approval unanimous.*
- IV. Treasurer’s Report. Mr. Benzinger reported that since August 8, 2023, income totaled \$13,647.76 and expenses were \$21,728.70. Current balance: \$35,532.42. All bills are paid as of this date. All JCHLC accounts are current and in order. Mr. Burke and Ms. Reese presented invoices that will be paid and included in the Treasurer’s Report for December 2023. Mr. Burke announced that he has asked for a debit card to facilitate payment of such recurring expenses as utilities. Mr. Burke also noted that since the James Osbourn Farm has not been transferred to the JCHLC, the JCHLC will lose out on rental income of \$2,200 for the month. Mr. Benzinger added that the hotel/motel tax this year is about \$200 less than last year. Mr. Burke reminded that county commission made an additional contribution to the JCHLC of \$10,000. Motion to approve: Mr. Demer; second: Ms. Reese. *Approval unanimous.*
- V. Presentation by Ms. Claire Tryon, Education and Planning Officer, West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office. Ms. Tryon explained that part of her job is to produce a

statewide historic preservation plan and to help guide historic landmarks commissions. A plan is on a five-year cycle. Goals for 2020 to 2024 are education, awareness, identification, community and economic development, and stewardship. Mr. Burke explained that the JCHLC has written these goals into its long-range plan. He cited AmeriCorps member Jake Blackall as part of the JCHLC educational mission and our brochure program under awareness. He added craft fairs as our way of putting our name out. Our county and National Register nominations fall under identification. We push heritage tourism, and we work with the Convention and Visitors Bureau. For stewardship we maintain the Shepherdstown Battlefield, Peter Burr Farm, and we have stabilized and hope to develop into a museum Duffields Depot. Ms. Reese described working with the county GIS office to identify all known cemeteries and to increase awareness for them. For Ms. Tryon's question on weaknesses and challenges, Mr. Burke answered that the JCHLC needs a fulltime employee. Ms. Reese reminded she has a JCHLC sign on the sides of her car and answers questions of those who see it. She pointed to the recent workshops by Atlas Preservation and the genealogy workshop she conducted at Shepherdstown Library earlier this year as well- received and should be continued. Ms. Tryon reminded of survey and planning grants and the need to apply by their deadline of October 31. Mr. Coble, recently retired from a career with the National Trust, cited encroachment of new housing developments. Mr. Burke said the Toll House Woods development just outside Shepherdstown, however is in Morgan's Grove Historic District. Ms. Tryon asked how the SHPO can assist the JCHLC. Ms. Reese said with ground penetrating radar (GPR). Mr. Burke said that in 2004 to 2007 the county hired a contractor to survey historical properties. From that the JCHLC categorized properties into four groups. Group 1, the most significant, have been nominated to the National Register. The JCHLC continues work on the remainder. He reminded that the JCHLC established an endowment of \$100,000 to assist in preservation but that amount doesn't spin off enough income to be effective. Ms. Reese felt the state should enact code for a twenty- foot buffer around cemeteries to help allow for burials just outside formal boundaries. Ms. Krouse spoke of frustrations she has encouraging countians to look at solar development and its environmental consequences for the county. She feels solar developers have no care for the county. She encourages countians to look at her Facebook page where she has tried to spell out the downsides to solar development. Ms. Tryon distributed and collected a questionnaire on JCHLC awareness and future needs.

VI. Reports and Announcements.

- a. Jefferson County Courthouse National Historic Landmark status. Mr. Burke reported we still await approval by the Secretary of the Interior. He reported receiving an email from Mr. Wayne Zigler on commemorative plaques. Mr. Burke reiterated the JCHLC's position that no plaques not related to the courthouse building should be placed on the courthouse wall. This will allow plaques that designate the building in the National Register and eventually as a National Historic Landmark. The JCHLC does not support the bulletin board currently on the wall and recommend it be moved to the freestanding location at right angles to the courthouse but still under its portico.
- b. Status of Website, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube. Mr. Blackall reported posting two posts weekly on Facebook that seem to be tracking normally. He said he wanted to record either tours of public areas or something scripted, possibly of lesser-known areas of the county.
- c. Status of JC Cemetery projects and Jane Rissler's bequest. Ms. Reese spoke of black mold, from the Spotted Lantern Fly that has covered and permeates Kearneysville Cemetery. At Fairview Cemetery Ms. Reese plans to spend grant monies to remove trees and brush and directed contractors in another cleanup. Mr. Blackall volunteered to assist Ms. Reese. Ms.

Reese talked about an old burial ground in Charles Town that she and George Rutherford have investigated. The City of Charles Town provided ground penetrating radar. It is deed-bound to care for the ground. Ms. Reese is no longer able to weed whip; Mr. Blackall offered his help. Ms. Reese reported an infestation of yellow jackets. Mr. Burke cautioned care.

d. Status of National Register and Jefferson County nominations.

1. *Shady Grove*. Mr. Burke reported that architectural historian Maral Kalbian will finish her draft for Shady Grove by the end of October and submit it to JCHLC and WVSHPO.
2. *Waltz House*. Mr. Demer reported that he and Mr. Blackall will contact Mr. John Bryant, grandson of the owner, to begin a nomination. An updated WVHPIF was completed this past summer.
3. *Isaac Clymer Farm*. John Restaino and Mark Schiavone have completed their draft and are formatting it as required by the SHPO.
4. *Keller Furnace*. Mr Burke has substituted *Woodbyrne* and the *Frederic Rosenberger Farm* for Keller Furnace, putting Keller Furnace on the back burner.
5. *Fairview-Rees-Daniels Farm*. Mr. Demer completed a first draft and has submitted it the owner for review and update.

e. Status of concept plan reviews and zoning changes. Mr. Burke reported receiving no new plans for review.

f. JCHLC properties.

1. *Peter Burr Farm*. Bread baking for the season will end the weekend of October 14. All praise and thanks to Wayne Braunstein and his bakers for providing several hundred loaves of hand shaped bread from an outdoor oven these recent six months.
2. *Duffields Depot*. Mr. Burke outlined plans to eventually develop a museum, staffed by volunteers, and open weekends. Three volunteers have already stepped up. The Mosby raid of 1864 holds historical interest. Mr. Burke has applied for transportation alternatives grant for \$66,000. He hopes to hear in December 2023. The Civil War Roundtable of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, will hold a fundraiser for the depot.
3. *Shepherdstown Battlefield*. The WV Department of Environmental Protection cleaned two sinkholes, a two-day job. The JCHLC has applied to another program within the Department of Environmental Protection to remove the 1870 Caton House that postdates the Civil War and presents a health and safety hazard.

Adjournment at 8:23pm. Ms. Reese moved approval; Mr. Burke seconded. *Vote unanimous.*

Respectfully submitted,
John Demer, Secretary