



**Meeting Minutes**  
**Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission**  
**7pm – County Commission Room, Charles Town Library**  
**Charles Town, WV**  
**December 13, 2023**

Present: Jefferson County Commissioner Jennifer Krouse

Guests: Mr. Carlo Olivares

HLC Commissioners: Martin Burke (Chair); Ray Benzinger (Treasurer); John Demer (Secretary); Addison Reese; AmeriCorps Member Jake Blackall. Excused absence: Jim King.

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

- I. Public Comments. Mr. Burke welcomed Mr. Carlo Olivares, a county resident. Mr. Olivares asked whether we knew of Old Stone Church that appears abandoned in Kabletown. Ms. Reese said she thought the congregation had moved to a new facility but that the old church has a cemetery that needs to be investigated. Mr. Olivares then asked whether Feagans Mill is being restored. Mr. Burke said Mr. Dan Lutz, its owner, has been unsuccessful in raising funds for restoration.
- II. Approval of minutes for meeting on October 11, 2023. No comments. Motion to approve: Mr. Benzinger; second: Mr. Burke. *Approval unanimous.*
- III. Treasurer's Report. Mr. Benzinger reported that since October 11, 2023, income totaled \$21,168.77 and expenses were \$24,928.27. Current balance: \$31,772.92. All bills are paid as of this date. All JCHLC accounts are current and in order. Motion to approve: Mr. Demer; second: Mr. Burke. *Approval unanimous.*
  - A. Review of budget for FY 2024. Mr. Burke compared the FY2024 budget in August with a revised budget six months into the current fiscal year. He cautioned that we may be a "little bit ahead" of our forecast. We spent more at Peter Burr, but the farm is being used more. We are grateful for \$10,000 from the County Commission and for the bequest from Jane Rissler. We hope the American Battlefield Trust (ABT) had transferred the Osbourn Farm sooner, but the transaction lacked a survey. Mr. Burke located the survey, then drove to Chantilly, VA, to have it signed by the surveyor. We hope the transfer is concluded this month. We can anticipate an increase in our insurance premium after the transfer. We still need our audit for FY 2023. Because we were pass-through of \$1,000,000 for the purchase of Osbourn Farm we need a single audit. We need to allot half of Jake (Blackall's) AmeriCorps funding at \$3,250. We need to line up a contractor to mow Peter Burr and Duffields. The County Department of Parks and Recs is changing contractors. In the past we've been able to piggyback on their contract. We're sending a check to the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation for \$2,000 to add to the \$100,000 fund we have there. We await a decision from WV Highways on a \$66,000 grant request.
  - B. Jane Rissler bequest. Ms. Reese reported having spent about \$4,000 of the bequest. She submitted her grant report last week on Fairview Cemetery. She hopes a class from Shepherd will assist her.

- IV West Virginia History Day (February 21, 2024). Although Mr. Demer plans to be in Charleston to present the *Fairview/Rees/Daniels Farm* and *Rosenberger/Brown Farm* nominations to the West Virginia Archives and History Commission, the JCHLC decided against an information table.
- V. Reports and Announcements.
- a. National Historic Landmark status for Jefferson County Courthouse. At 11:00 am December 13, 2023, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland approved the nomination of the Jefferson County Courthouse as a National Historic Landmark. The nomination caps six years of hard work begun by AmeriCorps member Lauren Kelly and guided by Kathryn Smith of the National Park Service.
- b. Status of Website for Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Mr. Blackall reported updating the website for speed, efficiency, and to work with Safari. He asked for videos to help increase our presence on YouTube. He and Ms. Reese asked for drone footage, especially of Fairview Cemetery.
- c. Status of Jefferson County cemetery projects. Ms. Reece has completed work outlined by her grant for Fairview Cemetery and has submitted its required grant report. She remains challenged by Middleway Cemetery for its lack of surveyed boundaries. She feels stymied by subsequent issues arising from her efforts to work with property owners who have drilled a well. The Jefferson County Health Department issued a permit for the well. Commissioner Krouse asked, “what can I do to help?” She and Ms. Reese will visit the cemetery to see conditions firsthand.
- d. Status of National Register (NR) nominations & West Virginia Property Inventory Forms (WVHPIFs). Maral Kalbian has finished an expanded WVHPIF on *Shady Grove*, its owner declining a NR nomination. Mark Schiavone and John Restaino will present *Isaac Clymer* February 21, 2024 to the Archives and History Commission in Charleston. Mr. Demer will present the *Fairview/Rees/Daniels Farm* and *Rosenberger/Brown Farm* projects at the same meeting. *Woodbyrne* is ongoing.
- e. Status of Concept Plan Reviews and Zoning Changes. None to report.
- f. JCHLC properties.
1. *Peter Burr Farm*. Bread baking has ceased for the season; the utility kitchen is being resided.
  2. *Duffields Depot*. The west gable end has been resided, primed, and painted. A small porch has been added on the south side (facing tracks) to allow a safe viewing space.
  3. *Shepherdstown Battlefield (James Osbourn Farm)*. The JCHLC awaits transfer from the American Battlefield Trust. We hope the transfer will occur before the end of the year.
  4. *Easement monitoring*. Mr. Burke and Mr. Blackall visited *Snow Hill* (the James Hurst House) and reported successful renovations. A surprise was historic site-made bricks with dog prints fired in!

Adjournment at 8:35 p.m. Motion to approve: Ms. Reese; second, Mr. Benzinger. *Vote unanimous.*

Respectfully submitted,

John Demer, Secretary