

Orange County  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Summary

January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
Old Orange County Courthouse  
106 East King Street, Hillsborough

Approved March 3, 2015

---

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Todd Dickinson (Chair), Susan Ballard, Rob Golan, and Bob Ireland (Vice-Chair).

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jaime Grant and Grace White

**STAFF PRESENT:** Peter Sandbeck

**GUESTS:** None

---

**ITEM #1: CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Dickinson called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm.

**ITEM #2: CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:** None.

**ITEM #3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES (January):** Golan noted several corrections, then moved to accept the minutes corrected as noted; seconded by Ballard; motion passed.

**ITEM #4: ITEMS FOR DECISION:** None

**ITEM #5: DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**a. Schedule for holding a joint public hearing with BOCC for the White Cross School:**

Staff reviewed the process for moving forward with the proposed landmark application for the White Cross School. The next step is to hold a required joint public hearing with the BOCC at the Whitted Center to take any public comment on the proposed application. This is just a routine event, and normally nobody from the public has any comments. Right now it looks like we will hold this on March 3 but staff will confirm. It sounds like we only need one member to attend but more are welcome. Staff will check to verify the attendance requirement. Staff (or the chair) can make a very brief presentation about the landmark, then wait a few moments for public comments, then the hearing will be closed. We will then adjourn to a small meeting room in the same building to hold a slightly abbreviated regular meeting.

**b. Overview of planning for Orange County's Blackwood Farm Park (Attachment 2):**

Members reviewed the master plan map and related documents in their package. The cost estimate of \$5.8 million shows funding for the construction of a new office for DEAPR; that has now been scaled back to a parks operations base building. Blackwood was proposed as a possible site for a regular County Fair but that plan has been shelved. Discussion followed about the possible use of the barn for special events. Fire and liability issues will preclude this. There is some discussion of having limited living history activities in the distant future; this could include some livestock. Should the farm be designated as a

County Landmark? A possible landmark designation could include the whole site or just the central historic farmstead; members favored landmarking the farmstead and possibly the old road, but not the entire 152 acres. This existing master plan dates from 2011 and will eventually be updated. Staff reported on current repairs to the porch and the installation of fence-type gates in the barn bay openings. There is funding still on hand for restoring the exterior of the house, right now planned to retain its ca. 1920-30 appearance. Restoration would remove the aluminum siding, modern decks etc but generally maintain the house in its present form. Family photos show some older outbuildings now lost, like the potato house and outhouse. Staff will bring back a proposal in the future outlining a restoration plan for HPC review and recommendations. The current plan is to open the park for low-impact or “soft” use this spring. Golan raised the question of the long-term preservation of the land around the farm, especially the Strayhorn property at the main intersection as well as the parcel along I-40. Members hoped the county would seek to protect those adjoining parcels to preserve the scenic qualities of the site.

**c. Planning for the “second reconstruction” of the Occaneechi Village at River Park near the Farmer’s Market (Attachment 3):**

Members reviewed the package of photos and maps showing the village and the archeological work at the original village site between the 1930s and the present. Staff described the outcome of a recent meeting with John Jeffries, who represents the Occaneechi tribe, regarding a possible project to rebuild the village that he first reconstructed between about 1999 and 2003. Discussion followed about the importance of accurately recreating the village size and layout. Mr. Jeffries worked closely with Steve Davis and Trawick Ward with the UNC Research Laboratories of Archaeology. There is some money in the upcoming county budget for River Park that could be used to help undertake the village restoration. Members noted that the village in the early 2000s was very popular. The material used to cover the huts should be reconsidered to give a more accurate appearance. The tribe now owns land in Alamance County, where they would like to develop an Occaneechi cultural center so it is not clear if there would much tribal involvement other than Mr. Jeffries. Tourism grants were used for the first reconstruction. Members expressed a lot of interest in volunteering to help make this happen.

**ITEM #6: UPDATES AND INFORMATION ITEMS**

**a. Town HDC agrees to participate in publication project**

Staff made a second presentation to the Town HDC in early January to review the project again and seek their final vote of support. The HDC members were impressed with the Chapel Hill book that was published in 2006. They voted to support the Town in a project to do a joint publication and to have the town staff seek a CLG grant from the state this year, with the town to be asked to allocate \$10,000. This may or may not make it through the Town budget process this year but is a strong show of support. Claudia Brown at the State Historic Preservation Office says that their highest priority is to complete the survey update or inventory of the Town outside of the existing National Register Historic District. Her office says that town inventory will get priority in the Federal review ranking process and would be ranked higher than our application. She indicated that we could still submit a CLG application but if they give a grant to the town then our grant will be small. We still have County matching funds showing up in the next year’s budget, so that will allow us to move forward even if we don’t get much CLG grant funding. There are a lot of moving parts and this all has to be worked out by the grant deadline of Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>, so staff will report back on the outcome at our next meeting. Our consultants are getting underway right now and can come to meet with us, probably in April.

**b. Upcoming training workshops in Greensboro and Wake Forest (Attachment 4):**

Staff reminded members that one of the requirements of being a CLG is that at least 2 members and staff must attend approved CLG training programs each year. Greensboro is hosting such an event at the Greensboro Historical Museum on Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>, and then there will be one in Wake Forest at their history museum on May 15th. Staff encouraged members to attend one of these two options as they are close by. Anyone wishing to attend can hitch a ride in the County truck. These always include interesting tours.

**c. Plans for a tour of the Hackney House**

Dates are still being discussed for this tour.

**d. Colonial Inn Update**

The Town has hired the UNC Kenan Flagler School to evaluate the financial feasibility of the various options associated with preserving the Colonial Inn. This is a necessary step by an outside, impartial and respected organization, to provide the Town with information needed to make informed decisions as they move forward.

**e. Open air time:**

Golan reported on the current plans by the Presbyterian Church to expand Strudwick Hall into an area of the Town Cemetery that is likely to have a high potential for burials. Brett Riggs from UNC Archaeology has been called in by the church to investigate and has located what appear to be multiple burials in the area that was being proposed for the new addition. Brett indicated that there is fill there, over the graves. Ireland discussed the ongoing speculation that the present Presbyterian Church was built on the foundation of the original Anglican church; this is not true but the stones may have been reused. The first church was used as a hospital during the Revolution and those who died in the hospital were buried there, often without markers. Ireland says that there are stones even in the back yard of the Brewer family home, adjacent to the cemetery. Golan reported that over in Alamance County, there is a movement to re-open the old Glencoe Mill School as a Charter School.

**ITEM #7: Staff Presentation:** Members viewed a Powerpoint by staff as a follow up to earlier presentations by staff showing the National Register and Study List properties all over the county. This time staff showed properties in Bingham Township that might be worthy of including in our proposed publication. This will cover half of the Bingham properties, due to time. This is a test, to see if this is a useful way to share the properties with members, sort of a winnowing process, or a first cut. Members agreed that they needed to see all the properties in order to be able to make thoughtful selections for the publication. Staff proceeded to go through the list of properties shown in the Excel table handed out to members, starting with **OR 3** (Bingham School) and ending with **OR 1108** (Oak Grove Church). Members will provide their notes back to staff.

**ITEM #8: ADJOURNMENT: Golan moved to adjourn, seconded by Ballard. Meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm**