

**Orange County
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**DRAFT Meeting Summary
June 24th, 2015
Old Orange County Courthouse
106 East King Street, Hillsborough**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Todd Dickinson (Chair), Susan Ballard, Rob Golan, Grace White and Bob Ireland

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jaime Grant (excused)

STAFF PRESENT: Peter Sandbeck

GUESTS: Victoria Hensley, Jan Elmore and Brenna Yellin (interns with Preservation Chapel Hill)

ITEM #1: CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dickinson called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

ITEM #2: CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO AGENDA: The chair wished to add a discussion item regarding whether to hold or cancel the July meeting to provide a month off, as we have often done in the past. Staff wished to add an update about the Occaneechi Village.

ITEM #3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES (May 27th, 2015 meeting)

Golan moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Ireland. Motion passed unanimously.

ITEM #4: ITEMS FOR DECISION: None

ITEM #5: DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Review of Concepts and Examples of Other County Historic Resources Books

Chair Dickinson invited the guests to join members around the table to look at the various examples of publications produced by other counties, and briefly explained our proposed book project. Our job tonight is to look through these books for half an hour to get an idea of exactly what a county inventory book is, how they are organized and laid out, and how we react to these examples. We should be able to agree on a format and design we see here, or some combination thereof, so that we don't have to reinvent the wheel. These books will be available for members to check out and take home if they wish. Members should give their reactions about their favorite aspects of these to help guide us toward a consensus on a format and design we like. Members reviewed about twenty different volumes and shared them around the table. Discussion included pricing (\$40-\$60), weight/bulk, the importance of special illustrations like maps, floor plans, historic photos, etc. Five or six of these were designed by B. Williams and Associates, in Durham. The County actually contracted with her back in 1999 to start work on the book but stopped the contract once it was determined that the content was not even close to being ready.

Members commented on the written entries, and how they varied in length, content and readability. Most were organized geographically by township etc. The amount of history included in the front sections varied greatly. Members noted that the coated paper stock

reproduced photos much better than the uncoated. There was interest in color photos; these can be included in signatures of 16 pages. Some incorporate photos of buildings that have been demolished. Members felt that these were part of the story of a county or town and must be included. Some books included many outbuildings and site features, but with less focus on important or fine architecture. Does the county have any remaining slave houses that could be included? Only a portion of the slaves lived in dedicated slave houses, as many just lived wherever—in the kitchen loft, the barn, etc. Orange was not a county of large slaveholdings. Stagville was the extreme exception. We do have some good examples of tenant houses. Will we include examples of cemeteries and gravestones? We want to include stories of important people where logical/possible.

There was discussion about the audience, who are we doing this for? How much focus on genealogy is needed? Integrity, for example, must play into the equation when deciding what buildings to include. Members asked Sandbeck to explain which model/prototype he recommended. He believes that the recent Chowan County publication was the best model for us to follow. This has an excellent historical/architectural overview, especially complete written entries with good histories, and their resources are relatively humble and diverse. It is arranged by township. Do we include properties that are no longer standing, or use photos that show buildings in earlier times, before changes or siding was added? Most agreed these would make for a richer end product. The question of a cutoff date was posed. We will try to follow the National Register protocol of a 50 year rolling cutoff.

b. July Meeting: do we cancel or meet?

Chair Dickinson asked members if they wanted hold the July meeting or take a holiday. Members discussed the options. Bob will be in Maine in August so will not be able to attend. Staff will ask Jaime if she has a preference and then write everyone to let them know. It might be possible to visit the Hackney House in July, depending on the schedule of the intern with Preservation Chapel Hill.

ITEM #6: UPDATES AND INFORMATION ITEMS

a. Colonial Inn:

There are no new developments. Work is being done behind the scenes by those dedicated to saving the building. The UNC study recently released was valuable for assigning a realistic valuation to the building that factored in its present condition.

b. State Historic Preservation Tax Credits:

The future of the credits rests with the final budget deal to be hashed out by a conference committee formed to resolve differences between the House and Senate budgets; the House passed a modified version of the credits but the Senate eliminated them.

c. Survey Project Status and Book Update:

Staff explained that the project continues to move forward nicely. The consultants are on track to complete all work by the end of August, when all forms and database work must be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office. Staff will continue to call on members to help gain access to properties. Thanks to Susan for helping gain access to two very interesting properties outside of Hillsborough. It is time to get back up with the Town to reaffirm their involvement in the book project, so staff will work on getting a meeting with Mark Bell and/or Town staff.

d. Blackwood Farm Park: report on opening event:

About 120 people attended the limited opening. The County Commissioners and Bob Strayhorn gave good speeches. Three generations of Blackwoods all showed up, perhaps 50 of them, making it a special event. Attendees spoke very highly of the way the historic

farmstead has been preserved and maintained. Staff gave a tour of the farm complex with Bob Strayhorn and was able to make a digital recording of Bob's narrative.

e. Proposed project to rebuild the former Occaneechi Village:

Staff gave a brief update on the ongoing efforts working with the Town, the Alliance and John Jeffries to rebuild the former village on the same site in River Park. The County budget included funds to buy 400 cedar poles needed to recreate the palisade as the first phase this fall.

f. Open Air Time:

Staff reported that he had been able to use some contractual services funds to generate a contract to undertake detailed agricultural research using the Extension Agent's annual reports, Ag Census records and Ag Dept records to generate a much clearer picture and story of the county's ag history to enrich the text for the book and the property entries. This will be undertaken by the present survey update consultants. Also, the State Historic Preservation Office has announced their award of an additional CLG grant of \$5,000 for the next phase of the survey update project.

ITEM #7: STAFF PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION:

a. Orange County Historic Resources: overview of resources in Hillsborough and Eno Townships:

Staff presented an overview of resources in Hillsborough and Eno townships, noting those that were tagged by the survey consultants and staff as having sufficient integrity and significance to merit possible inclusion in the book. This time, we are showing these as an overview but not a culling exercise. After the last session, it was the consensus of the group that staff and the consultants should make the first cuts or culls based on their special knowledge of all the resources, then present those finalists to the members, and also share any "undecided" properties to get member input. There was some discussion about the viability of pushing toward a very small grant program to stabilize/protect endangered resources, perhaps geared to keeping a good roof or making critical stabilization repairs to deteriorated log buildings. The presentation stopped with the former Butner Barracks Building in Eno Township; we will resume with the balance of Eno Township and then Little River at the next meeting.

ITEM #8: ADJOURNMENT: Members checked out selected books, then Golan moved to adjourn, seconded by Ireland; motion passed. Chair Dickinson adjourned the meeting at 9:12 pm.

Meeting summary by Peter Sandbeck, DEAPR staff