

**Orange County
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Approved Meeting Summary

April 27th, 2016

Old Orange County Courthouse
106 East King Street, Hillsborough

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Ballard (Chair), Bob Ireland (Vice-Chair), Jaime Grant, Allie Mead, Art Menius and Grace White

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tom Loter (excused)

STAFF PRESENT: Peter Sandbeck

GUESTS: Joseph Ofoomozokpa and Annie Baumann, planning students, UNC-CH

ITEM #1: CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ballard called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm and welcomed Art Menius.

ITEM #2: CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO AGENDA: Staff asked to add two informational items: the old County Poor House Cemetery and Historic Preservation Month.

ITEM #3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES (January): Ireland moved to accept the minutes corrected as noted; seconded by Ballard; motion passed.

ITEM #4: ITEMS FOR DECISION: None

ITEM #5: DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. **Proposed project to move Governor Burke's grave from its original site on Gov. Burke Road to the Old Town Cemetery (Attachment 2):**

Staff presented a PowerPoint about a proposal by the Sons of the American Revolution, to move Gov. Burke's remains from his original resting place on his plantation north of Hillsborough, into the Old Town Cemetery. This group has been caring for the grave since the 1940s. Ireland related additional historical information about Burke. Staff referred members to the biographical background info in Attachment 2, and to maps showing the location of the cemetery, next to Latta's Egg Ranch and inside a pasture reached by climbing over an electric fence. Issues include the pros and cons of moving his remains away from his chosen burial spot, how to provide better access, perhaps by working with the farm owners. The State of NC owns the actual cemetery and is arranging a special meeting with the Sons of the American Revolution, the SHPO, the State Archaeologist and the Town, to be held in early May to discuss the effort. There are strict rules and laws governing the moving of graves. If the goal is to create a memorial to Burke, then that could be done by creating a new monument downtown somewhere. Discussion followed. Members generally felt that this site is his chosen resting place, and that there may be other burials around his grave. There may be reasons he was not buried in the Town Cemetery. At this point, the County and the HPC have only an advisory role.

Staff gave an informational presentation about the cemetery associated with the old County Poor House, on Elfand-Cedar Grove Rd. There are two marked graves with

interesting histories, and likely more unmarked burials. The County may install some sort of permanent marker there, along the lines of the state markers, but with our own County logo, colors etc. Discussion followed. Issues included the challenge of how to deal with requests for other markers. These cost about \$2000 each. Some other county marker programs are successful and have developed guidelines and criteria. Members would like to see examples of other guidelines/criteria. Lettering needs to be sized for legibility. Staff will proceed to look into a marker program.

Next, staff gave an update on the recent archaeology and research findings about the Strayhorn slave cemetery at Blackwood Farm. Parks maintenance staff did a great job of clearing the entire site while leaving all the standing and fallen field stones. The archaeological firm of Legacy Research from Durham was hired to positively identify all burials, and found 34 burials there. All have been carefully mapped and located.

Staff ended with an overview about Historic Preservation Month and the National Trust's campaign called "This Place Matters." Laurie Paolicelli with the Visitor's Bureau is willing to help work with the HPC to try this for 2016. Members like the participatory nature of this sort of campaign, to get regular citizens to care about local history and places. There is a connection between the localism movement and historic preservation.

b. Updated book project budget and description (Attachment 3):

Staff referred members to the new budget document and overview statement. Our consultants completed the field work and are now starting on the essay. Bob Ireland needed a simpler budget for a prospective donor to the project.

c. Book committee meeting planning/scheduling:

We have not been able to hold a book committee meeting as the Town just notified us of their member, Virginia Smith, last week. Staff met with Ms. Smith earlier today. She will review the Town's material now on hand, notably the revised National Register nomination, then will be ready for the first full group meeting to be held sometime in June. Menius provided his newcomer's thoughts about the book project and pointed out that print is costly and not always democratic, versus using electronic formats to share our information. Other members related that we are committed to doing the book first, as our permanent contribution, to be followed by a digital version of our inventory. There is still a value to holding a book, turning pages, seeing the images, without distraction. A digital project may link to the concept of a digital Orange County History/Heritage portal.

d. Chapel Hill CLG training program on May 13th:

Staff reminded members about the workshop being held by Preservation Chapel Hill and the Town of Chapel Hill. Ireland, Loter, Mead and Menius plan to attend. The HPC is providing funding for morning snacks and coffee. The Town of Chapel Hill is a sponsor.

ITEM #6: UPDATES AND INFORMATION ITEMS

a. Update on historic resources inventory project:

This was reported earlier in the meeting.

b. Norwood-Jones Law Office preservation progress:

This early 19th century brick office is owned by the County. The Preservation Fund of Hillsborough has given \$5,000 for restoration work. This and the other County-owned historic properties of special significance could be designated as Landmarks to offer a special layer of protection. Members would like to proceed.

c. Landmark designations within the Hillsborough and Carrboro ETJ:

The idea to designate Ayr Mount as a landmark raises this issue. Right now, the County may not designate a landmark within any town's ETJ. We need to generate an Interlocal Agreement between the County and each town to allow us to do this.

d. **Blackwood Farm Park: Strayhorn Slave Cemetery archaeology**

This was reported earlier in the meeting.

e. **Update on bridge replacement project at Hall's Mill Road:**

NC DOT has decided to contract with a historic preservation consultant to evaluate the properties in the vicinity of the bridge.

ITEM #7: ADJOURNMENT: Grant moved to adjourn, seconded by White. Meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm

Meeting summary by Peter Sandbeck, DEAPR staff