

**Orange County
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Approved Meeting Summary

**May 25th, 2016
Old Orange County Courthouse
106 East King Street, Hillsborough**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Susan Ballard (excused)

STAFF PRESENT: Peter Sandbeck

GUESTS: None

ITEM #1: CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Ireland called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm in light of the excused absence of Chair Ballard.

ITEM #2: CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO AGENDA: Staff asked to add two informational items: Bellevue Mill and Town Interpretive Signs, and postpone the topic of the Strayhorn slave cemetery interpretive sign text until a later meeting.

ITEM #3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES (April 27th): Grant noted a typo on page 3; Menius moved to accept the minutes corrected as noted; seconded by Loter; motion passed.

ITEM #4: ITEMS FOR DECISION:

a. June 22nd meeting: need to change date or cancel meeting:

Members discussed date change due to staff needing to be away that week. Menius moved to cancel June 22nd meeting, and hold our next meeting on July 27th; seconded by Grant, motion passed.

ITEM #5: DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Information sharing from Chapel Hill CLG Training Workshop:

Ireland asked for clarification about when a local commission is supposed to seek input from the State Historic Preservation Office when a project within a district or under their review requires some type of state or federal permit. Staff felt this was not likely to be something that our HPC was going to encounter but recommended that the SHPO and the local commission should consult together well in advance of reviewing a COA. For us, this could become an issue in the event that the Old Courthouse is designated as a landmark, which would bring the HPC into play should there be federally permitted activities in that vicinity. Other historic districts have faced issues with proposed police radio transmission projects. Discussion followed. In short, it is always useful or productive for the local HPC to reach out to initiate the discussion with the state. In many ways, the SHPO is in a better position to help buffer the issue in the event that there is a controversy that raises local political issues. Staff thanked all those who attended.

b. Book project update:

Staff provided a brief update and reported on his meeting with the Town book committee member, Virginia Smith. The goal is for the town and county book committee members to meet together in June, then report back to their memberships after the joint meeting. Susan comes back in early June, so she will be available to meet that month. Committee members Grant and Ireland were flexible. Staff will follow up with an email to set up the meeting time. Our consultants have started to craft the bones or core of our historical/architectural essay. We were able to obtain some funding to get our consultants started on editing the entries, and a little funding to get some supplementary historical research started to provide more and better information about the individual properties. Discussion followed about possible approaches for raising additional funds for the project. Staff needed to do some follow-up work to prepare information to submit to potential funders. One idea is to select an existing historic resources book to refer to as an example of the type of book we are planning. Another approach is to refer to the potential of working with UNC press, then seek sponsorships that would allow the sales price of the book to be reduced or subsidized to broaden sales. We could generate a visual proposal to give donors a better sense of what we are planning—it would be helpful for us and for prospective donors. There are some deadlines coming up in August so staff will have to push on this.

ITEM #6: UPDATES AND INFORMATION ITEMS

a. Update on historic resources inventory project:

Our consultants completed the survey update within the Town's ETJ, with no particularly remarkable discoveries. One thing of interest was the discovery of the Robert Jones House, built c. 1850, located on a small cul-de-sac off of Orange High School Road. We learned that it was moved there from Johnston County in the late 1990s. Ireland noted that the intent was to bring in historic houses from all over the region. The Town submitted its application for a CLG grant to survey the area of the town outside of the National Register Historic District, to include the mill village, the African American neighborhoods, and even to make sure some of the Daniel Boone Village is documented in some way. Discussion followed about the movement of the former mill houses, and where they are all located. There are at least 50 relocated mill houses all over the town. At the library there is a copy of a paper someone did in the 1980s about the movement of these houses.

b. Historic Preservation Month Proclamation (Attachment 2):

Tom Loter did a fine job reading our proclamation. Staff thanked him and also Jamie Grant for attending the BOCC meeting to show support. Staff then discussed the process for generating more activity for Preservation Month, in addition to a proclamation. Laurie Paolicelli did a great job of creating a video to show to the BOCC. If we want to pursue a social media approach, staff must start months in advance to get the groundwork done.

c. Dickson House repairs and landscape work:

Staff gave an overview of the history of the property and its move and restoration in the 1980s to serve as the Town's visitor center, followed by PowerPoint presentation showing the various architectural features and historic photographs. This is owned by the County and leased to the Alliance. The County will be carrying out some repair and restoration work on the exterior later this year. Staff mentioned the recent removal of the two Crape Myrtles that stood right in front of the porch; these had grown into the front of the house within 20 years of being planted and had to be removed this spring.

d. Bellevue Mill Update (added to agenda):

Staff showed a PowerPoint about Bellevue Mill and the recent fire that destroyed it the second oldest section. The original fire containment system of firewalls and fire doors did

a good job of preventing the fire from spreading beyond one single building. An investigation is underway to determine the cause. Arson is a possibility.

e. Occaneechi Village update:

Staff presented an informational update and PowerPoint about the plans for a project to rebuild the recreated Occaneechi Village down at River Park in 2016-17. It will be located behind the Link Center and the Farmer's Market, on the site of the first recreated village. As background, this was first built in the late 1990s, then portions were removed to use to rebuild a village at the tribal property in rural Alamance County. The original circular concrete footing is still in the ground. The Tribe has made a decision to support rebuilding the Village again back at the first location. The layout of the Village will be based on research and advice from Dr. Steve Davis of UNC who supervised the earlier digs at the original Village site (the Wall Site) at the bend in the Eno. The current project will seek to recreate the village shown in the artist's conceptual drawing done for the first project in the 1990s. Tribal member John Jeffries will help supervise the effort based on his experience in leading the first village project. The County is in the process of procuring 400 cedar poles right now to build the palisade. We hope to get this started this fall. Our challenge is to find materials for the huts that will look authentic but will have some durability. There is debate as to whether the huts were covered with bark, or were wattle and mud, or reeds. This was not an issue back in the 1600s, as the Occaneechi knew that these were not permanent structures; they required constant repair and rebuilding to keep them in reasonable condition. Security will be another concern. The archaeologists have recently learned that there may have been trade between the Occaneechi and the coastal tribes.

f. Open Air Time for members to share information

Staff handed out copies of the proposed sign texts for another set of six informational signage that the Town is planning, all developed by the Town's sign committee. Bob helped with a lot of historic information about the "historic corner" sign. Stephanie is not looking for editorial input but rather, for us to flag any really serious errors or misstatements that must be corrected. Please let staff know if you see anything.

ITEM #7: ADJOURNMENT: White moved to adjourn, seconded by Loter; meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm

Meeting summary by Peter Sandbeck, DEAPR staff