

MINUTES

**CHARLOTTESVILLE HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Joint Meeting with Albemarle County Historic Preservation Committee

Monday October 24, 2016 \* 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

County Office Building \* McIntire Road

**Members Present**

Melanie Miller, Co-Chair  
Edwina St. Rose, Co-Chair  
Margaret O’Bryant  
Ellen Wagner  
Genevieve Keller  
Bob Fenwick

**Members Absent**

Crystal McNeese  
Liz Sargent  
Dede Smith

**Staff Absent**

Mary Joy Scala

**ALBEMARLE COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

October 24, 2016: County Office Building, McIntire Rd., Room 241, 4:30 PM

MINTUES

<b>Committee Member Name</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
1. Betsy Baten	X	
2. Erika Castillo	X	
3. Dennis Dutterer	X (4:41)	
4. Ed Lay	X	
5. Jared Loewenstein	X	
6. Steven G. Meeks		X
7. Crystal Ptacek	X	
8. Liz Russell	X	
9. Ross Stevens		X
10. Jeff Werner	X	
11. Peter Wiley		X
<b>Liaison Name</b>		
Ann Mallek, BOS	X	
Pam Riley, PC	X	
<b>Visitor Name/Contact Information</b>		
Steve Thompson, The Ivy Creek Foundation		
Charlottesville Historic Resources Committee, including Genevieve Keller, Melanie Miller, Edwina St. Rose, Ellen Wagner, Margaret O’Bryant, and Bob Fenwick		

Lyle Wilson, Charlottesville High School		
Tim G. Keller, Albemarle County Planning Commissioner		

1a. **Call meeting to order:** J. Loewenstein called the meeting of the Albemarle County Historic Preservation Committee to order at 4:36 PM with a quorum.

1b. Melanie Miller called the meeting of the Charlottesville Historic Resource Committee to order at 4:36 PM.

## 2. Announcements

- Next meeting: November 28, 2016. J. Loewenstein said that in the past, HPC has changed or eliminated the meeting.

## 3. Approval of Minutes

- Minutes from September were approved (Motion by J. Werner, second by L. Russell, vote unanimous).

## 4. Discussion Items

- M. Miller introduced Steve Thompson to talk about the City/County jointly-owned Ivy Creek Natural Area and house. She also wanted to address the Old Jail.
- The Old Jail
  - The Jail is owned by the County, but preservationists are interested in seeing it not degrade further and doing something more with it in the future.
  - A. Mallek said she understood that there was an operational effort with the Historical Society to develop programming. E. Castillo asked if anyone had contacted Parks and Rec. A. Mallek replied that they have more than enough to deal with and they would probably be unable to give tours. E. Castillo said that General Services have been doing maintenance and Parks and Rec has not been involved so far.
  - J. Werner said the walls need to be capped to keep out water. He asked about the option of involving the neighborhood. He cautioned against developing activities rather than how to preserve it.
  - G. Keller said that Preservation Virginia put the Jail on their most endangered list several years ago. Stabilization would take lots of money.
  - Introductions of all attendees at the meeting
    - J. Loewenstein said that S. Meeks would say that stabilization needs to happen before thinking about activities. The cost goes up rapidly every year nothing happens.
    - E. Lay said that we need to emphasize the importance of the building. HABS documented it. It has all of the original fabric inside, like the Fluvanna County Jail.
    - B. Baten asked if state grant money is available for this sort of stabilization effort. J. Loewenstein answered possibly. B. Baten asked if HPC can apply.
    - L. Russell asked if any long term plan exists for the jail. M. O'Bryant, a member of the Historical Society, said that there was some degree of fundraising two or three years back for stabilization and interpretive purposes. An architectural study was undertaken for renovation, but now progress is at a halt. The Historical Society uses the Jail for interpretation. They host an Open House each Saturday morning with guided tours conducted by Steven [Meeks] and Paul Jones. It is also the site of the

- last of the Society's Spirit walks Saturday, 10/29, from 6-8:30. A. Mallek said that she understood that the Historical Society as a whole accepted the Jail rehab project. M. O'Bryant replied no and that it has really just been Steven's deal.
- J. Loewenstein invited people to visit the Jail.
  - M. O'Bryant said that the Jail raises more of a safety issue each year. M. Miller said that the County came to the City's architectural review board. The County installed a fence to protect people from falling mortar. They suggested putting the money towards mortar stabilization and not the fence. J. Werner asked about putting a mortar cap on the wall to keep moisture off. He proposed making stabilization efforts a "Save the Clock Tower" sort of deal or, alternatively, applying for a grant. His understanding is that S. Meeks is trying to raise funds, but we're not accounting for stabilization of the wall. J. Werner asked about taking the project to a neighborhood level. Fenwick said that these two committees could publicize to the County what's there. Fenwick proposed to augment the publicity, for example, visiting on Saturdays from 10-2. Then, the project could be a joint City and County effort. The committees could focus on the North Downtown area. They could also check with Justin Sarafin to see about grants. G. Keller said that it would be highly unlikely to apply for and receive state money. You'd have to tap into the "local rich guy". E. Castillo countered that the amount doesn't have to be a lot, and it doesn't have to be the traditional sources. B. Baten offered that the DHR has grants. She said that the City of Charlottesville is CLG, but the County isn't. G. Keller said that if the County would become a CLG, HPC could apply for the funding. J. Werner asked if a small group should form to talk about it. A. Mallek said that the Board needs to find out what's going on. G. Keller asked how long ago the Board was updated. A. Mallek said that it has been at least three years, so the BOS needs an update. G. Keller said that the process has not been very transparent. A. Mallek said she was surprised to hear the Historical Society wasn't more involved with the project. G. Keller said that the Historical Society isn't a broadly represented group of the communities and it is not transparent. For instance, very few Board names have changed recently. However, it has a good record and has had lots of people associated with it. A. Mallek said if there is money being made on the project via fundraising or profit from the Spirit walks but it is not going into the Jail stabilization, then that is a concern. J. Loewenstein said that the first place to start is to talk to Steven and find out what progress the Historical Society is making, including what funds they've made. B. Fenwick said he is willing to volunteer to approach manufacturers about publicity, as contractors would have to meet certain standards. J. Werner said at this point, the Historical Society is at a mothball level approach. Water is the problem. The County painted the roof, but the wall is a forgotten piece of it. Questions should include can someone put mortar on the cap? Who will approve it? Can we raise funds? G. Keller said that the wall contains old, soft Virginia brick, so just not everyone can go up there. J. Loewenstein said we've heard about the things the Historical Society was going to do, but it is unclear if those things have been done. The first thing to do is discuss with Steven.
  - L. Russell suggested Steven might be able to show HPC around the Jail. G. Keller said that the Jail is creepy, and it should be creepy because horrible things happened there.

- J. Werner said that the County buildings people aren't looking at the Jail as a building valuable to the County in the long term. Is this of importance to the community? What about the City/County preservation community? The scale of fundraising required to make the Jail function as a place may be a long way off.
- J. Werner said that the Jail is a County building. G. Keller assumed that "Albemarle County Court" owns it, as it appears on the City's GIS. E. Castillo said that the title "Albemarle County Court" is a quirk of putting the title into GIS.
- G. Keller said that the property is a valuable piece of real estate in downtown Charlottesville, so someone should make a decision as to how it's going to proceed. In the City, there was a process to rehab The Jefferson School, where the City appointed a task force, there was a direction to go, and then that task force handed the project off to a group of partners to find uses for the building and rehab it. The process was long with many studies to determine structures and uses.
- J. Werner said the property includes a jailer's house, jail, yard, and wall. He volunteers to help out, as he thinks we will lose the building. J. Loewenstein said that a short term solution will save the wall, but a more long term plan is needed. If HPC publicizes the opportunity to do something, it should be more than just putting mortar on the wall. L. Russell said that it is murky what the Historical Society sees as their vision. Is it as a museum? Is that a feasible option? The Jefferson School has been successful. She said the best way to save a building has been to give it use. J. Werner said that the walls are two feet thick. The Jail has tiny, scary rooms with big iron doors. He said it is difficult to imagine it being anything other than a jail. L. Russell offered the idea of a flea market. J. Werner asked about a wedding venue using the courtyard. M. O'Bryant said that the Historical Society could create space for a public meeting space because of a demand. In a preliminary report that came back in the study, the committee recommended a separate entrance for that space. J. Loewenstein asked if any documentation was done by the Historical Society relating to potential plans. M. O'Bryant said she couldn't answer that. It could be used as a museum or as meeting spaces.
- G. Keller asked if the City's Historic Resources Committee could request an update in 60 days to find out what's going on. J. Werner said there should be answer about the status of the building, the status of the Historical Society's involvement in the restoration efforts, and where there are gaps. J. Loewenstein proposed an end of the year report. G. Keller said that Preservation Virginia would be interested in the results since the Jail was on their endangered list for so many years.
- L. Russell said she would send along mason Henry Cercley's contact information.
- E. Wagner said that you can donate on oldjail.org, so it would be good to have an update on progress. J. Loewenstein said that no motion is needed, but it sounds like the progress report should proceed.
- J. Loewenstein said HPC should keep their November meeting date because the December meeting is typically cancelled.
  - E. Lay asked if HPC will get an update at that meeting, including addressing what funds, if any, have been raised. J. Loewenstein said that Ann suggested there was money set aside for rehab. Does long term funding exist? Are there capital improvement projects related to the Jail? By the next meeting, HPC will have a status update.

- Ivy Creek Natural Area
  - S. Thompson said that in the spring, he presented to the City and County separately reminding everyone of the Farm House, which was probably built by Hugh Carr around 1870 or so. The property is owned by the City and County and is an historic resource that is largely ignored by its owners. In the City, several members encouraged Preservation Piedmont to document the site. On the County's side, a structural assessment was supposed to happen.
  - The Ivy Creek Foundation, of which Thompson is a board member, completed a "landscape master plan" with an entry way, kiosk, and parking lot. Sue Nelson and Warren Byrd donated their time and knowledge to produce the plan. The Board looked at the arrival area at Ivy Creek and wondered why more people weren't part of The Ivy Creek Foundation. They decided it's because no one knows it exists. So, they want to modify the whole entry area. They've come up with one big plan with lots of little steps. Nelson and Byrd presented the plan to the Ivy Creek Board, and in September, they presented it to the membership at their annual meeting. Thompson met with heads of the City and County Parks and Rec, because the Board didn't want to do anything without public support. Part of the plan is to move the road away from the house and accentuate the ridgetop as an agricultural landscape. The Natural Area has an incredible cultural history that few know about.
  - The City and County thought that the Ivy Creek Foundation should take over the house, which is home to a caretaker. The house is becoming increasingly poorly suited. J. Loewenstein asked if the caretaker is still there. S. Thompson replied yes and that there are issues about the unkempt appearance of the house. He said Ivy Creek is the fourth most visited park in Albemarle County even though the park does not allow swimming, bikes, or dog, and it doesn't have tennis courts. The caretaker has animals that run free, but no animals are actually allowed on the property.
  - Plans for the landscape improvements are slowly moving forward. There have been presentations to City Council and the Board of Supervisors on what the Foundation is hoping to accomplish to get more support, but for the City and County, "capital improvement" is not part of their vocabulary.
  - Right now, the paved trail and a service road are side by side. The Foundation wants to move the road to reclaim the area as a pedestrian passage cutting through the heart of the park with lots of native landscaping and the kiosk re-envisioned. They'd also like to draw the house into the landscape of the Natural Area and emphasize "Ivy Creek and historic Riverview Farm". Options the Foundation is considering for the house include an onsite museum, office space, and/or housing for the executive director of the Foundation.
  - P. Riley asked how is the plan is to be funded. She asked if they had a Master Plan. S. Thompson replied there is no master plan. He said that Brian Dailey said not to use the word master plan, because it has specific legal meaning. It is rather a plan of landscape improvement. The property was purchased with private money 40 years ago and was deeded to the City and County jointly. The City every year gives money towards maintenance, while the County contributes in kind for building maintenance, snow removal, mowing, and trash pick-up. There is a caretaker, who, in return for greatly reduced rent, keeps watch over the property. There is a self-composting toilet that the County sort of takes care of. They also pick up the bill for electricity. D.

Dutterer asked who the money goes to. S. Thompson replied that the City gives the money to the County.

- The Ivy Foundation employs one and a half staff: a full time executive director and a part time education coordinator. They facilitate trail maintenance and educational programming. The education building built by the Ivy Creek Foundation is used almost every day of the week for meetings and other events. Many groups who use it now are member groups. Resources raised by the Foundation go to programming and staff. D. Dutterer asked about an annual budget. S. Thompson replied that it is about \$80,000 and that most of the money goes to staff salaries.
- The Foundation is re-envisioning itself as “Friends of the Ivy Creek Natural Area.” Many municipal park systems have this “friends” structure. J. Loewenstein said that back in the summer, Ann said the County would look into some of the issues and the person living there. S. Thompson said it is difficult because of the chain of communication. G. Keller asked who is responsible for the lease. E. Castillo replied the County. E. Wagner said she was on the Preservation Piedmont committee that documented the house, and it was in deplorable condition and is probably a fire hazard. It is a historic resource that hasn’t been maintained by the tenant at all. C. Ptacek said that from the April minutes, HPC discussed that the lease is up every 5 years. J. Loewenstein asked E. Castillo to check on the lease status.
- G. Keller asked B. Fenwick if he sees this line item in the City’s budget. B. Fenwick replied that no, it’s buried. S. Thompson said that The Jefferson School is great example, but he doesn’t know if you can pull out a building to give to citizens. G. Keller said that tax credits are a significant part of The Jefferson School. J. Werner said that visiting parks isn’t viewed as economic development.
- S. Thompson said that it is remarkable the number of out of town visitors that visit that come to Charlottesville for the purpose of hiking there.
- J. Werner asked if it would help to extend to project to include the larger landscape. He asked if it can become an anchor for the interpretation for the Route 29 area.
- P. Riley reiterated about lifting up the history at Ivy Creek and linking it to the post- emancipation era. She said there needs to be a master plan for the park and role of the park and uses of the park. She suggested the formation of a task force that can look at it more deeply and address the three parties. S. Thompson said that it would be a difficult process. For instance, in the Ragged Mountain Natural Area, all of the trails were opened up by the Ivy Creek Foundation when no one else was interested in doing it, and the trails were maintained for decades. When the relationship ended, it was because the City said they wanted to take it over. S. Thompson said that there is a loyal membership in the Ivy Creek Foundation, and a lot of people were upset. Introducing changes can be contentious, but with the right vision and guidance of a task force, it could be done.
- J. Werner said that there could be some level of sustained funding from City and County. He said that there has to be something else done that is beyond the preservation committees. J. Loewenstein said that the visitation rate alone is significant, and that should resonate with the Board of Supervisors and City Council, and it should be included in any approach because of the popularity and the issues surrounding it as an historic property. It would have to be done carefully with the help and support of the Foundation.

- S. Thompson said that the next steps are to make pitches to City Council and the Board of Supervisors about the plan of landscape improvements, raising money, and trying to put together the pieces. He said the house isn't the priority of the plan, but doing something with it has been built into the plan. J. Loewenstein said that the house's context is important not to lose.
- S. Thompson said that 129 cars a day were counted with a traffic counter. Anecdotal reports say it is a popular place at lunchtime. Visitation had a spike with PokemonGo.
- S. Thompson said that the tenant is not responsible for maintaining the building. E. Castillo said that there should be conditions met in the lease by the tenant. G. Keller said that it is not unusual for a local government to be in this situation. It's an issue, but it isn't unusual.

## 5. Work Group Updates

- Demolition
  - J. Loewenstein said that nothing stood out to him.

## 6. Questions

- none

### Other:

- J. Werner said he attended the Section 106 meeting for Secretary Sands Bridge. He said that VDOT has a small budget, and while it seemed like the engineers would love to do the right thing, there is a significantly small amount of money to make the bridge functional. It would be a public relations nightmare if funds for the bridge went elsewhere, because people know their bridge is unsafe. The bridge was cited as an issue because a City firetruck responded to a traffic accident and couldn't turn around. J. Werner said VDOT won't advertise for the work until 2021.
- J. Werner mentioned the Rio/Route 29 Plan. In it, the cemetery identified by Steve Thompson was on a property up for rezoning. There was discussion about adding additional language to protect the burial site more rigidly than proposed.
- The County has discussed the possibility of moving the courthouse from the city. Stay tuned.

## 7. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 5:56 PM.