

**Old Fort Mountain Heritage Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes
February 20, 2008**

Members Present:

Dru Heldman, Chairperson, Pinwilz Co. TAAS Gallery
Ken LaRoux – Old Fort Resident
Wesley Lael – Old Fort Train Shop
David Quinn, Handmade In America
Wayne Martin, NC Folklife Director, NC Arts Council
Kim Lukasiak, BB&T
Debbie Acrivos, Fort Davidson Historical Park
Frank Kissell, Old Fort resident
Garland Norton, Mayor Old Fort
Terrell Finley, Mountain Gateway Museum
Terry Wilson – Teacher – Old Fort Elementary
Nada Carroll, Old Fort Planning Board
Ashley Wooten, Assistant McDowell County Manager
Carol Price, McDowell TDA
Susie Painter – Painter’s Nursery
Dean Kanipe, McDowell Tech
Nancy Hicks, Old Fort resident
Linda Canterbury, Old Fort resident
Linda Bunch, Secretary, Old Fort resident

Dru Heldman called the meeting to order. Introductions were made by all in attendance.

News and Updates from Community Organizations represented

McDowell TDA – Carol Price

Upcoming events include:

March 14, 2008 County Wide celebration of all events in McDowell County

Location: Marion Community Building

April 2008 – Pioneer Day, NC Gold Festival,

May 17, 2008 Railroad Days Fundraiser for matching funds **NEED VOLUNTEERS**

[Individuals wishing to volunteer contact Linda Bunch at lmckbb@hughes.net or 828-668-9620](mailto:lmckbb@hughes.net)

Chamber of Commerce – Debbie Acrivos

An office employee has recently been hired by the Chamber.

The Chamber will have a booth on Pioneer Day.

Gateway Museum – Terrell Finley

Pioneer Day is scheduled for April 26, 2008 from 10-5 on the Museum Grounds. There will be food, entertainment, crafts and music.

Blue Ridge Heritage Festival (formerly Summerfest) planned for 6 weeks in June and July. On June 14 David Holt will perform.

Margaret Morley Exhibition – opening day is March 1, 2008. Photographs by Ms. Morley and books of North Carolina Mountains circa 1890 are on display at TAAS, the Depot and other business locations around Old Fort.

Old Fort Planning Board – Nada Carroll

The Planning Board is currently inactive. There has been no replacement for Jerry Lewis who resigned as chair of the Planning Board.

Town of Old Fort – Garland Norton

Construction will begin shortly to address the two step sidewalk on the north side of downtown Old Fort. A rail is being installed with flower containers.

MACA – Carol Price

Livermush Café – Saturday February 23 at 7 p.m. at the Marion Arts Counsel.

Susan Grant has been appointed permanent Director of MACA.

Livermush Festival – first Saturday in June

Susan Grant has begun a local artist advocate group. Members of OFMHA are encouraged to spread the word about the group to artistic individuals that they may know.

Folklife Institute –

A summer series is in the planning stages.

Davidson Fort – Debbie Acrivos

It was reported that the gate of the Fort has been completed. A clean up day is planned for Saturday, February 23rd, weather permitting. The fencing of the fort will require 6000 pegs hand done to secure the fencing.

There are plans to convert an old house to a small museum and office.

The rural \$75,000 grant is expected to be received within the next couple of weeks.

The Davidson Fort project is in need of volunteers, funds and logs to build the fence.

Sims and Steele is completing the fundraising planning. Future projects include a visitor center and other buildings outside the Fort. **They need individuals to volunteer who have fundraising experience.**

There was recently an article in the Asheville Citizen Times on February 10, 2008 about Davidson Fort.

Ann Swan spoke to the Board about the history of McDowell County on February 21, 2008.

There was some discussion about utilizing the Scouts to assist with the Fort Project. Debbie reported that at this time their insurance only covers adults because it is in the Construction phase of the project.

Individuals who wish to volunteer or make donations should contact Debbie at 828-668-4831

Economic Development – Kim Lukasiak

Dru reported that they were continuing to work on a map of all business buildings in downtown Old Fort.

Mayor Norton advised members that he could make the Rockett Building accessible to assess its potential for retail shops or restaurants.

Carol Price reported that 4,047 visitors came to the Visitors Center at the Depot in 2007. There is a need for places to eat. Dru reported tentative plans for Catawba Vale to begin serving deli sandwiches and salads on April 1, 2008. Currently they have WiFi access. Catawba Vale also plans to bring alternative music such as Blues or Jazz on Friday nights to compliment Old Fort's Friday Night Country Music.

Design Committee – Terry Wilson

Fundraiser - Carol Price

The fundraiser for Bradley Park remains scheduled for March 13th. It is a Chicken/Ribs fundraiser and the vendor will be at Bradley Park. Order lists are being faxed to all businesses in Old Fort requesting that the orders be returned by March 4th.

Carol presented to the Steering Committee flyers, tickets and materials for pre orders. Carol is also going to prepare flyers to assist in promoting the event.

Members were asked to commit to selling tickets in advance of the event. Funds collected can be given to Carol at the TDA or Kim at BB & T. Tickets can be purchased at the event but we need preorders for the initial order.

VOLUNTEERS are needed to serve and deliver the food to local businesses

Community and Cultural Preservation – Terrell Finley

The C & CP Committee is researching the steps for the town of Old Fort's application for designation as a Historical site. Both Dru and David Quinn from Handmade in American stressed the importance of following a process to ensure success for such a designation. He also advised the Steering Committee that there are different types (local, state etc.) of designations with different restrictions. David stressed the importance of understanding effects of the designation on property owners (i.e. tax credits). Becca Johnson out of the Department of Cultural Resources in Asheville would be an excellent resource.

Ann Swan and Becca will meet with Dru, Terrell and Garland the first or second week in March.

The next step will be to do a presentation to the OFMHA Steering Committee.

Resource Team Visit – Kim Lukasiak and Dru Heldman

The Resource Team is on schedule to be in Old Fort March 25-27. As previously noted their will be representatives to review organization, design, promotion, cultural resources and economic development tracks for Old Fort. The 3 days will be intensive fact gathering with touring Old Fort and interviewing individuals. The driving tour – led by Kim and Carol is scheduled for March 25th. All Steering Committee members meet at the depot at 4:00 to meet the Resource Team members.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED to help prepare lunches and snacks.

Kim requested individuals sign up for interviews on topics such as music, retail, history, trails, Davidson Fort, Government. These 15-30 minute interviews are being scheduled for March 26th.

OFMHA Promotion -Dru Heldman

Terry Wilson and Carol Price volunteered to write articles for the newspaper.

There is a blog associated with the article about Davidson Fort in the Asheville Citizen Times

Dru is including a “bulletin board” on the OFMHA website

A suggestion was made to create OFMHA Stickers for Business windows promoting the website and the organization.

Information/Comments from David Quinn

Kim will be contacted by a Self Help Credit Union. They are familiar with small business 504 funding.

David stressed again the importance of the subcommittees that need to grow and **individuals with grant experience are needed** to aid in the completion of the application process for Non Profit status.

David mentioned to the Mayor and Nada that the State’s Division of Community Assistance office in Asheville is available to assist the Planning Board with training/facilitation and other needs. Cards were given to Nada from the DCA staff. They can be reached at 828-251-6914

Other Business/Announcements

Next week is Entrepreneurship Week. Wednesday McDowell Tech is introducing 75 Junior and Senior High School students to entrepreneurship.

Tentatively on March 11, 2008 there will be a Certified Entrepreneurship meeting at Tom Johnson's to explain the program. There will be a panel of small business owners to discuss challenges and personal experiences in starting and running a small business. A leadership team is doing a survey to assess the level of interest of individuals in being entrepreneurs.

A sheet was passed around for updates on all e-mail addresses and phone numbers of attendees.

Next Meeting

The next Steering Committee meeting will be Wednesday March 19, 2008 at 3:00 p. m. at the Depot. The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by: Linda Bunch, OFMHA Secretary
February 25, 2008