

Old Fort Mountain Heritage Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes
September 17, 2008

Members Present:

Dru Heldman, Chairperson, Pinwilz Co. TAAS Gallery
Kim Lukasiak, OFMHA Vice President – Branch Manager BB & T
Carol Price, McDowell County TDA
Terrell Finley, Mountain Gateway Museum
Dean Kanipe, McDowell Tech
Debbie Acrivos, Davidson Fort
Nada Carroll, Old Fort Resident
Garland Norton, Mayor Old Fort
Carroll Miller, Mayor Pro Tem Old Fort
David Quinn, Handmade In America
Linda Bunch, OFMHA Secretary
Wendy McAnally, Freelance Writer

Dru called the meeting to order.

David Quinn shared with the members present an upcoming HIA Event - the 2008 Handmade House at The Ramble. This house will be on display from October 11-November 9th. The hours will be Friday through Saturday from 10-4 and Sunday from 1-4. 100 of WNC's artisans have joined with Biltmore Farms to create the Handmade House which will meet green building standards (healthyhomes.org).

Linda Bunch expressed appreciation to Ashley Wooten for substituting as secretary and scribing the August meeting minutes

Group introductions were made with special welcome to Wendy McAnally, a free lance writer

Town of Old Fort – Carroll Miller

The town has received estimates for building a new maintenance facility to allow for relocation some time in the future from the Rockett Building out of the downtown area. Future plans include renovation of the building for retail space.

News and Updates from Community Organizations Represented

Economic Development – Dru Heldman

This group has not met recently therefore no new activity to report. Kim announced the new CEO at BB&T. **There will be a meeting of the Economic Development Committee on Thursday, October 9th at 6:00 p.m.**

Davidson Fort – Debbie Acrivos

The DVD marketing the Fort has been completed and the Fort is well represented for Grant Applications. To raise funds logs may be purchased for \$100, Corporate Bricks for \$500 and family/individual bricks for \$75. These funds will be towards paying off property debt. The Blockhouse is now under construction and plans are in the works for handicap accessible restrooms.

The Davidson Fort group has plans to involve local school children in history of Old Fort and Davidson Fort through the school system to offer Field trips.

Mountain Gateway Museum – Terrell Finley

Terrell reported that the Museum is trying to get upgrades on roofs for the cabins. The summer Blue Ridge Traditions Program was very well received and they are still awaiting confirmation of funding for 2009. There are plans for renovations in the Museum office (Mauney House) to include setting aside one of the rooms as an Archive Room to maintain local historic documents.

TDA – Carol Price

Carol reported: the Mast General Store contacted the TDA regarding a motorcycle organization fund raiser to be repeated in 2009; the Blue Ridge Heritage Grants are due by October 1st. Bike racks are needed for Point Lookout Trail and perhaps we can use some of the funds in OFMHA account. Bike Rack should be coordinated with DOT.

Dru asked for clarification of tracking of our OFMHA account expenditures to ensure that we had accounted for the expense of the benches in the park. Our account is currently a line item in the town's records. Carroll Miller and Garland Norton offered for the Town of Old Fort to contribute to the cost of the bike racks.

Carol was pleased to announce that the Labor Day statistics for the TDA indicate only 3 less visitors from last year. Given the economy and high cost of gas this was good news.

Upcoming activities in and around Old Fort include Oktoberfest October 3 & 4; the Quilt Show at the Carson House October 4; Christmas in Old Fort on December 12 and 13. Tentatively the Home Extension Group will serve meals from 11-8 for lunch and dinner (proceeds to be donated to the school and Old Fort libraries; The Old Fort Christmas Parade – December 6th; luminaries in the Park December 13th and 14th; and lighting of the tree – November 22nd.

Brainstorming of Ideas – WNC Magazine – Dru Heldman and Wendy McAnally

Wendy is a free lance writer and is currently contracted with the WNC Magazine. She and Dru have met to discuss ideas for promoting Old Fort outside of just advertising and asked for input from the Steering Committee Members.

A general discussion was held and forthcoming thoughts included:

Scheduling Roundtable events to share stories of Old Fort and the “way it used to be”

Apply for a National Historic Area designation for Old Fort

Identify local long term residents such as Bud Hogan, Ann Swan, and Gene Bradley for tapping their knowledge of the town

Consider holding an Old Fort “Family” Reunion

Create a Walking Tour with sign posts, markers and posts with stories

Tap into the Tannery and WW II history

Access Binkie Adams’ old articles from the Old Fort Newspaper

Research and present “then and now” information of Old Fort to include a theme of Indian trails to roads to interstate access

Write a series of articles for exposure and indicate where interested individuals may go to access this historic information

Cabin Fireside story telling on the Gateway Museum grounds

Encourage the involvement of children and bringing people together with common and civic interests

Create a badge learning history of Old Fort

Nada Carroll offered to do research on the history of Old Fort

Handmade in America - Resource Committee Report – David Quinn

David stated that the Resource Committee Report which is the master plan for the revitalization of Old Fort was complete and he gave an overview of the report. Selected highpoints of the report include;

Organizational Development - getting incorporated/501C3 designation; building on the committee structure & consensus; credibility in communication and celebration of successes; a listing of potential funding

organizations; Design Guidelines - drawing renditions have been included in the report to show focal points of change; importance of physical landscaping and our creeks, parks and trails, redefining gateways into the town, preserve & protect the historic downtown area; Economic Development – to “clean, green and screen” and build on an the importance of a “sense of place” that makes Old Fort so unique.

This report also stresses to not lose sight of accomplishments already in place and to connect all the activities, programs and events together for leverage. For example, to enroll in the Trout Cities Program with the NC Wildlife Commission in 2009; tie in local school activities and school children; take advantage of the economic impact and funding of our trails and greenways. Communication – utilization of website, e-mail and all non electronic communication. Cultural Resources- to cross promote our Mountain Gateway and Heritage Center, community involvement, Davidson Fort regional and national trails.

Copies of the report and a CD/PDF are expected to be available within two week for all steering committee members and town aldermen.

STEP – Small Towns Economic Prosperity

The STEP training was completed in August – Participants included: Old Fort Mayor Garland Norton, Mayor Pro Tem Carroll Miller, Dean Kanipe, Dru Heldman, Carol Price, and Aldermen Pete Matthews and Greg Piercy.

David Quinn presented a Banner for the partnership of the Rural Center’s NC STEP program with HIA and the Town of Old Fort. The Town of Old Fort will utilize the Arrowhead logo for the Banner and the Banner will be presented during Oktoberfest. OFMHA needs to create our logo to be included on a Banner. Thanks to this partnership Old Fort and Andrews have \$15,000 for planning and support and \$50,000 for implementation over a two year period. It was stressed that OFMHA & the Town cannot lose sight of the end of the funding period so that we do not forgo these dollars. The end of the funding period is March 2009 but may be extended. The completion of the training program is one of the requirements of the program.

The next step for OFMHA is to complete a work plan from the Resource Report.

Dru closed with asking that all Sub Committees schedule meetings as soon as possible.

We currently have the following individuals signed up for the Subcommittees:

Note: if any of this information is incomplete or inaccurate please let Linda Bunch or Dru know so that we can update our records.

Promotion: Nada Carroll, Carol Price, Linda Bunch

Community & Cultural Preservation: Carol Price, Wayne Martin, Susie Painter, Terrell Finley, Beverly Patterson

Design: Wayne Roland, Nancy Jordan, Susie Painter, Terry Wilson, Carol Price, Susan Cole

Economic Development: Garland Norton, Dru Heldman, Charles Pyle, Dean Kanipe, Kim Lukusiak

We need more sub committee volunteer members to sign up as soon as possible.

There being no further business to address the meeting adjourned at 5:15.

Next Meeting

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

**Respectfully Submitted by: Linda Bunch, OFMHA Secretary
September 25, 2008**