

Old Fort Mountain Heritage Alliance
Special Board Meeting Minutes
December 10, 2008

Members Present:

Dru Heldman, Chairperson, Pinwilz Co. TAAS Gallery
Linda Bunch, OFMHA Secretary
Dean Kanipe, McDowell Tech – Small Business Center
Terry Wilson, Teacher-Old Fort Elementary
Nancy Hicks, Gateway Resident
Linda Canterbury, Gateway Resident
Susie Painter, Painter's Nursery
Nancy Jordan, Grant Writer
David Quinn, Handmade In America
Carol Price, McDowell County TDA
Ron Johnston, McDowell Craft Guild

Additional individuals present:

Claudia Kiser, Old Fort Elementary PTO
Monica Elliott, teacher and Old Fort Elementary PTO
Charlise Owenby, Old Fort Elementary PTO

Dru called the meeting to order at 3:05. Introductions were made with special welcome to the members from the Old Fort Elementary School PTO.

Community Revitalization

The first order of business was the viewing of a 45 minute video created by The Conservation Fund -Partners in Land and Water conservation. The video was a presentation given in Boone, N.C about community revitalization. A concern expressed in the presentation is that the special character of America's small towns is disappearing.

The purpose of showing the video with the members and guests of OFMHA was to gain further knowledge (the Big Picture) related to long term planning for conservation **and** development that focuses on a healthy environment, vigorous economy and vibrant community. As quoted in the video, "development is not a problem when the pattern of development focuses on planning for where you put it; where you arrange it; and, what does it look like."

For individuals not in attendance who wish to view the presentation a copy is available from Carol Price at the TDA office in Old Fort.

Old Fort Elementary PTO Project – Claudia Kiser

Claudia shared with the members of OFMHA that the Old Fort Elementary PTO fundraising effort to build a playground by the track near the interstate behind the elementary school had thus far raised \$20,000. Plans for the playground include a train/

depot and the OF Arrowhead as climbing wall. Two plans have been submitted by **Just For Fun Playgrounds** in Asheville with estimates of \$15,000 for the Arrowhead and \$35,000 for the Train. The plans also include borders, textured ground and safety guidelines. Total funding needed would be between \$35,000 and \$55,000.

The park would be open to the Old Fort community as whole, with a trail connected along the river to the park. This would make the plans conducive to supporting health and fitness for all ages. The PTO members requested support from OFMHA towards this project to include sources for funding.

Discussion

David Quinn suggested the Community in Schools and the NC School Board for funding.

Mary Smith at the McDowell Health Department was also suggested as contact.

Nancy Jordan mentioned that there are grants available for Pedestrian Trails Planning within a 2 mile radius of the school under the Safe Routes to School Program. Also, NASCAR might be a funding source.

Carol Price advised that she has a list of grants available. She also suggested reviewing the Golden Leaf Organization website as an additional funding source.

The members of OFMHA agreed that a partnership with the OF Elementary PTO would be in line to support goals of both organizations in the revitalization of the town.

A Subcommittee was created

Terry Wilson, OF Elementary Teacher and member of OFMHA

Monica Elliott, OF Elementary Teacher

Chalise Owenby, OF Elementary PTO

Nancy Jordan, Grant Writer

Linda Bunch, OFMHA Secretary

The subcommittee will schedule a time to meet after the first of the year to lay out plans for a coordinated partnership.

McDowell County Craft Guild

Ron Johnston and his wife Becky are owners of the Mountain Stream RV Park. Ron is interested in joining OFMHA. He shared that he wants to start a McDowell County Craft Guild to provide a venue for local skilled crafts people throughout the county to promote their knowledge and products. His long term goal for the Guild is to develop classes for all ages as well as create an apprenticeship program to preserve mountain crafts knowledge, skills and abilities for future generations. Ron and Becky's e-mail address is camp@mountainstreamrvpark.com

Design Committee Update - Susie Painter

As mentioned in the November meeting, the Design Committee which is working on ways to improve the appearance of downtown Old Fort reported the results of Susie and Terry Wilson's trip to Jones Concrete Ornamentals in Edneyville. They identified two types of turn of heavy pots that would be appropriate for planting trees and various plants along sidewalks. Jones is willing to deliver the pots at cost for the fuel. The pots would need a seal to keep in the moisture. The pots (\$30 each) range in weight from 150lbs to 200lbs and are 20 to 24 inches wide and 22 inches high. The only delay in obtaining the pots is that the owner only has one mold for each design. The committee needs to determine how many are needed and where to place them. Plants and trees need to be identified that require minimal watering.

Markings have been made for 60 possible locations and the Design Committee needs to identify the number of trees and plants needed to fill the pots. Susie asked that the OFMHA members review the locations that have been identified. The Design Committee plans to meet in January to finalize recommendations and then present them to the Town Aldermen meeting, also in January.

OFMHA Priorities

Dru reminded everyone that we need to finalize the paperwork for obtaining OFMHA's 501-C-3 status our National Register for Historic District Designation.

Energizing Entrepreneurship Workshop

Carol Price and Linda Bunch attended this workshop presented by The Rural Center for STEP Communities on December 3rd and 4th and Susie Painter was a panel speaker. This is a course for teams of community leaders to develop local plans using entrepreneurship as an economic development strategy. Due to time constraints a review of learnings from this workshop was delayed until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Due to time constraints the meeting adjourned at 5:00

Next Regular Meeting

[The next regular OFMHA meeting will be Wednesday January 14, 2009 at 3:00 p. m. at the Depot](#)

Respectfully Submitted by: Linda Bunch, OFMHA Secretary
January 8, 2009