

Old Fort Mountain Heritage Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2009

Members Present:

Dru Heldman, OFMHA Chairperson, Pinwiltz Co. TAAS Gallery
Linda Bunch, OFMHA Secretary
David Quinn – Handmade in America
Dean Kanipe, McDowell Tech – Small Business Center
Susie Painter, Painter's Nursery
Andy Bunch – Old Fort resident
Nancy Jordan, AECOM Grant Writer
Terry Wilson – Old Fort Elementary teacher
Scott Swickle – Swickle Technologies
Carol Price, McDowell County TDA
Ron Johnston, McDowell Craft Guild
Terrell Finley – Mountain Gateway Museum
Ashley Wooten, Assistant McDowell County Manager

Guest Speaker – James Tomlinson

Dru called the meeting to order at 3:00 and introductions were made. Dru introduced James (Jay) Tomlinson as the guest speaker.

The Charrette Program – NCSU – James Tomlinson, Assistant Dean for Extension and Engagement – College of Design

What Is a Charrette?

Mr. Tomlinson shared that a charrette, which literally means “cart” in French, is associated with architectural design in Old Europe. Students would be sent out in a cart for a short period of time to collaborate about the best uses for a community. A Charrette creates a learning experience that allows students to learn while contributing to the quality of a specific community

The charrette process is ideal for key stakeholders to generate and discuss ideas in the community design process. A charrette helps cut across boundaries when working with small towns in NC on signage, entrance ways, streetscapes, parking, trails and greenways and other design elements to develop a community's “sense of place.” As a consensus building tool, participants are encouraged to offer design ideas and solutions to the design of the community.

The NCSU program brings a group of university students and faculty to a community for two to three days of intensive work to study, draw and design solutions for projects in the community. After spending some time preparing, recommendations, including a sketch model and design concepts, the charrette ends approximately two weeks later with a final

presentation of designs and findings to the community. Utilizing the STEP grant OFMHA will provide for housing and food for the participants.

Communities that the College of Design has worked with include Hayesville, North Wilkesboro, West Jefferson, Crossnore and Dobson.

OFMHA members committed to the utilization of the Charrette Process with a target date of May 12th to coincide with the OF Chamber of Commerce monthly meeting at the Depot as the kick off. The group will meet with Town Leaders and business owners to gain an overview of community goals and issues. They will tour Old Fort and identify a set of specific issues to explore and develop alternative visions. The week of June 9th would be the back end date for the students to present their recommendations to the community. Expenses are not expected to exceed \$2500.

General Discussion

Mr. Tomlinson requested any digital maps of the Old Fort area. Nancy Jordan will see if she has any maps or overlays that could be utilized. Mr. Tomlinson also inquired as to the potential linking of Asheville, Swannanoa, Black Mountain, Montreat, Ridgecrest, Marion and Lake James corridor.

Mr. Tomlinson commented on the historical style of lighting around the Depot. Nancy Jordan remarked about the Safe Routes to School Program which has requested the same type of lighting in the grant application.

Scott Swickle commented on the need for repositioning of power lines in the town center.

Ideas around leverage of the Arrowhead, Davidson Fort, and the railroad, turn of the century architecture, the pending McDowell County tourism logo, and entryway signage to the town were shared.

Next Steps

Dru will contact the Chamber of Commerce to request to be on their agenda inviting them to attend the May 12th meeting at the Depot.

Carol Price will research accommodations for students and faculty.

Mr. Tomlinson will e-mail his equipment needs and other information needed from OFMHA.

Projects –Final STEP Grant Funding Distribution

Organization

- 1) Incorporate OFMHA as non profit and apply for 501C3 designation.
Incorporation and non profit designation for filing is \$750. A CPA will need to review.

Assigned Grant \$ - \$1000

- 2) Establish Organization Plan
 - Membership or self sustaining
 - By Laws (in process)
 - Inclusive Board
 - Committee Structure
 - Funding Plan and Budget
- 3) Administrative Support
Assigned Grant \$ - \$2,500

Design

- 1) Funding Support Streetscape beautification
Assigned Grant \$ - 2000
- 2) Support & Sponsor NCSU Design Charrette. Program offers targeted students & faculty the opportunity to complete design plans. Students and faculty will develop design alternatives for selected areas of Old Fort, based on input from the community.
Assigned Grant \$ - \$2500
- 3) Mill Creek Trail – create trail from old US 70 to Catawba River with matching funds of \$10,000 from Blue Ridge National Heritage Area (BRNHA) Grant with STEP funding.
Assigned Grant \$ - 10,000
- 4) The National Register Historic District Designation in Old Fort's Town Center. The National Historic District is designated by the US Department of Interior in partnership with the NC Division of Archives and History working with Ann Swan, D and McDowell Tech.
Assigned Grant \$ - \$5,000

Promotion

- 1) Develop a community logo for banners. Website, signage and other promotional materials. Brochures will be potentially TDA costs.
Assigned Grant \$8,500
- 2) Funding Support for Gateway Mountain Summer Series
Assigned Grant \$ - \$9,000
- 3) Funding Support for Website Development
Assigned Grant \$ - 2,000
- 4) Railroad Day – 5/2/09
Assigned Grant \$ - \$1,000
- 5) Kick off and presentation of the STEP initiative to the community and support the recruitment of new members to OFMHA.
Assigned Grant \$ - \$ 1,500

Economic Development

- 1) Support relocation of Town Maintenance and re-use of Rockett building.
Assigned Grant \$ - \$5,000 for feasibility study for best and highest use of facility
- 2) Support a business and commercial property inventory as part of a business recruitment plan that identifies and targets priority businesses in Old Fort. HIA will assist with this project/no \$ assigned
- 3) Support creation of a seasonal Farmer's Market. OFMHA will promote on OFMHA website/no \$ assigned

Total Assigned Grant Funds = \$50,000

Other Business

A date for refreshing Bradley Park and painting the large pots to be distributed around town needs to be established. It was recommended that Tuesdays or Thursdays from 4-6 would be the best time period for these projects. Linda Bunch will coordinate with Susie Painter.

Next Regular Meeting

The next regular OFMHA meeting will be Wednesday April 15, 2009 at 3:00 p. m. at the Depot **Note:** As Linda Bunch will be out of town a volunteer is needed to take the minutes for this meeting.

Respectfully Submitted by: Linda Bunch, OFMHA Secretary
March 30, 2009