

Old Fort Mountain Heritage Alliance

July 15, 2009, 3:00

Attending:

Dru Heldman, Chairperson; Debbie Smith, Secretary; Carol Price, Anne Bevan, Susan Cole, Susie Painter, Nelda Carroll, Terry Wilson, Terrell Finley, Brigitte Walters, Andy Bunch, Dean Kanipe, Heather Cotton, Ashley Wooten, Debbie Acrivos, Jenny Moore, David Quinn, Carolyn Early

Heather Cotton: WNC Quilt Trail board chair

Heather explained about the quilt trails established in many WNC counties. Businesses and individuals contract to have a quilt block painted and mounted on buildings and barns. The block is listed on a website with a description as to the location, meaning, history, and sponsor. One of the benefits of displaying a quilt square is to draw in more tourists and also provide advertising to businesses that sponsor the square. A group is working to establish a trail in McDowell County. They are looking for support from individuals and groups such as ours. Heather will email those who gave her their email addresses. 3 squares are already planned and hopefully many more will follow.

Committee Report updates:

- Economic Development: A time line needs to be developed. Andy and Brigitte will work on that. Also we can apply to have Old Fort put on the National Registry list and benefit from the funds available.
- Heritage and Cultural Preservation: A meeting of this sub-committee will be scheduled. Ann Swann is working on the county preservation.
- Promotion: The flowers look great in town. The Painters are making sure they remain looking so beautiful. There is a plan to order more planters and in the fall, planters will be replanted with winter hardy foliage. Next year there is a plan to add baskets with bougainvillea and sweet potato vine. These would be brought to Painter's greenhouse in the winter and put out again the next spring.
- Design: Heinz Kassler in Asheville was visited and his prices for signs were far over our budget. We are looking at Bakersville, Spruce Pine, and Chimney Rock who used signs that are Alumacore (not sure of this spelling). The bases of the signs were rock planters which would last for a long time. We need to find out the costs so we can begin applying for grants, outside funding and fund raising projects. The ownership of the brick Old Fort sign on 70W toward I-40 West, has been given to the OFMH Alliance.
- Fund Raising: The Sundae Social is set for Sunday, September 20th in the afternoon on the grounds of the Gateway Museum. The family group, Common Ground will have a concert at the amphitheater at no cost to the Alliance. Ice Cream Sundaes, popcorn and other refreshments will be available for free. Donations will be accepted.

Linda Bunch tree/bench

A motion was made and accepted by the committee to place a concrete bench with an appropriate tree in memory of Linda Bunch in Bradley Park across from the Arrowhead. Linda was a very active member of this group and worked diligently in getting it started. She was a dynamic person and is sorely missed.

Debbie Smith will collect donations for the memorial. (checks may be made out to Debra Smith and mailed to 656 Old Fort Sugar Hill Rd. Old Fort. If you have questions call 828-803-1238)

Andrew's & Old Fort connection, Dru Heldman Regional handcraft tourism & GBX

Dru and Scott have an idea of establishing a network among the cluster towns from the HandMade in America group. By establishing a website to tie us together we can capitalize upon the strengths of the others. We can share what works, what doesn't, as well as how things are accomplished. Scott and Dru are working to get fiber optic broadband in our area. Hopefully we can partner with Andrews to draw in more businesses.

Also, there seems to be an explosion of "Garage Bands". More and more of these informal musical groups are looking for venues in which to perform. We could use these groups to assist in providing free or very low cost musical concerts.

David Quinn trails project

Handmade in America is back on contract and there is money available for implementation of projects. The WNC Quilt Trails is a very good idea to further advertise what our town has to offer.

The Trails project has \$20,000 from the Blue Ridge Heritage and the money needs to be spent by the end of the year. We need to work on where we want it to go, establish a time line and project what we need to do and when. We should begin to personally talk to property owners around the creek and explain what the overall plan is so hopefully they will understand what's involved and willing to give easement rights. Reach out to other towns with trails to see how they accomplished everything and what difficulties that might have occurred.

economic development related survey, Dean Kanipe

HandMade in America has grants available for Market and Research and David offered their assistance. Dean Kanipe has been hired to conduct these surveys. There needs to be a Consumer Survey, Merchant Survey, Asset Research (what's available, what's used and what's not). We need to consider if we only want to stick to local only or do we want to branch out to people farther away. This will help business owners determine the market.

Andy will assist in getting word to members of his community about the OFHM Alliance. We need to get the widest distribution of our surveys.

subcommittee meeting schedules

Dean will have an Economic Development Committee meeting **August 3 at 3:00** at the OF Depot (with a backup date of Aug. 17th). Andy Bunch, Jenny Moore, Brigitte Walters will meet with Dean.

July 28, The Rural Center is interested in learning more about strengthening the capacity of rural community philanthropy (community giving) to contribute to making North Carolina small towns and rural places economically vibrant. The Rural Center is interested in learning more about strengthening the capacity of rural community philanthropy (community giving) to contribute to making North Carolina small towns and rural places economically vibrant. Debbie and Dean are planning to attend this meeting.

Davidson's Fort

There will be a Thanksgiving Dinner at the fort. The fort will need \$146,000 within the next 4 years. There will be a fund raiser at the end of August. A car show with games and hotdogs and hamburgers will be available. The previous structure has been relocated to another part of the land and will be seen from the interstate.

Debbie