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**TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY JOINT HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**MINUTES for**

**January 12, 2021, 4:00 PM on Zoom, Virtual Meeting**

- I. Call to Order, Welcome and Introduction, Chair Melanie Spreen,** called to order at 4:00 pm. Members attending were Chair Melanie Spreen, Vice Chair Ellen Harris, Secretary John Koury, Commission Member Molly Jenkins, and Commission Member Rebecca Suddeth. Darby Terrell, Planner and Allen McNeill, Planning and Community Development Director was in attendance. Kristi Brantley, Local Government and CLG representative for the State Historic Preservation Office. There were 7 members of the public or media on the Zoom call.
- II. Consent Agenda:** The Chair asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commission Member Rebecca Suddeth motioned, and Secretary John Koury seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.
- III. Presentation:** Local Landmark Designation Training from the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Kristi Brantley.

Ms. Brantley introduced herself to the committee and the public watching. Ms. Brantley informed all who were watching that there have been some changes to the NC statutes recently due to the passing of 160D which does affect the Historic Preservation Commission enabling legislation but mostly only by references. There is one change that is significant and that the design guidelines should now be called design standards. The 160D-942 gives eleven powers to the governing boards and local historic preservation commissions.

Ms. Brantley then went through the basic local landmark designation process step by step. The report that is given to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is to allow experts in the field of historic preservation to give guidance on that potential landmark to the governing board and historic preservation commission. The SHPO has 30 days to review the report and get back to the local government. The feedback given to the historic preservation commission or governing board from SHPO is non-binding, the local authority has the power to designate the landmark. Ms. Brantley emphasized that the review given by the SHPO should weigh into the decision because their purpose is to help strengthen the argument for the governing board if they decide to approve the property as a landmark. Ms. Brantley expressed that the "comments.... are made with the spirit and intention of strengthening the report and helping your local government make a legally justifiable and defensible landmark designation." Ms. Brantley also mentioned that this can also help strengthen the historical preservation program. Ms. Brantley then informed that once the property

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is designated the historic preservation commission is responsible of notifying the property owner, register of deeds, county or town clerk, the building inspectors, etc.

At this time Ms. Brantley asked for any questions.  
Secretary John Koury if all the comments given back to the local government mandatory for the local government to follow?

Ms. Brantley answered saying that these comments are non-binding, but they are made with the spirit to help strengthen the report and make it legally justifiable. Ms. Brantley said she would strongly encourage members of the commission to consider the comments in their decision.

Afterward she explained the criteria for local designation, which is in two categories, one for special significance and the other as integrity. She elaborated that special significance means a possible local designation applicant provides a historical, prehistorical, architectural, or cultural importance to the local area. It also must possess integrity whether that be from the design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and/or association that this landmark has for the community and area. Ms. Brantley explained that a landmark can have more of a special significance than integrity or vis versa if there is a strong case provided through the report that is created for the landmark given to the State Historic Preservation Office to help justify the landmark being designated. Ms. Brantley gave a definition of each word under special significance and integrity categories.

There were some questions asked to Ms. Brantley.

Commission member Molly Jenkins asked Ms. Brantley if a potential landmark was being considered that had a substantial amount of work done to it, and no longer has its original character. Is there a way to decide if the property should be considered?

Ms. Brantley- The most effective way to consider is to take in all the evidence that is presented to see if they meet the historical significance that the applicant is defining that is there for the property.

Commission member Rebecca Suddeth asked if properties listed on the National Registry list should use more information than what is listed, because the SHPO believes there needs to be more information given? Ms. Suddeth stated she believed that the information on the National Registry was a good starting place for history and research. She wanted to clarify that if used the applicant must fill in the gaps from when the place was listed.



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Ms. Brantley agreed that the early listed places tend to have a smaller report with basic information that only revolves around the history. She also agreed that they should try to fill in the gaps of the report.

Vice Chair Ellen Harris clarified that the National Registry is a good place to start but there is a difference of the amount of information that is needed when applying for a local designation. She explained that the difference being for contributing structures and those on the National Registry list. Those who are contributing tend to need more information because less is written about them in the Registry.

Chair Melanie Spreen asked a question on the cultural or use of the building. Specifically, on the integrity of the cultural aspect of the building. How do you determine that this has the integrity when you are not considering the inner portion of the building when as part of the historical significance of the property?

Ms. Brantley answered the question by stating it is difficult because you are not considering the inside of the building with the integrity characterization. Ms. Brantley used an example of having a building that is being considered as architecturally significant, it must be architecturally significant by the materials that are being used. She also used an example of a building that is being considered due to its cultural association, which can allow the reviewers to be lenient on how the structure looks architecturally since it is the purpose of its designation would be the cultural association and not architecturally.

Mrs. Iris Galloway, member of the public, asked Ms. Brantley if the property owners go through the process to get their property locally designated, after designating the property would it be turned into a public property due to the historical locally designation as a landmark?

Ms. Brantley answered that a private property would stay private property.

Chair Spreen asked for a brief explanation of minor works and major works.

Ms. Darby Terrell, Planner gave an example of a minor work, as construction that does not involve a lot of changes, such as earlier in the fiscal year the JHPC received a minor works application that involved a property owner adding a removable wheelchair ramp. Due to the removability and not a lot of changes to the original aesthetics of the property it would be reviewed by staff only. Major she explained would be a lot of changes to the landscaping or replacing materials. The replacing of materials on a porch would be reviewed by the JHPC to make sure the materials being replaced match the original architecture.

Ms. Brantley discussed the purpose of the local designation report to those watching. She explained that it provides justification for designation, in which it documents the history and special significance and integrity of the property based on evidence and research provided. She further explained that it provides a benchmark for evaluating certificates of appropriateness applications, and documents of property.

Ms. Brantley then discussed the report components, these size categories help assure credibility of the proposed designation and allow the SHPO to provide informed and worthwhile comments to the governing board or historic preservation commission. Ms. Brantley explained each of the six categories, general information, abstract, historic background, assessment, and supporting documentation.

After Ms. Brantley showed how to find examples and more information about this topic on the SHPO's website.

#### **IV. Old Business:**

##### **A. Strategic Plan Goals 2021 Review**

After the presentation by Mrs. Brantley the Chair with overall consent of the Commission decided to discuss the Strategic Plan Goals next meeting. The Chair asked if Ms. Terrell has a Staff Report.

#### **IV. New Business**

##### **A. Staff Report**

Ms. Terrell informed the Commission that Allen McNeill has officially been named the Director of Planning and Community Development. Ms. Terrell also informed the Commission and the public that Transit Fixed Route has been started and encouraged the members and public to ride. She explained that this was created with by the hard work of April Alm the Transportation Planner, with the assistance of Mr. McNeill. The route will be adjusted in the upcoming months if there are any adjustments that the staff feels are appropriate or that have come from the feedback of citizens who have ridden the fixed route.

#### **V. Public and Board Member Comments**

There were no Public or Commission Member comments given.

**V. Adjourn:** John Koury motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Suddeth seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned around 5:13 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled on the regular meeting date of February 9th, 2021.

**PLANNING AND  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**



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MINUTES APPROVED

*Melanie Spreen*

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Melanie Spreen, Chair

*Darby Terrell* 2-22-21

Darby Terrell, Planner

Date

