

Minutes
Regular Meeting of the Historic Commission
City of Chattahoochee Hills
August 24, 2019
10:00 a.m.

Meeting Location:
The Beavers House in Campbellton Park
8655 Cochran Road SW

Call to Order – Determination of Quorum

Chair Laurie Searle called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. Present were Laurie Searle, Brian Gross, Sarah Love, Lila Rhyne, and Allison Duncan. Kim Taylor-Cloud arrived at 10:10 a.m. A quorum was represented.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Laurie Searle led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Searle asked for two items to be added to the agenda under Items for Discussion.

- *Checking possible burial site/ artifacts on proposed development land*
- *Documenting Campbellton Methodist Church*

Love made a motion to approve the agenda with additions. Gross seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of June 11, 2019 Regular Meeting Minutes

Duncan made a motion to approve the June 11 Meeting Minutes. Love seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Items for Discussion

1. Review of July Activities

Duncan shared the report of feedback received from Commission members regarding priority issues. A copy of this report is included in the record of this meeting. Commission members discussed their individual priorities and which items they would be willing to champion. This will be used as a framework for strategic direction.

Taylor-Cloud will take the lead on identifying where and how to store the collective resources of the Commission. This will include physical storage space (file cabinets, etc), electronic storage space, (city server, city website, etc) and display space for artifacts. She will follow up on materials that may already be stored in the Chattahoochee Hills library. She reported that the Campbell County Historic Society still has regular research hours and regular meetings.

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Duncan will take the lead on investigating the possibilities for undertaking a city-wide survey. This could include resources offered through both universities and professional consultants. She is also interested in being part of a group that helps to develop the direction for city-owned properties.

Rhyne has a longstanding association with Campbell County Historic Society and will help with building the relationship with the Society. She is interested in being part of a group that helps to develop the direction of city-owned properties, including working with the Parks Commission on developing the interpretive plan for Cochran Mill.

Love is interested in advocacy and development coordination. She offered to coordinate with preservation partners to raise awareness of historic sites in the city. She will also take the lead on public awareness projects for outreach related to archaeology.

Searle identified cemeteries as her priority interest and would include more discussion in the items she added to the agenda. She noted that she will be running for City Council this fall and if she is elected, she will have to step down from the Commission. She also said she had been contacted by Member Carole Harper who is stepping off of the Commission.

2. Setting top three priorities

Based on the discussion of individual interests, the Commission agreed that the top three priorities were city owned properties, development advocacy, and policy development.

3. Setting new meeting date/time

Dates for September and October meetings were decided upon. The September meeting will be Monday, September 23 at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall. The October meeting will be Monday, October 21 at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall.

4. Checking a possible burial site/ artifacts on a proposed development site

Taylor-Cloud described concerns that had been brought to her attention about historic and pre-historic sites on a property that is being considered for the development of a new executive training facility. UGA groups that were mapping trails in and around Serenbe had previously identified the potential for Native American mounds and primitive burial sites on the property. The zoning change for the property was recently approved.

Searle shared information in an email from the Mayor and City Attorney about the current limitations of the Historic Commission on advising the property owner and/ or making an assessment of the site.

Discussion of the proper role for the Commission in providing comment on proposed development resulted in the following recommendations:

- *Taylor-Cloud will follow up with UGA to see if they have any reports that detail the nature of the potential sites they identified on the property.*

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- *Love will look into whether the State Archaeological Site files have any information on this specific sites or adjacent sites, including compliance archaeology that was done for the Cedar Creek Reservoir in Coweta County.*
- *Duncan will investigate historic topographic maps to see if they show the presence of any potential sites as well as research the chain of title to determine if anything in the deed record makes reference to historic or pre-historic sites on the property.*
- *Gross will follow up with any of the old families in the community that may turn up through the chain of title search and see if they have any first hand knowledge of the sites.*

All of this information will be presented at the September Commission meeting for discussion and consideration of next steps, which could include a recommendation to the City Council for further action and/ or direct contact with the property owner.

Searle shared information on her experience documenting historic cemeteries in the City and the type of information that is available through the GIS and online tax records. She suggested that it would be a benefit to the development review process to make sure that potential cemeteries were given consideration during the development review process.

5. Documenting Campbellton Methodist Church Cemetery

Searle opened the discussion on the Campbellton Methodist Church Cemetery and asked Gross to share some information. Gross indicated that he thought the Methodist conference was going to maintain the cemetery. As a part of their process to close a church, the conference typically forms an association for the perpetual care of the cemetery in the form of a trust.

Searle asked if the Historic Commission would like to undertake documentation of the cemetery in the form of a report. She provided an example. The Commission did not express the desire to formally undertake cemetery reports as an action of the Commission. It was suggested that former church members may be interested in assisting with the project.

Items for Consideration

1. Donating the Campbellton United Methodist Church bell and podium to the city

Searle had acquired artifacts from the Campbellton UMC including a podium, alter railing, and church bell. She suggested that the Historic Commission should donate them to the city.

Duncan expressed concerns about undertaking this as an action of the Historic Commission without any sort of policy in place. She suggested Searle could donate the items as a citizen and did not need any action on the part of the Commission. Gross suggested that any action be delayed until a policy is in place.

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2. Archeology Day at the Beavers House

Love expressed interest in creating an outreach event around archaeology at the Beavers House. Searle indicated that the Parks Commission was planning a series of outreach events and this could be a good opportunity for a partnership. Love will take the initiative to reach out to the Parks Commission to coordinate. Members of the Commission indicated they would support the event.

Commission Member Comments / Suggestions

Love shared the definition of an abandoned cemetery as found in OCGA 36.72.2 et al. Section 36.72.3 outlines the responsibilities for cities/ counties to take care of abandoned cemeteries. Love indicates that she appreciates the Commission's concern for archaeological and subsurface resources.

The Commission thanked Searle for taking the initiative to arrange to host the meeting at the Beavers House for the benefit of those individuals who had not been there.

Searle reminded everyone of the GA Municipal Cemetery Association conference in Savannah on October 16-18. Love will be speaking at one of the sessions.

Adjournment

Taylor-Cloud made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:59 a.m. Rhyne seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Approved this 23rd day of September, 2019.

Laurie Searle, Chair

Allison Duncan, Vice Chair/Secretary

Attest:

**Dana Wicher, City Clerk
(Seal)**