

**Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting of the Historic Commission**  
**City of Chattahoochee Hills**  
**September 14, 2020**  
**6:30 p.m.**

**Call to Order**

Sarah Love called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. Present were Brian Gross, Kim Taylor-Cloud, Gene Griffith, Sarah Love, Amber Lightsey. Allison Duncan joined the meeting at 6:58 p.m. Lila Rhyne was absent. A quorum was represented. The meeting was held via videoconference/teleconference.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Sarah Love led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Agenda**

The following items were added to the agenda:

1. Kim Taylor-Cloud requested a discussion of Deer Hollow development at Serenbe.

Motion: Gene Griffith made a motion to approve the agenda as amended.

Second: Kim Taylor-Cloud

The motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of the July 13, 2020 Regular Minutes and August 11, 2020 Joint Historic/Parks Meeting Minutes**

Motion: Amber Lightsey made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented.

Second: Gene Griffith

The motion passed unanimously.

**Items for Discussion**

**1. Discussion of Development Applications**

Discussion suspended pending Allison Duncan joining the meeting.

**2. Update on Scout Hut**

Amber Lightsey provided an update on the status of the Scout Hut, noting that volunteers have been cleaning it out in preparation for the Clearance Day on Saturday, Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>. The goal is to empty the Hut in order to begin a proper structural assessment. The structure appears to be in relatively good repair, with loose boards, broken windows, a few leaks. City has turned on electricity inside and outside. There is no well or septic; the parcel is too small to support these systems. Laurie Searle and others are looking into alternative options. Currently there is a dispute over an adjoining piece of property that is listed in tax records as being owned by the Masonic Lodge. The neighbor of the Scout Hut says her family owns the parcel. The City is working on resolving this issue. Finally, Sarah Love inquired about the possibility of items of historical value being removed from the structure during the clean-out phase. Amber

Lightsey noted that nothing of historical value was found in the clearing of the Scout Hut.

### **3. Cochran Mill Park Signs**

Sarah Love presented a photo of the park sign she and Roland Alston created for Cochran Mill Park. Roland designed the physical sign; Allison wrote the copy. The sign alerts park goers of the ordinance that prohibits the removal or destruction of artifacts, plants, and cultural materials, etc. from the park. There is unanimous approval of the sign from the Commission members. Sarah suggested the sign should be placed at the gravel path entrance down to the waterfall, and perhaps another sign on the other side of the street. Some concern that a sign will call attention to objects of significance in the park. Brian Gross notes that the code section of the ordinance is not on the sign; Sarah says she will add it.

### **4. Follow-Up Discussion on Beavers House**

Brian Gross provided a synopsis of the previous week's meeting to come to a consensus on recommendations for a use of the building. Everyone was in agreement to take the short-term path of stabilizing the Beavers House, securing an architectural engineer who would provide an assessment of the house and the punch list of items needed to stabilize the structure. The list would be used to secure funding to put the exterior of the home in an aesthetically pleasing condition, and do nothing to the interior at this time. Simply make it an aesthetic backdrop by, for example, replacing windows to make them more period appropriate. The house has undergone layers of remodeling through the years, but the plan is to return the house to the 1870s period, the time when Reuben Beavers, John Beavers' son, owned it. Anything added from 1900s forward will be removed. Brian Gross noted that any restoration work done now would be executed in a way so nothing would have to be undone when work on the interior is undertaken in the future.

What to do with the garage is still undetermined. Brian Gross also stated that there are no outfitters interested in working out of the two-story garage at this time. Sarah Love reiterated that the only viable building on the property that would have a modern function is the garage; the house will not be rehabilitated for any modern use at this time. Buildings originally on the property may be rebuilt in the future. These may serve better purposes for outfitters and restrooms.

Because it's a historic square of Old Campbellton County, and there is so much to the landscape above and below grade, Sarah Love suggested hosting a public archaeology day, opening up an excavation unit and potentially finding some of the old foundations of some of the outbuildings on the property. This would be an effort to get people invested in the preservation of the landscape.

Sarah Love recommends a visit the historic Rock House in Thomson, Georgia. It could serve as a good model to follow when efforts to stabilize and rehabilitate the Beavers House get underway.

Allison Duncan joins meeting at 6:58 p.m. Group returns to item 1 on the agenda:

### **Discussion of Development Applications**

Allison Duncan asks Kim Taylor-Cloud to share what was discussed at the Planning Commission meeting. Kim describes the Deer Hollow Plan that is located next to the Atlanta-Newnan Rd. entrance of Serenbe. The owner of the property, John Reid, is planning to develop the ten acres into four lots. It's zoned Agricultural, with a significant buffer. They want to get a variance and change zoning, in an effort to eventually be subsumed by Serenbe. The property has no utilities. The owner says they will keep it at 70/30 open space to development and are planning to have some space set aside for a park. Kim and others have been trying to find out what the ruins are. They are clearly old. Steve Nygren says the ruins are from a former Shell family home site. Allison asks if there are plans to put the ruins within the designated open space. Kim says the open space/park is near the entrance to Serenbe, and there are many unanswered questions about the ruins in relation to the open space. The ruins are on the largest of the four lots; the present owner of the land intends to keep that lot. Allison says that according to code the ruins should be in the open space.

No definitive action has been taken by the Planning Commission. Kim would like them to go back to John Reed and nail down some of the boundary lines around the ruins: what is the 70% to be preserved? Allison will follow up with Mike Morton in an effort to have a special call meeting of the Historic Committee to discuss this, if needed. If there is action taken between now and October meeting, Allison will consider a special call. Brian notes the Shell family was a prominent family in the community and suggests a deed trace on the property. Allison says there's a provision that allows for a minor subdivision, which is what they are planning to do at Deer Hollow. Allison suggests more documentation on the site; perhaps an Environmental Impact Statement could be in order. The property owner is asking for a variance. The concern is whether or not the ruins on the property are of historical value. Allison asks: what do you do with these things that contribute to the overall identity of the community but may not be historically significant? Is there new and significant information to be learned? Recommended to contact Lila about the Shell family in the area. Bear Creek Nature Center and Old Campellton Historical Society preserve historical records and could be good resources.

Brian Gross shares a passage from a book: "an event of great interest was the Shell reunion," and it took place on the old Shell property and was a tribute to James Park Shell. Brian states that if a connection could be made between the property and the Shell family, there may be some historical documentation of the family. Allison asks Brian to scan and email the passage to the Commission.

### **5. Preliminary Feedback on RTP Grant Report for Cochran Mill Park**

Allison had great feedback about the follow-up from the mitigation plan for the RTP grant. A draft has been sent out to the commission; feedback requested. Allison referenced Lila's information on historic mill sites and others on the national register-listed mills. Allison says the next piece that needs to be written is the recommendations.

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She will consult with Sarah Love on archaeological resources and preservation plans for what's left in the park. As for signage, there will be more virtual signage through the app rather than physical signs that have the potential to be destroyed.

Amber Lightsey interjects a request to consider adding Smith's Store to the wayfinding program, noting its historic significance to the community. Allison indicates it does retain a certain historical form, along with images of its former appearance, and has the potential to be included in the program.

### **Commission Member Comments / Suggestions**

Amber Lightsey mentions the Chatt Hills Barn Quilt Trail Project being organized by Laurie Searle. The project plans to see 10-20 barn quilts installed on public and private property around Chatt Hills. Amber Lightsey asks if the Historic Commission should weigh in on this. Allison Duncan notes that as long as the barn quilts are not painted on historic structures, the structures themselves won't be compromised. Allison emailed Robbie at a personal capacity to raise some issues about using public funds on private property. Some policies are being developed pertaining to who actually owns the art.

Allison Duncan asks Amber Lightsey to reach out to Laurie Searle to ask her to keep us in the loop pertaining to the Scout Hut. Brian Gross adds that as a local community member for more than forty years, he has seen the Scout Hut as a Boy Scout hut, a haunted house, and a civic building. Brian states there is very little or nothing of historical significance in the Scout Hut.

Allison Duncan suggests the Historic Commission take a field trip to the Beavers House, the Varner House, and the Scout Hut to tour the properties with the Parks Commission sometime this fall.

### **Adjournment**

Motion: Brian Gross made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Second: Gene Griffith

The motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

**Approved this 12<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2020.**

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**Allison Duncan, Chair**

**Attest:**

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

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