

City of Lewisburg
Historic Landmarks Commission Regular Session and Public Hearings
Meeting Minutes — March 13, 2023, 5:00 p.m.
942 Washington Street West, Lewisburg, WV
Paul L. Cooley Council Chambers

PRESENT: Chairperson David Craddock; Commissioners Paul Lindquist, Donna Johns, William Deegans and Clifford Gillilan; Planning and Zoning Officer Marsha Cunningham; Mayor Beverly White; City Manager Misty Hill; Recording Officer Tina Alvey

ABSENT: None

VISITORS: Dr. Bonny Copenhaver, Gary Ford, Jerry Janiga, Lance Syner, Mike Tremann, Wayne VanBuren, Stephen VanBuren, Larry Perkins, Jim Morgan Jr., Paula Janiga, Jim Nemitz

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 5 p.m. by Chairperson David Craddock.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Commissioner Clifford Gillilan moved approval of the minutes of the February 13, 2023, meeting, with the amendment of removing a reference on page 3 to demolition of the former True Value building. Said building is not scheduled for demolition. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Donna Johns and approved 5-0.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC: Dr. Bonny Copenhaver, president of New River Community and Technical College, updated the Commission on the progress the school has made in an ongoing project to honor the people buried in both marked and unmarked graves on NRCTC grounds in a section of the Dick Pointer Cemetery. The project was prompted by the realization that certain unmarked graves may have been disturbed by the recent razing of a dilapidated house in that section of property where the cemetery extends onto college property.

The college's Foundation intends to raise funds for a life-size sculpture created by Frederick Hightower that will be placed on the site of the now-demolished house in question. Titled "First Family," the sculpture depicts an African American family after the emancipation of the nation's enslaved people. The total cost of the sculpture is \$225,000, and it is estimated it will take a year to complete.

Copenhaver said the sculpture project was approved by the college's Board of Governors' Facilities Committee and by the full Board of Governors earlier this year. The New River CTC Foundation also endorsed the project. She noted that the local African America community — including Lewisburg Mayor Beverly White — had been consulted about the project.

Copenhaver sought the Historic Landmarks Commission's endorsement at this evening's meeting. After Commissioners questioned whether the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) also should be consulted, Commissioners voted unanimously to endorse the project, pending action by SHPO. Johns made the motion, and Gillilan seconded.

Public Hearing: *Shuck Memorial Baptist Church, 841 Washington Street West. Build a 16'x20'*

outdoor stage.

Church representative Wayne VanBuren told the Commission that, having adjusted the boundaries of the outdoor stage project, Shuck Memorial has now met the city's zoning regulations. He said he would provide a sample of the 6'x6' treated posts that will be used in construction of the stage as soon as the wood dries out sufficiently. Those posts will be painted brown. Commissioner William "Skip" Deegans advised VanBuren that the Commission will require a sample of the paint as well.

VanBuren said there will be no permanent electrical connection to the stage; temporary power will be provided for church-related functions by running an extension cord from the church to the stage. He also said no functions will begin before 7 a.m. or continue after 9 p.m. In accordance with city ordinance, the church will secure a special permit prior to any outdoor event on the property.

Planning and Zoning Officer Marsha Cunningham advised the Commission that, despite some of the exhibits attached to the church's application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, the current application is only for the outdoor stage itself, not parking designations/signs or use of a canopy over the stage.

Gillilan made a motion to approve the application, pending the applicant's provision of paint and materials samples. Commissioner Paul Lindquist seconded the motion, which carried with no votes against.

Public Hearing: Larry Perkins, 1031 Washington Street East. Paint exterior trim of building with SW 3351.

Applicant said he wants to paint his building "plain white" with a 6" wide stripe of dark navy blue all around the building and around the door frame. "It'll make it stand out," he said. Brickwork has already been removed from the structure.

Deegans noted that his objection at a previous hearing on this matter was that the apparent dual blue border around the door is "not in keeping with Lewisburg." But while he said he wasn't "real crazy about any of it," he had no problem with Perkins painting the building's doors dark blue to match the trim. Perkins agreed to do as Deegans suggested.

Johns moved to approve the application, seconded by Lindquist and approved 5-0.

Public Hearing: James W. Nemitz, 1577 Washington Street East. Install a 20KW Briggs & Stratton generator.

Applicant told the Commission that the proposed whole-house generator will be located on the side of his house opposite the side that faces Dwyer Lane. He is working with a local contractor on the installation, which will include a white enclosure that will blend in with the home's exterior. Landscaping is already in place.

Lindquist moved to approve the application, seconded by Johns and approved 5-0.

Public Hearing: *Court and Stratton, LLC, 121 Stratton Alley Suites 1, 10 and 11, new facade and adding second story with four one-bedroom and two two-bedroom apartments.*

Representing the applicant, Lance Syner presented plans for a new facade and addition of a second story to the end of the Court and Stratton Buildings that runs parallel to what is now a dead-end alleyway at the rear of City Hall. The access point to the alleyway off of Court Street was the site of a sizable sinkhole collapse several years ago, before the current owners acquired the property. In light of that misfortune, Syner said the Court and Stratton company brought in Terracon (not to be confused with Terradon) to perform a geotechnical study; that study found that bedrock was at least 45' below the surface at the place where the sinkhole appeared.

Parking for the six new, second-story apartments will be sited in the parking lot of the former True Value store, just across Court Street from the Court and Stratton Buildings, Syner noted.

Gillilan moved approval of the application, seconded by Deegans and approved 5-0.

COMMENTS FROM THE CITY MANAGER: City Manager Misty Hill responded to requests for an update from the Commission regarding a public hearing which was tabled on February 13, 2023, to allow time for research into the ownership of the Confederate Cemetery on McElhenney Road. Hill said the cemetery is owned by trustees who were appointed by the court. There are currently two trustees. She added that the city is not interested in owning the cemetery.

The request pending from February 13 was from the West Virginia Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), for permission to place an iron cross on the Confederate mass grave, with the ceremony set for April 22, 2023. Hill said she had spoken to a UDC representative about the cemetery's ownership and, as a result of that conversation, the rep said the UDC will not include the cross ceremony during a convention which members plan to hold in Lewisburg.

ADJOURNMENT: Upon motion by Gillilan, seconded by Deegans, and approved 5-0, the meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tina Alvey
Recording Officer