



**HISTORIC SALUDA COMMITTEE
MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 1, 2024**

ATTENDEES: Cindy Tuttle, Nancy Pew, Ammie Weymer, Clara Carter, David Twiggs, Billy Shand Laretta Cook. At Large Members: Mary Boehm, Betsy Burdett. Quorum present

Guests: Ellie Varn, Elena Robeson, Deborah West

WELCOME: Meeting called to order at 2:03 PM

MINUTES: Billy made a motion to accept the minutes. David seconded. Motion passed.

FINANCIAL REPORT: \$14,864.01 currently in the account. Laretta says another \$1000 is expected. Cindy reported the higher balance is due to the home tour.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Oral History/Vlogs** – “Going Home, Saluda’s Music Traditions” has been released to the public for free on YouTube. The quality is better than the DVD. No recent interviews have been conducted.
- **Step back in History Series** – It is hoped that plans will begin soon for the workshop series regarding historic preservation.
- **Historic Saluda Home Tour – June 8, 2024** – It was agreed this may have been the best tour to date. Not only was it a great event but brought in the highest proceeds to date. It is estimated that a net of \$10,000 was raised. Laretta indicated two additional \$500 sponsors are still due. Laretta was recognized for her great work as chairperson.

It was noted that donations still need to be made to the Saluda First Baptist Church and the Saluda Historic Depot for their help during the tour. Laretta moved we provide \$100 for the Baptist Church and \$200 to the Depot. It was noted that the Depot had provided assistance to the HSC for years by selling not only home tour tickets but merchandise. The church was gracious to allow use of their parking lot during the tour. Ammie seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Recommendations for future tours:

- Two tables needed; one for ticket sales and one for those who already purchased tickets in advance.
- We need a larger cash box with spacers for cash.
- We need to give golf cart drivers better route directions and instructions.

- We need to keep golf carts moving, not staying at one house and waiting for the people they dropped off.
- Consider the golf carts alternating their start locations so that routes are staggered.
- We need homes in a smaller geographic range
- We need to have golf carts at the Visitor Center, especially for those with mobility issues.
- It might be better to start at 9:00 versus 10:00 to avoid the heat.
- There were no seat belts on the back of the four-seater carts and some had issues with brakes.
- Flowers not needed. Most homeowners do their own.
- Provide 6-9 months window for families to get history of homes together. Give them a firm deadline. We can provide assistance if needed.
- Homes need to be identified on year in advance.
- Need to make it a priority to commit to do it again in 2026.
- We need to invest in house numbers.
- Consider doing in the Fall (leaf season). It's not as hot or as close to other events
- Garden tour used to be combined with home tour. Consider this again.
- We have two 3 x 6 banners that can be used again since there are no dates on it.
- Sponsorships have a potential to grow. We only scratched the surface.
- Consider writing a grant for expenses.

It was agreed the secret to this year's success was:

- Sponsorships
- A variety of home
- Our leader

It was agreed thank you letters need to be sent.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Non-Profit Discussion** –Cindy Tuttle and Nancy Pew reported they had met with Steve Orr, City Manager this morning at Cindy's request. Cindy indicated this is just an annual check in regarding the work the HSC does under the City's umbrella. Steve indicated we may be better off as a non-profit in order to take advantage of more grant writing and donors receiving a tax benefit. Cindy discussed the origins of the founding of the HSC when in June 2010 City Commissioners said they needed us to help with the restoration of City Hall. That's how we became an official committee with the City of Saluda. Cindy reported the city gives us a home, structure, access to a lawyer and good financial support including reporting. Cindy emphasized with Steve that whatever steps are taken, it needs to be done strategically for the best interest of the HSC and Saluda. Two models were discussed. Cindy gave an example of the arts council in Stokes County. They operate as

a non-profit and are a county organization. They have a budget with the county and they raise funds on the non-profit side. This has allowed the arts council to be a model in the state of NC. Steve suggested that Cindy provide more information about this model. As a second possibility, Cindy stated she had spoken with Lynn Casey. Lynn suggested they look at the HSC falling under the Saluda Downtown Foundation which has historic preservation as one of their goals. Steve indicated during the meeting that no one with the City wants to form a Historic Preservation Commission and Cindy agreed with this. Cindy would like to see the HSC become “Historic Saluda” as a more recognizable branded entity. In this meeting, it was agreed that Saluda is at a turning point and that situations such as what recently happened with Crystal Springs should be avoided. This discussion will continue with the City. Billy inquired as to the pros and cons of each model. He also indicated that the HSC needs to clearly define its purpose.

- **Historical Marker** – Billy expressed frustration with the sign company. They can’t deliver the marker unless it is put on a loading dock which would require a forklift. He can’t place the order until a forklift is found. Elena Robeson stated there may be room at one of their buildings for storage and they have a forklift. It was also discussed that perhaps Don Mintz Builders might help.
- **HSC Website** – Cindy indicated that we need to find out more about our next steps with the City before we move forward with this. Mary stated that is concerned we might lose some functionality of the site if we don’t at least update it some. Cindy agreed to discuss this with the current webmaster.
- **The Appalachian Channel** – Videos from the filming is now being uploaded to YouTube. M.A. Pace Store was posted last night and Thompson’s and Ward’s Grill posted a few weeks ago. More videos are being created.
- **Coon Dog Day** – Decision made to not participate this year.
- **Reclamation Park** - Betsy Burdette made a report – Betsy left information on the SCLT Reclamation Park Project. They have hired Emily Cadmus. She is a Western Carolina University History Major who will do the research. Cindy will send her information on African American History. The property is behind the pump station. Betsy says the property was stolen during the depression. Some of the residents may have once been part of the Kingdom of the Happy Land. She is trying to connect names with the land. She indicated Ada Means has connections to the Jeeters. SCLT has applied for a Polk County Community Foundation \$4200 planning grant. It will be used to determine how to get water in the creek and SCLT will get estimates on putting in a parking lot. It was noted the HSC is a collaborator with this project.
- **Crystal Springs** – Elena Robeson reported she has met the owners and they are interested in learning more about Saluda. The owner is communicating with James from the Planning Board to explore the possibility of some zoning changes.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Agenda Addition – Ellie Varn, Guest** - Ellie reported she wrote her history thesis on convict labor and possible burial sites of convicts on the grade. She plans to do a deeper dive in this subject and would like to collaborate with the HSC. Cindy indicated this was a fascinating subject and that the HSC will help in any way possible. Ellie agreed to share her thesis with the committee.
- **Committee Terms and Officer Election** – See attached table. Laretta and Ammie need to fill out the application form to renew their terms. This will have to go before the BOC.
- **HSC Merchandise** – Cindy reported learning that Depot has made the decision to no longer sell the HSC merchandise. Cindy learned about it after she delivered more books to the Depot the Sunday after the home tour. Bruce Hunt emailed her and said they had made the decision earlier in the year. He apologized that no one had informed the HSC. Cindy reminded the committee that regarding the publication Images of America: Saluda, the contract is between the City of Saluda and Arcadia Published Company which only allows the HSC to sell the book in 2 home base locations. These home base locations are where the HSC could profit from 100% of the proceeds. In the contract those locations are the Saluda City Hall and the Saluda Historic Depot. The Depot was agreeable with this arrangement at the time of the contract. Cindy stated that the DVDs are now uploaded to YouTube and is not worried about those sales, but the book has always sold well. Cindy did clarify that any merchant can buy straight from Arcadia Publishing and make a nice profit from the book. The HSC received small royalties for this type of sales. That is why we need to pursue another home base location. Nancy suggested River Dog Run. The topic will be continued.
- **Historic Homes on the Market** – Discussion held about the Rembert Home on Shand Hill. Ammie and Greaton Sellers are the listing agents. It was agreed that realtors should be part of the solution and be able to share resources with potential owners regarding historic preservation. Ammie would like to set up a meeting with Jack Thomson with Preservation NC to come out and visit the home and provide advice, which can be shared with potential buyers.

CITY REPORT – None

ADJOURN - The meeting was adjourned at 4:12

Next Meeting Date: Friday, August 9, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. at the Saluda Public Library

General Sharing: You are invited to stay after the meeting to share in “historical conversation”.

Respectfully submitted by:

Nancy Pew

Secretary, Vice Chair