

Historic Bath Foundation  
Special Called Meeting  
January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
3pm-Swindell's

Chairman Everett called the meeting to order, a quorum was verified (Surry, Gene, Karen, Milo, Jimmy, Betsy, Tricia, Jason, ex-officio: Leigh). He indicated the meeting had been called to vote on whether HBF would accept an offer presented by the town related to the bridge lot/park. As you are aware, we spent many months writing a grant on behalf of the town hoping to qualify for a matching PARTF grant for the park. The funding was awarded to the town with the condition that HBF lot and additional \$52,800 would be provided for the project.

Surry explained he and Gene were asked to meet with the mayor, town administrator, and the town attorney. We thought we were there to discuss the timing and particulars of deed transfer but instead we were told that the town needed the deed transfer, matching money, and the town would take it from there and there would be no further involvement by the foundation. There was clearly no room for negotiation.

Gene asked if they would keep Betsy, who is named in the grant contract as project administrator. They said no. We asked if they would keep the landscape architect who has designed the park which qualified the park for the grant. They said no. Gene said that this is a serious problem. This is by far the largest expenditure the foundation has ever made, a lot valued at \$175,000 plus a grant of \$52,800. We have a responsibility to our members and donors to ensure foundation money is well spent. Under these terms, we have no meaningful input. It is true that broad guidelines are written into the state contract but many many details have yet to be determined such as the type of trees, shrubs, walkways, pier construction and on and on. And the town is removing us from the decision process at the very time it is showing insensitivity for trees and landscape greenery. It is planning to take down six trees in a row that shade historic site property on Hwy 92 over the objections of the Historic Bath Commission. It was all understood when the grant was written, conditions were set forth clearly making Betsy Boxer from HBF the grant administrator and manager of the project and that she would work closely with our landscape architect, who designed the project, and the landscape committee in order to bring the park to fruition. I am speaking as one board member. I have serious concerns about financing a park with no meaningful input. Without our land and our \$52,800 grant, the town will not receive the state grant of \$225,000.

It is a big step, but I have come to the reluctant conclusion and am making a motion that we should not deed the land to the town, and instead spend the \$52,800 on the park itself and if necessary add another \$50,000 to create the park.

Surry asked for discussion which resulted in the following comments:

Wouldn't the town do what is in the state contract? Only in broad terms. The amenities and budget can be altered according to DENR representative, Steve Moler. The character of the park as it is designed can be altered if the town expresses a wish and reason for it.

Why is town attempting to alter the contract? They want Bubs to be the project administrator and then hire someone to manage the project.

Couldn't the town have a contract with Tom Moss? The town said no.

Steve Moler, now a former DENR employee, said he would manage the project for \$1000.00. He is not a landscape architect.

Since the council changes with each election, future council members might have different ideas about what the park should and should not contain. Or perhaps they may not be dedicated to completing the project if it were to take several years.

Who would manage the park? It will be mainly grass mowing and inexpensive liability insurance which we are already providing. In later years, if the park maintenance is burdensome, we can offer it to the state, county, or the town itself if they were to present a thoughtful management plan.

What could we accomplish for 100,000? The landscape architect says substantial greenery, natural gazebo, brick walkway/seating, pier, parking lot/landscape buffer. We could defer some of the costly items requested by the town such as porous concrete, an additional pier, etc. If necessary, we could phase in the full project over time. We can have a good portion of it done within a year which is significantly less time than it would take with state red tape.

Would we put all the piers back if a hurricane took them out? The town never guaranteed they would do it. We would manage things as they come along.

We've had unfortunate dealings with the town related to GoldenLEAF and in addition they charged BHSP a significant amount of money to buy a structure which the town had intended to raze and which BHSP intended to re-establish as a public use and benefit to the community. And now here we had this understanding with the town for the park project and they are renegeing. There is definitely a trust issue.

Is there any reason they would hold us up on moving forward with the project? The project has been vetted thoroughly with them and the public.

Do we have to decide now? Yes, the state needs to know if funds will be used or not. They may want to award funds to another town.

Jimmy motioned to accept Gene's motion not to deed the property to the town and to manage the park project ourselves. Surry asked for a vote. Seven board members voted to accept the motion and there was one abstention. Gene asked if the vote included the authorization of \$100,000. To clarify, Jimmy said he would like amend the motion to include the authorization up to \$100,000 to move forward with the park project as part of motion. Second by Jason. Surry asked for any further discussion. Gene said there would be slight material changes due to cost but the park committee would keep the board of directors in the loop with major alterations. Amended motion accepted by the full board. No further discussion. Surry said he would inform the town of our decision.

Surry asked for any other discussions.

Tricia shared that mostly the small grants committee is receiving requests from the State Site. I would like to request dissolving the small grants program/protocols which require significant volunteer effort

and suggest that any request for funds come directly to the board of directors. Full board voted to dissolve small grants program. No further discussion.

Jason explained that he will arrange for electric to be buried at Lawson Walk as soon as the wet weather clears. He will manage both the electric and cable company. He will let Tricia know well in advance so that she can arrange for an archaeological review to be done, if possible, when there is digging by those companies.

Jason asked if HBF wanted to participate in historic interpretation during the port celebration. HBF will provide funding to the Commission for those types of activities as we have done in the past.

Gene said that trees are not being trimmed properly in town and it is causing branches to die and puts the trees at risk. Gene said during a town meeting to save the trees on state property, Hwy 92, HBF offered to pay an arborist to supervise the trimming of those state trees. Full board approved. None opposed.

Surry asked for further business. None offered. Surry adjourned meeting. Next meeting will be March 25<sup>th</sup> 3pm.

Submitted,

Karen Sayer

Secretary