**Historic Bath Foundation, Inc.**

**Quarterly Meeting Minutes**

**September 12, 2014 Bath Town Hall**

**3pm**

Chairman Surry Everett welcomed everyone. A quorum was determined. Board members present: Surry, Gene, Karen, Jim, Milo, Tricia, Jason. Absent: Mariann, Betsy. Ex-officio present: Leigh, Cori Fritz for Becky Tuten, Peggy, Jimmy. A motion was received to accept minutes as presented by Milo. Second by Jim.

Surry introduced special guest, Dr. Kevin Cherry, Deputy Secretary, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. Surry asked if the agenda could be modified to first allow Tom Moss, Landscape Architect, to make the presentation for the bridge lot “town park”. None opposed.

Tom started his presentation with the current lot conditions. Constraints include: CAMA, DWQ, NCDOT buffers. DWQ jurisdiction includes existing pilings, NCDOT will review proposed driveway access point. Lot inventory includes: gently sloping and well drained sight, secure shoreline, highly visible location, and existing pilings to build upon if desired. General design ideas include: parking, circular walkway, central seating/event area, bench placement, open lawn area, recreational pier, native plants along the shoreline. Material needs: parking – pervious concrete, walkway – contained sandy gravel or pervious concrete, lawn – centipede or zoysia, trees – live oaks, bald cypress, sycamore, meeting area – stone or precast concrete products.

Discussion included the following: there is existing green growth engineering in place and limited shoreline work is needed. If possible, it would be nice to push parking to the east since it is a small park. The central area can be used for functions – seating. The parking space number is not literal but we should plan for at least 2 handi-cap and 8 others. The pervious surface can be concrete but it may be expensive.

The walkway could be a hard surface like brick but we would need an exception from agencies. A buffer can be made of trees as a visual block so that you feel you are in a different secluded place. We will leave a 4’ opening in the fence for a walkway through to the restaurant. Jimmy asked if trees could be placed on the west side of the parking area so the parking lot is not visible from the park. Tom said that is no problem. This is all the first stage of planning. Cost projections are $150,000-$175,000. Next we will need to detail out materials and budget. Gene shared that Robin attended DENR/PARTF conference and they emphasized that projects less than $250,000 will be looked upon favorably. We can use the property as a match so if it appraises at $125,000 with the project coming in at $175,000, then we will need to match the balance of $50,000. Gene asked for action to go forward based on this data in order to have a discussion with the town about permitting, grant application, and town ownership of the park. Surry asked for discussion. Tricia mentioned that the pervious material on walkways can be troublesome with ground growth penetrating through the application. Tom mentioned that he was primarily considering pervious application on the parking lot and we can also explore other options. Surry inquired if Tom would firm up the plan, prepare the budget, and talk with agencies and the town. Surry appointed a committee to assist with the project to include: Gene, Betsy, Karen, Jim, Robin, and Karen Waters. Jimmy commented that we would need to complete appropriate town applications. Karen said she would initiate the town processes. Jimmy expressed trepidation regarding town ownership of the park related to maintenance and liability insurance. The board was not opposed to supplementing some maintenance costs initially. Robin mentioned the grant application was due February 2nd officially but the review needs to be done at the local level at least a month ahead of time. Gene shared that the grant application will need to reflect new items and not duplicate recreational components found in town already. They are looking for water access, boat slips, canoe and kayak launch, fishing pier, and children’s activities such as: sand box, slide, seesaw. There was no objection from the board to move forward as requested.

**Treasurer’s Report: absent**

**Reports of Officers**

**President:** Surry reported that funds of $162,914.05 have been received for the purchase of the Willson properties.

**Vice President:** none

**Secretary:** none

**Reports of Committees**

**Membership:** Karen shared that she is continuing with the regular membership mailings and Jason was willing to pull together a strategy for recruiting new members. Jason asked the board whether new members should be recruited based on specific projects or for the general fund. He mentioned his experience was that most are more amenable to a specific project. He inquired about corporate members. The board indicated this is something we can pursue in the future once we have established major financial needs. The board expressed that at this moment membership should be based on the general fund versus a specific project.

**Museum:** Gene shared that it might be possible to start a campaign for the gallery. He explained that we may have a possible opportunity to start the gallery in the wing adjacent and south of the Bath town hall. Gene and Karen had a tour of the property given by John Taylor. There was a discussion about an opportunity to also use part of the land to the south to build a new structure. It is possible that we could have 1600 within the existing structure and 2800 square feet or more in the new structure with a corridor connecting the two. All of this is exploratory. John felt that it could possibly be offered at no cost to HBF since we would be putting rehab funds into the structure. We need to get the State to run it ultimately. It is critical to be able to transfer ownership to the State. We have been down this track with BHSP, and based on previous State conversation, they are not prepared to enter into a partnership unless they control the property. David Johnston will review the site and give us an estimate on the costs. It may be possible to add a small bathroom in the gallery and then place a larger bathroom in the new building. We will have a firm estimate by November. It could be our most financially reasonable option. This opportunity could satisfy the desire to use an existing historic structure and also have a new structure. We could move the entrance forward of the existing structures and make it a conspicuous entrance. If we could move forward we could possibly have a gallery within a year. Leigh asked what if the State doesn’t want to take ownership of a museum. Gene shared that we need to continue to move through the process to find out. There was no objection from the board and Surry asked the museum committee to continue pursuing options.

Jim shared his negotiations with Ken about the use of Swindell’s for a museum location. Ken is more open now that we walked away. It is a good spot and he would consider selling it. He is not opposed to our proposals and is in favor of the museum. He would lease for more than 2 years without an escalating monthly lease. Leigh shared that in this past week someone mentioned they would oppose a business in Swindell’s because of limited parking. Jim will keep a line of communication open with Ken and notify him of our options.

**Finance/Fundraising:** Karen asked Milo and Jim if they could assist Mariann with pulling in additional sponsors for the Reverse Raffle event and they agreed to assist. They will confer with her.

**Historic Research/Curriculum:** Karen shared that she had big ideas about creating a more expansive glossy brochure similar to the Albemarle tour brochure which would also include digital links. She asked Leigh if this was something Jamie could work on. Dr. Cherry expressed that there is a new similar initiative that is being trialed at a State tourist site and it may be something you could consider once it is in place and we have more data about pulling it together. Leigh said she would evaluate Jamie’s involvement.

**Public Relations:** Karen mentioned that Paddle Bath was canceled for this year but there are plenty of opportunities for presenting HBF at Port Bath activities in the coming year.

**Award Ceremony:** Gene and Karen nominated Jimmy Edwards and Sandra Harrison who were both instrumental in the re-use of the high school structure and integral in getting the library in the SW wing. In addition, Gene recommended we provide a resolution to David Johnston for sharing his expertise and supervision of the Willson property renovation. Surry asked for nominations from the floor. None offered. Motion to accept nominations per Jim. Second by Tricia. None opposed.

**Small Grants:**

Tricia explained there had been a request to receive grant funds ahead of project completion. Some local, small, grass roots-types are unable to float funds for the project and I was asked to prepare a protocol for allowance of funds to be dispersed if requested. My suggestion is to provide funds up to 50% of the project if a special need is requested. This should be an exception. I have added a statement to the memorandum of agreement reporting standards which explains the process. Milo motioned to accept amendment to MOA. Second by Jim.

On another subject matter, Tricia said she was asked to investigate the possibility of placing a marker at the cemetery at Catnip Point. She explained that it could not be a State marker since it was not on State property but there are similar signs/markers that we can use to accomplish acknowledgement. She showed examples which were very similar to the State markers. The cost would be around $1000 for a single side and $1850 for double side. Jason said he really appreciated Tricia’s efforts. Tricia said we would need the language for the sign. Jason said he would check with Mary Helen Ellis since she had done a lot of research. Karen asked that once the desired language had been worked out for Gene to review and approve it after also reviewing the research material. The board agreed and had no preference on whether it was a single or double sided sign.

**Report of Ex-officio Directors**

**Mayor of Bath:** Jimmy shared that the sewage plant brick and mortar is done and the town is inching toward a final stamp of approval. Jason inquired with Jimmy about his concerns for taking over the bridge lot park and that he was under the impression that town liability insurance could be bought at a discounted rate. Jimmy expressed that the town was on a tight budget.

**Chairman Historic Bath Commission:** Peggy commended the work of HBF in their efforts to save the Willson property and for the purchase of the bridge lot. She said those two projects will have a huge impact on Historic Bath. The HBC will be pursuing an underwater archaeology investigation ahead of the First Port celebrations and having the QAR Exhibit here is a natural kickoff for the First Port celebration. The next steering committee meeting in November 14 and she asked if HBF could appoint a representative. Surry said he would ask Mariann and Betsy. Peggy asked if HBF would be interested in having a First Port event or providing seed money for an event. She also inquired if a First Port sign or a playground “ship” could be placed at the new park. Surry said he felt HBF could contribute to the celebrations by accepting and dispersing funds similar to what was done with the QAR event. Karen said she would investigate signage and “ship” for the park. Peggy shared that the Tricentennial logo could be utilized for the sign as John Taylor clarified use of the logo with Wayland.

**Manager Historic Bath State Historic Site:** Leigh shared that the QAR Exhibit was a wonderful event and Pirates in the Port was highly successful. The Walking Tour brochure has been redone to include the Lawson Walk and the new HBC artwork – First Town First Port. DCR is assisting Edenton, Bath, and Tryon Palace on a joint advertising effort called “Carolina Colonial”. The joint event will occur the weekend of December 12, 13, and 14. Jamie has been busy with social media and we now have a blog, Instagram, and Flossie Friday link. We have also categorized and chosen 1000 slide images to digitize.

**Bath High School Preservation President:** absent. Cori Fritz had a prior engagement and had to leave the meeting early.

**Old Business:** none

**New Business**

Robin Boyd made a presentation regarding the Senior Center opportunity. She explained that the gym in Bayview is closing and there is a need for a gym in Bath. Also, the Belhaven Senior Center has a new director and there has been a rumor that their numbers are low and that center could possibly be moved to Bath if there is support for it. She met with Mid-East Commission, Timmy Baines, and confirmed that if we could secure a space and budget of at least $4500 a year for their certification cycle, it could possibly be relocated here. Robin said a lot of people said she needed to come to HBF for support because HBF is known for getting things done. The vision is to re-use an historic structure and it seems that would fit in with the HBF mission. I am here to request a donation of $10,000 for purchasing gym equipment in order to re-locate the gym here in an existing historic structure. Also, I am requesting an additional $7500 for the purpose of partial rent funds for the funding cycle. I will seek the balance of rent funds from the town council. In addition, I will be seeking additional funds for the gym from the community. Gene expressed that re-use of an historic structure is within our charge and that having a senior center which promotes social activity will benefit Historic Bath in the long run. We have set a precedent in supporting other community groups such as the girl scouts which provides community unity. Milo agrees that promoting social interaction in the community can benefit the historic district. Robin said the community is very enthusiastic. Milo made a motion to accept the proposal expressing funds will be appropriated once a concrete plan is in place. Second by Gene. None opposed.

Surry asked Dr. Cherry if he would like to address the board. Dr. Cherry shared that the State budget was sparse and that the dynamics of running a business was now the onus of each department. Salaries would be paid through the legislative budget but it would be up to the sites to subsist on their own earnings based on their ingenuity to increase tourism dollars at their site. It is a more entrepreneurial approach.

Surry asked for additional new business. None offered. Surry explained that the board would go into closed session to discuss the bridge lot property and that the regular meeting session would continue once closed session had been adjourned. He encouraged members and visitors to return once closed session had ended.

**Closed Session:**

Comments regarding Tom’s plan included: Jason shared that Toby Tetterton volunteered to move concrete debris gratis if needed. Jim said he likes the idea of the green engineering along the shoreline and the utilization of the existing pilings. There was a discussion about John Logelfo requesting additional property from HBF. Jason shared that John did not need additional land now from us because he was going to seek a major CAMA permit and he felt it was likely to be approved. We will be requested by CAMA to comment on the project since we are a neighbor. Gene shared that he appreciates the partnership that existed for the purchase of the bridge lot but he has serious reservations about offering more land to John Logelfo. John received at least a $6000 break on the purchase and we have heard negative opinions from the Mayor about his land usage. We also risk losing future membership donations if we give away property. We don’t want to sell property to Logelfo. We want a bigger park. Other factors include the town voting down his boat slips and we do not want to subvert the town decision. I would offer to buy the property back if he is unable to obtain his major CAMA permit. The full board was in agreement to discuss a purchase price later if the need arises. In addition, the board agreed to provide him ownership of property needed for his specific parking requirements. With no further discussion, Surry adjourned the closed session and resumed the regular meeting.

Jason shared that there was an interest of creating a canopy along HWY 92 with live oak trees. He has a source for live oaks and knows others who are interested in organizing the effort. Gene said he thought it was a good idea and Jason should present more concrete ideas in the future. None opposed.

Surry asked for additional new business. No further business was offered and Surry adjourned the meeting with notice of the next meeting to be announced at a later date.

Submitted

Karen Sayer

Secretary