

Cullowhee Planning Council
Minutes
December 4, 2023
6:00 p.m.
Department on Aging, Heritage Room
Sylva, NC

Members	Present	Absent	Members	Present	Absent	Members	Present	Absent
David Claxton	X		Chris Stuckey	X		Rebecca Manring	X	
Carol Burton		X	Donna Huguelet	X		Damon Sink		X
Mike Byers	X		Karen Kandl	X				

Staff Present

Michael Poston, Planning Director
 Anna Harkins, Planner I
 Allison Kelley, Administrative Assistant III

Others Present

Eddie Johnson, Historic Preservation Intern

Call to Order

Chairman David Claxton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and a quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda

Chairman Claxton made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition for item b) Rotation of Board Members under “New Business”, and it passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Donna Huguelet made a motion to approve the minutes from September 11, 2023. Chris Stuckey seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Public Comment- Sign-up sheet- 3 minutes per speaker

There were no public comments.

New Business

a) Historic Preservation Intern: WCU Story Map Presentation

Ms. Harkins stated Jackson County Planning Department staffs the Historic Preservation Commission. The program is about designating local landmarks as well as national landmarks for historic preservation purposes, and they are in the process to get that program up and running. She stated that includes a lot of interacting with the public and public history, which has led to have some great interactions with the WCU staff, specifically Jessie Swigger in the public history department about having an intern. The project the Commission wanted to pursue is a StoryMap, which is using GIS mapping with public history to create an interactive map, and they thought a great starting point would be to do one of the WCU campus with a WCU public history intern. Ms. Harkins stated Eddie Johnson is a senior at WCU and will be graduating this semester and has been the intern to take on this project of a WCU StoryMap.

Eddie Johnson stated his project with his internship with the Planning Department was to make a StoryMap of the historic upper campus of WCU. A Storymap uses mapping from geographical information systems to show buildings but it also connects it with information that you can include onto it. He stated he looked for examples of other StoryMaps and looked at the UGA Graduate School, which was a virtual campus tour of the buildings with pictures and information on each buildings. The StoryMap includes location markers of the buildings, pictures, and information and fun facts.

Mr. Johnson presented the Historic Upper Campus of Western Carolina University Story Map to the Council. He stated he included the fact and recognized the history that the Cherokee people have with the land for hundreds of years that WCU was built on, and included a picture of the wi sculpture that was produced by a WCU fine arts students. He also included information that the area become inhabited with farmers that took advantage of the open space after the forceful departure of the Cherokee people. The Cullowhee Academy and Cullowhee High School (1889-1891), (1891-1905) included the buildings The Cullowhee Academy, Music and Art Building, and "Old" Madison. In addition, he stated Western Carolina history he mentioned Robert Lee Madison started the Cullowhee Academy and then became the Cullowhee High School.

The Cullowhee Normal and Industrial School (1905-1925) included the buildings Davies Hall, Joyner, The Steam Plant, The Training School, Moore, and "Uncle" Dave Rogers House. Cullowhee State and Normal School (1925-1929) included the buildings the African Episcopal Zion Church, Cullowhee Baptist Church and Cemetery. Western Carolina Teachers College (1929-1953) included the buildings Robertson, Breese Gymnasium, Student Union Building, McKee, University Auditorium, Madison, Graham Infirmary, and Memorial Stadium. Western Carolina College (1953-1967) included the buildings Boodleville, Stillwell Science Building, Hunter Library, Reynolds, Buchanan, Bird, Brown, Western Carolina Baptist Student Fellowship/HOMEBASE, and Albright and Benton. Western Carolina University (1967-Present) included the buildings the Natural Sciences Building, Mountain Heritage Center at the Hunter Library, and Tom Apodaca Science Building. In addition, he added a slider that shows the growth of WCU's campus from 1953 to 2019. The aerial map from 1953 you can see a lot of farmland and can see how much the school has expanded looking at the aerial map from 2019. Mr. Johnson stated the StoryMap would be published on the Historic Preservation Commission Facebook page and also the Planning Department Facebook and website. Ms. Harkins stated they would also have the StoryMap posted on the Jackson County GIS Department page as an added feature.

Ms. Kandl inquired what constitutes a historic building. Mr. Johnson stated he believes that the Joyner building would count, as it is a nationally registered building. Even though Westerns campus has been around since 1889, and has been growing it is still called the historic upper campus because is more than 130 years old. Ms. Harkins stated for a technical standard under the National Register and local standards 50 years is the minimum age requirement for a historic structure, along with significance of the structure including architectural, people, events, or significance to a general time era.

Mr. Claxton inquired if a building is designated as historic, does that mean they cannot change it too much. Ms. Harkins stated it depends on the program, at the national level, yes and no. When it comes to personal homes, usually you can do whatever you want to if it is on the National Register. If it is a commercial site that may be getting some tax benefits from being on the National Register, then you would have to comply with the standards that the national register has. With our local level program, for private property as well as commercial properties there would be standards applied that would be reviewed by our Historic Preservation Commission before building permits are issued. Currently, that is the program the Commission is trying to establish and we hope to have local landmarks in the future to where we can start implementing some restrictions on historic properties so they can be preserved. Ms. Harkins stated the local landmarks program can is petition for a delay of demolition for some properties that are local landmarks, to allow time to go in and document, and maybe take some things out of the property if the Historical Society or museum would like to do that. Ms. Harkins stated they are trying to have some documentation and cataloging, so that way in the future, if there is an intern at the WCU or a student that has some interest in WCU historic structures they could come to our department and ask for the file.

Mr. Claxton stated there is a new David Joy book that just came out about Cullowhee, and it starts on campus with the moving of the AME Zion Church. Mr. Johnson stated he could only find information that the AME Zion Church was where Robertson is now and then moved to Old Cullowhee Road. Mr. Claxton stated they have a plaque at AME Zion Church that makes it very clear that they were asked to move off campus and they had to move the graveyard as well and were assured that they would never be asked to move again.

Mr. Byers stated he has always been at other places that had WPA project type buildings, and the others at other campuses had Eleanor Roosevelt came to visit when they opened it. He asked Mr. Johnson if he happened to run across anything stating Ms. Roosevelt came to Breese at WCU. Mr. Johnson stated yes, she came for the opening of all six buildings and he believed they opened near the same day. In addition, he stated he did not include that within the StoryMap because he only found one single picture of her being on campus and it was difficult to point out where she was in the photo. He stated the photo was on the Mountain Heritage Center's making memories section. Mr. Claxton he inquired if Lady Bird Johnson also came to Cullowhee campus at one point. Mr. Johnson stated yes, that is also on their website and he believes she was in the picture. Mr. Claxton stated he believed she went to visit Canada Community Elementary School.

Mr. Poston noted that Dr. Swigger has already asked Ms. Harkins that they have some other interested students if they have some other identified areas in the County for a potential project, and they have identified both the town of Webster and Dillsboro has interest of having a StoryMap done in their communities. Ms. Harkins stated she has done some talks with the public history classes at WCU and let them know what the Jackson County Planning Department is doing with the historic preservation programming. In addition, she also informed them that there is a monthly Cullowhee Planning Council meeting and encouraged them to get involved as the Cullowhee area is planned. Ms. Harkins stated she hopes to continue to have a strong relationship with WCU's public history department through our historic preservation program.

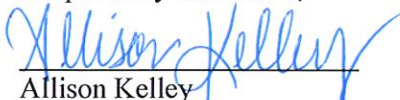
b) Rotation of Board Members


Mr. Poston stated 2025 is the next cycle that members would be up for reappointment, which included Damon Sink, Rebecca Manring, Karen Kandl. In addition, David Claxton would reach his maximum term and be term limited in 2025. Mr. Poston stated they have not formally had a vice chair nominated and they should consider adding that to an agenda in the New Year.

Adjournment

With no further business, Donna Huguelet made a motion to adjourn. Rebecca Manring seconded the motion and it carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Allison Kelley
Administrative Assistant- Planning


David Claxton
Planning Council Chair

