

**Historic Resources Task Force
November 18, 1998**

DRAFT Minutes

Present:

Ben Ford
Mark Baliles
Fred Hebllich
Meredith Richards
Coy Barefoot
James Eddins
Ingred Smyer Kelley

Also Present:

Tarpley Vest

At 4:00 Mr. Barefoot convened the meeting. He indicated that today begins Phase III of the Task Force and that they will complete their charge. He thanked the task force and congratulated them. He indicated that there will be no report to Council in November. He indicated that he will give a 5-minute report and slide show to Council on December 7.

Mr. Barefoot indicated that there will be unveilings for the historic markers. He indicated that City Councilors will be present and they will send out press releases. He indicated that one unveiling at a church will be on Sunday and the others will be on weekdays.

Mr. Barefoot indicated that he is meeting with Mr. Silverman on Friday to iron out the historic exhibit of Union Station.

Mr. Barefoot indicated that the task force has several priorities for the next few months:

- 1) He indicated that the local historic markers could go up as soon as January or February if they receive funding from City Council.
- 2) He indicated that the other big project regards the Court Square proposal from Mr. Baliles. He indicated that the idea is to take Court Square and give it the credit that is due. He indicated that this is the original Charlottesville and it the most historic part of the city. He indicated that Mr. Baliles will explain it further. He indicated that the task force will host a charette on the topic in January.

The group agreed that the charette would be in mid to late January, after UVA has started. The group agreed that the charette could possibly be held at the courthouse.

Mr. Barefoot asked for an update on funding for the booklet.

Mr. Hebllich indicated that he was turned down for funding by VNB and Wachovia. He indicated that they will need \$7500 to \$10000.

Mr. Barefoot asked about the possibility of bringing it up with Council.

Ms. Kelley indicated that she is shocked that the banks did not jump at the chance to do this. She indicated that she still thinks there is a bank that will do it.

Mr. Barefoot indicated that Wachovia has been very community oriented in the renovation of the tower.

Mr. Hebllich indicated that he was very surprised that Virginia National Bank was not willing to do it.

Ms. Kelley asked if Nationsbank/Bank of America had been approached.

Mr. Hebllich indicated that they had not been approached. He indicated that with the big banks it takes a long time to speak to the right person.

Mr. Barefoot indicated that VDHR sent out some information on possible funding sources that they could review.

Mr. Hebllich indicated that it is worth talking to Michie Company and the Chamber of Commerce. He indicated that the deal that has been worked out with banks in the past is that they have exclusive distribution. He indicated that VNB said that they had no money.

Ms. Kelley indicated that if the banks are not interested the group should go to someone else. She indicated that it is so vital that the booklets are available.

Mr. Hebllich indicated that he would try the Michie Company.

Mr. Barefoot indicated that he will mention that they are struggling for funding at the City Council meeting.

Ms. Kelley indicated that it is a great advertisement for the sponsor and that they can give the sponsor the back cover.

Mr. Barefoot asked Ms. Richards what the chances are of getting seed money from the city.

Mr. Hebllich indicated that the city should be a source of last resort. He indicated that they are asking for a small amount of money.

Ms. Richards indicated that the Chamber of Commerce will probably bounce the request to the Tourism Council.

Ms. Kelley indicated that it should not be paid for by the citizens but by someone who loves the city.

Mr. Heblich indicated that printing all the booklets will cost less than one seat at Scott's Stadium.

Ms. Richards asked if the booklet would feature architecture such as historic homes on Park Street.

Mr. Heblich indicated that the booklet is essentially five tours, each with its own map. He indicated that the tours include architectural information as well as personal stories and historic events.

Mr. Richards indicated that the real estate community has an interest in the built environment and may be interested.

Mr. Eddins indicated that there are financial incentives available for historic preservation. He indicated that he has a community preservation toolbox. He indicated that this is an outgrowth of Governor Allen's history initiative campaign, which was a community awareness campaign about historic preservation. He indicated that Charlottesville's toolbox went to Helanah Deveraux and that Albemarle's toolbox went to him and Carter McNeely. He showed the group several of the resources in the toolbox including: a handbook on the economic benefits of preservation; the Virginia Preservation Sourcebook; and various other financial incentives. He indicated that the Virginia Tourism Council has a matching grant program, but that it must include a minimum of three jurisdictions.

Ms. Kelley asked how you get the toolbox.

Mr. Barefoot indicated that Helena Deveraux has Charlottesville's and that they should get her to bring her toolbox to the Charette in January.

Mr. Eddins indicated that Deborah Murdock has the toolbox for Fluvanna.

Mr. Heblich indicated that he will keep working on getting funding.

Court Square Proposal

Mr. Baliles indicated that the idea for Court Square is a relatively inexpensive way to take the oldest area of the city and turn it into an identifiable historic destination point for tourists and community people. He indicated that Charlottesville associates itself the Jeffersonian era. He described the following possibilities:

- ◆ Create the idea of the park and consider a pedestrian park.
- ◆ Emphasize the original entrance to the court on Park Street by cutting back shrubbery and trees.
- ◆ Block off the street at High Street and Park Street. 6th Street will already be blocked off this spring and traffic patterns will be changing.

- ◆ Consider a different paving surface: make it visually evident that you are in a historic area.
- ◆ Underground wires to upgrade the appearance of the area.
- ◆ Create a visual historic area that stands out so that tourists will know they are in the oldest historic area in the city by doing the following
 - 1)Enhancing the physical environment.
 - 2)Creating cultural programs and community involvement. Involve historical society in tours. Have music and other events.

Mr. Eddins indicated that Prince Street in Alexandria is designated with cobblestones that almost remove the need for barriers from cars.

Ms. Kelley asked what, if any, opposition there is to the proposal.

Ms. Richards indicated that only the traffic engineer has expresses opposition so far.

Mr. Heblich indicated that the courthouse is in use. He indicated that court judges have a great deal of jurisdiction over the court. He indicated that the city and county need to build a joint judicial complex somewhere else that is convenient.

A question was raised about the future of the National Ground Intelligence Center.

Ms. Richards indicated that the building requires millions in renovations and that demolition may be an option.

Mr. Baliles indicated that he suggests moving the courthouse parking to the front area.

Ms. Richards indicated that there is a consultant's study underway right now on the Court Square area. She indicated that this is an active, vital area and that parts could be closed off from all but local traffic. She indicated that Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Huja are behind the concept. She indicated that council has been informed and some have given a positive response. She indicated that TEA-21 is a possible funding source. She indicated that the city may be able to apply for a federal grant for the project.

Mr. Ford indicated that he likes the idea but that he has a few general concerns. He indicated that the city should be careful about using Williamsburg as a model. He indicated that it may not be the best model to follow. He indicated that they can take ideas from Williamsburg, but should be careful not to become another village frozen in time. He indicated that he argues against the idea that people come to Charlottesville with the idea of the Colonial period. He indicated that there are other perceptions including the Civil War period. He indicated that the history of UVA brings many people to town. He indicated that he doesn't think that they should limit it to the Colonial period and that he cautions against boxing it off. He indicated that they must be careful not to alienate the local community including the African American community. He indicated that there may be other issues of equal importance than just the colonial period. He indicated that it is important to make it not just for tourists but to make it diverse and interesting, like the Mall. He indicated that the group can take the positive aspects of Williamsburg and run with them.

Mr. Barefoot indicated that those are great points.

Ms. Kelley indicated that she envisions a moving history with a big "to do" about different periods.

Mr. Barefoot indicated that they can develop many different programs that can go in the site if the site has historic sensibility.

Mr. Richards indicated that she brings out of town guests to the Court Square area and there is very little information. She indicated that they should develop a more park like area and more of a destination. She indicated that in order to have changing cultural events the area needs the initial infrastructure. She indicated that this could be achieved through banners, lighting, landscaping, sidewalks, and streets.

Mr. Barefoot asked the group to decide on a tentative date for the Charette in January. The group agreed on Saturday, January 23. The charette will be in the morning and will last about three hours. The Historic Resources Task Force will sponsor the charette.

Ms. Kelley indicated that the charette is a good way to generate interest and a way to get more people involved.

Ms Richard indicated that they will need to generate a list of individuals to send invitations to. She indicated that they will invite property owners and people who have offices in the court square area, landscape architects, historians and architects.

Mr. Barefoot indicated that the City Council meeting on December 7 can be the December meeting for the task force. He indicated that they can get together after the meeting. He asked the task force to come to the meeting with a list of names of people to invite to the Charette.

Mr. Barefoot indicted that he is not married to the idea of closing off the street and that they could be closed off only for special functions.

At 5:00 P.M. the meeting was adjourned.