

MINUTES

**CHARLOTTESVILLE HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

*September 11, 2017 \* 11:00 am – Noon  
NDS Conference Room \* 610 East Market Street*

**Members Present**

Melanie Miller, Chair  
Alissa Diamond  
Bob Fenwick  
Madeleine Hawks  
Genevieve Keller  
Margaret O’Bryant  
Liz Sargent  
Jalane Schmidt  
Dede Smith  
Ellen Wagner

**Members Absent**

None

**Staff**

Mary Joy Scala - Preservation & Design Planner

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Melanie Miller called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m.. She called for introductions since there were new members.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Dede Smith moved to approve the minutes of August 14, 2017, with corrections regarding Liz Sargent’s HALS document for Emancipation Park, and a typo in numbering the Bylaws. Genevieve Keller seconded. The minutes were approved 8-0-2, with the two new members abstained.

**PUBLIC COMMEMORATION**

*Vinegar Hill Park*

Mary Joy Scala noted an issue in preparing the RFP for signage regarding specifications for the Wayfinding Signage foundation design.

Alissa Diamond asked about the scope of Phase I of Vinegar Hill Park.

It was noted that the developer of the new building at the Ice Park/Arena site may contribute.

Liz Sargent thought that the Omni had offered to help.

Dede Smith will get in touch with Scot French and Edwina St. Rose regarding the Vinegar Hill Park historic markers.

Melanie Miller noted that Scot French had produced an outline. He had requested funding for a trip up here to finalize research.

Dede Smith will ask Scot French for a date to come up.

*Cultural Landscape Report*

Genevieve Keller said the Vinegar Hill Park plan should coordinate with the Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for Halprin’s Mall design.

Mary Joy Scala said there had been discussion about expanding the Downtown Parks Master Plan RFP to possibly include the Mall and 4<sup>th</sup> Street.

Liz Sargent asked if PLACE had been involved.

The HRC wants to be included in promoting the CLR.

Mary Joy Scala said she is requesting \$50,000 in the CIP to have the Mall CLR done next year.

Liz Sargent offered to be the liaison with the CLR project – she said we should be part of the discussion.

Madeleine Hawks said we should know what other groups are doing; what things are being celebrated and thought about.

Genevieve Keller wondered if the HRC was going through a mission creep. We have gone from a narrow role doing markers to naming Vinegar Hill Park, helping to implement the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations; role has expanded. We have limited resources and budget.

Melanie Miller said we could start with a letter of support to Council regarding the CLR.

Bob Fenwick said you are the history experts – appropriate to be in the middle of the discussion.

Dede Smith moved to write a letter in support of the Cultural Landscape Report for the Downtown Mall.

Bob Fenwick seconded. No one was opposed.

Mary Joy Scala said the CLR is important because it would include a treatment plan for the Mall.

Genevieve Keller said there is an urgent need.

Bob Fenwick said this is a good time to remind City Council what you all do.

The Committee reviewed a list of accomplishments of the Committee. It was suggested that Committee members' names over the years be added.

Liz Sargent said to update the accomplishments for review at the next meeting.

#### *Court Square Markers*

Jalane Schmidt asked about the background of the Court Square markers.

Madeleine Hawks explained they were started years ago by intern Kristin Rourke. The granite markers were in disrepair so Kristin removed one to see if she could make it more legible using a Sharpie marker. That morphed into re-doing all the markers.

Margaret O'Bryant noted the slate markers were from the 1960's. Those will not be replaced.

Madeleine Hawks said that an extended version of the Court Square markers text was put on the HRC's web site about 5 years ago. That needs to be revised.

Melanie Miller asked Madeleine to explain why they did not just put up little bronze plaques.

Madeleine Hawks said we liked the surface printing material because it would accommodate color and images.

Mary Joy Scala said she suggested to the City Manager's Office that since it might be months or years before a final plan was put in place for the two parks, that it would be good to put up our Court Square markers right away. There are two things holding them up- the County Board of Supervisors must approve the larger marker since it is on County property, and the City Manager's Office wanted to hold off on the Number Nothing (Slavery in Court Square) marker until the RFP for the Downtown Parks Master Plan was resolved.

Jalane Schmidt said she would like to see the McIntire marker reframed – perhaps the “City Beautiful” idea could be put in quotes, and say more about who was pushed out. It was a White person's park.

Genevieve Keller said she is not comfortable saying it was a Whites-only park.

Liz Sargent said it was probably true that McIntire was disturbed by African Americans at Court Square, but agreed with Genevieve, that there was not legislation until 1926 to require segregated parks.

Genevieve Keller said it's true that McIntire ensured that no buildings could be put here in the future- so that you could never have African American or mixed race housing here again.

Jalane Schmidt said to take that into account- weave this into changing narration on race to have it framed within the City Beautiful movement.

Genevieve Keller said philosophically she agrees with Jalane, but don't want to perpetuate a new myth. We could revisit the text, but need to be clear what is factual.

Margaret O’Bryant said the Blue Ribbon Commission did hear oral history about what people felt like being in the park, but agree with Genevieve.

Jalane Schmidt said, if the tack is preservation of an official account this does a disservice. The homes and businesses of people of color were intentionally acquired and replaced. The marker needs to be more cohesive and consistent.

Melanie Miller said this marker’s point is to talk about the parks campaign in general.

Jalane Schmidt said this can be done simply – knit together better.

Margaret O’Bryant said we could put something about people’s understanding and feeling about how the parks operated.

Jalane Schmidt noted “McIntire’s magic” meant demolition of unsightly buildings. There is quite a bit of documentation how the Courthouse functioned as an organization venue for the Klan. These events bookended installation of the Lee monument.

Melanie Miller was concerned about a delay in getting the markers up; we need to do other work.

Genevieve Keller said we need to change the markers.

Dede Smith remarked on the value of new voices, but we need to get it changed quickly.

Jalane Schmidt and Alissa Diamond agreed to work on the markers.

Genevieve Keller noted Court Square was a difficult landscape to attempt to interpret. The early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and more recent landscape changes left no gritty, messy sense of a rural courthouse center.

Jalane Schmidt said it was appropriate where the KKK chose to congregate in July gives historic context.

Alissa Diamond said it would be helpful to have a conversation about what we are here for.

Genevieve Keller said originally Huja was concerned about tourism, but over the last several years we have been doing things for ourselves more than for tourists.

Madeleine Hawks would set up the editable documents on a Google docs account so the committee could revisit markers #1 (Court Square) and #2 (McIntire’s Park Campaign). It would be helpful to receive revisions prior to the next meeting.

## **EDUCATION & PUBLIC MEETINGS**

## **SPECIAL PROJECTS**

## **GOALS FOR NEXT MEETING**

Revisit Court Square Markers #1 and #2.  
Review list of accomplishments.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

**MEETING ADJOURNED AT 12:20 p.m.**