



Board Meeting
Wednesday, June 16th, 2021
12:00 PM Martin County Arts Council
Minutes

PRESENT

Jeremiah Taylor, Chase Conner, Brenda Holliday, Cameron Braddy, Gemma Martin, Stephen Martin, Ila Parker, Zach Dickerson

CALL TO ORDER

Chase Conner called the meeting to order at 12:08 PM

INVOCATION

Chase Conner gave the invocation.

MINUTES

No comments or changes were heard to May's minutes. Jeremiah motioned for approval, Gemma seconded, all in favor, minutes were approved.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Jeremiah presented the financial report, to which no changes were noted from last month. Our balance is \$17,214.33.

MAJOR UPDATES

Downtown Summer Cleanup Day

Zach brought up planning for another downtown cleanup day for the summer. Given everyone's busy summer, Cameron suggested that we move the cleanup day to a Saturday in September. It would be cooler in the morning by that point in the year, and the cleanup would have a larger impact ahead of the Stampede. At our July or August meeting, we will set a date for the project.

Community Stage Update

Chase gave an update on the Community Stage at 140 W Main St. The First Friday event was a success! Next Tuesday is Trivia Night, running from 5:30-6:30, with a snack bar at the event. Next Thursday, they are having the rescheduled DJ 80's Night from 5:30-7:30. The July First Friday Event will run from 7-9pm, to tie in with July 4th – once night falls, they will take a picture with sparklers.

Tarheel Apartment Building Update

No major updates with this property and Zach's discussion with the parties who are potentially interested. On Friday, June 4th a significant part of the roof caved in from all the rain and spilled out into the alley. Zach has contacted Williamston Public Works to ask them to clean it up, but that has not been done yet.

Downtown Building Vacancy Registry- Discussion

Zach referenced a class he attended last week, during which the topic of Vacant Building Registries/Ordinances came up. This is a sort of new thing in NC, and has only been put into discussion in the last few years. Some bigger cities have put them into place, but there is still quite a bit of legal grey area surrounding them. The concept is that downtown property owners who let their buildings sit and remain vacant for a set period of time with no attempt to sell, make improvements, or rent, are required to put their building on a registry. If another period of time lapses without them making moves on the building, a fine is levied on the property. Zach sent a question to the hosts of the seminar, asking them about what "teeth" a municipality would actually have to enforce such an ordinance or registry, from a legal standpoint. The instructors did not have an answer to the question right then, but said they would contact the North Carolina League of Municipalities for further clarification.

The group discussed the possibility of this policy being implemented in Williamston. Stephen mentioned how important this would be to maintaining our existing building stock. We also discussed downtown property owners having insurance on their buildings, which at least a few do not have. We are not sure if this is something that a municipality would have legal authority to enforce, but may be part of establishing a Vacant Building Registry.

The group resolved to put together a game plan to present to the Town Board of Commissioners once Zach hears back from the NC League of Municipalities. We want to give the Board something to work with us on, rather than us leaving the ball in their court and saying "fix the problem."

Events Calendar

After hearing back from every downtown group and business we reached out to, Cameron put together an events calendar for all things downtown from June to October. We will be printing these in-house and distributing them throughout the county and Eastern NC.

MARTIN COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL

Zach gave a quick update- the MCAC is having their annual membership banquet on Thursday 6/24. The entertainment at the event will be Frankie Harrison and the Bluegrass Band.

MARTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE- Small Business Center.

Not present for this meeting.

WOMAN'S CLUB

Next meeting on Tuesday, 6/22 in 18 months!

FRIENDS OF THE OLD COURTHOUSE

Ila stated that the Jesse Fuller Jones House located in the Spring Green Community, near Hamilton, will be their ornament this year.

It is the site of the first hospital in Martin County It is on the National Register of Historic Places — October 1980.

The house was built as the Dr. Jesse Fuller Jones home between 1800 — 1830.

Today it is the home of Freddie M. Powell, retired Roanoke High School Teacher. He restored the house in the 80's, doing the work himself. (Taken directly from Ila's email to Zach after the meeting)

MARTIN COUNTY TOURISM

Not present for this meeting.

DISCUSSION

- a. Gemma mentioned that the Community Garden had their first major harvest, all of which was donated to a local church.
- b. The Community Garden is planning a Unity Festival for their 1st Anniversary in October. They are aiming for the event to bring people of all cultures and walks of life together, with folks bringing their favorite dishes to share.

ADJOURNMENT

We adjourned at 1:00