

Boone County Historic Preservation Review Board
Meeting Minutes
July 9, 2020
4:00 PM

The Boone County Historic Preservation Review Board held their monthly meeting on the above date via video teleconference using the Zoom online platform. The meeting was conducted pursuant to KRS 61.826, Kentucky Senate Bill 150 and OAG 20-05 and was necessitated by the state of emergency regarding the threats to public health presented by the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

- I. **Call to Order.** There being a quorum of the membership present, Chair Pat Wingo called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

- II. **Roll Call.** Review Board members present were Chair Pat Wingo, Vice-Chair Bridget Striker, Pat Berry, Pat Fox, Lisa Hoffman, Dr. Eric Jackson, and Tom Schiffer. Also present was Kentucky Heritage Council Certified Local Government Coordinator Vicki Birenberg, Assistant County Administrator Matthew Webster, and Matt Becher and Bob Jonas representing the Staff of the Boone County Planning Commission.

- III. **Approval of Minutes.** Ms. Hoffman moved to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2020, Review Board business as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Striker and approved unanimously.

- IV. **Items for Discussion and/or Action**
 1. **Boone County Zoning Code & Graves Road Interchange Study updates.**

Mr. Becher noted that there have been no significant developments to report since the board's June meeting but that, to the best of knowledge, the timelines for both projects remain on track for completion in 2020.

 2. **Local Historic Preservation Public Survey.** Mr. Becher referred everyone to the list of five initial survey questions Ms. Striker provided for distribution, which he also shared on screen. Ms. Striker said they were intended to be basic and serve as a starting point for discussion, gauge interest from the public and provide direction for further survey work. Ms. Wingo thinks they are a good foundation to gauge what people already know about local history and preservation. After brief discussion, she asked what others thought about timing for pushing out the initial survey. Ms. Striker replied that the public library is finding that people are currently overwhelmed with virtual content, so it would be wise to wait until at least September. There was general agreement to this and talk about using the social media pages of relevant organizations Facebook and the County's CERKL newsletter. Mr. Berry suggested that it could go to Boone County Schools and Mr. Webster added that it would reach everyone in the school's database through CERKL. Ms. Wingo said that all sounded good and that we should shoot for September.

3. **Historic Boone County Column Articles.** Ms. Wingo briefly explained the history of the news column, which ran monthly from 2006 to 2016 and that board was hoping to republish a number of them. She went on to say that Mr. Webster is amenable to using the CERKL newsletter to get them out and gauge interest. She and Ms. Hoffman are working on organizing the 100+ articles and hope to choose one in the coming weeks to distribute. Based on how it works out, they can decide whether it is worth pursuing digital newspapers such as *River City News* and the *Northern Kentucky Tribune*.
4. **Florence Main Street Historic District.** Ms. Wingo provided an update on this status of the effort, which began last year. To date, the project has included additional historic structures survey by a consultant within a proposed expansion area to the existing Florence Main Street (FMS) District, revised survey forms for existing properties in the FMS, a study by another consulting addressing the zoning update that will be needed, and preliminary design guidelines revisions. She went on to describe updates to a flexible parking area/outdoor event space and the significant rehabilitation of the 1938 Florence Fire Station, which the City hopes to lease out for use as a restaurant. Mr. Becher screen shared a parcel map showing the existing and proposed expanded FMS, which Dr. Jackson asked if the map could be emailed to the group at a later time. Mr. Becher said he would confirm with Mr. Jonas that he had the most recent version of the map before distributing it. Ms. Wingo indicated that Josh Hunt at the City of Florence would be heading up the project after her retirement at the end of the month. Mr. Berry asked whether the district was going to be expanded south across Dixie Hwy. Mr. Becher explained that it was going to expand south to, but not across Dixie Hwy in order to take in some older buildings and potential redevelopment sites not included within the original district FMS boundary.
5. **2019-2020 Projects: KHS Historical Markers, Old Burlington Cemetery.** Mr. Becher reported that all invoicing and payments for the iron fence repair at Old Burlington Cemetery (\$680) and both KHS highway markers (Old Courthouse [\$3,000] and Florence Baptist Church [\$1,320 Review Board]) have been completed. Ms. Wingo stated that she heard from KHS staff that everything is about 3 months behind due to the pandemic. She added that the owners of the church are excited about the marker and have a late 19th century bell to reinstall at the church. For Ms. Birenberg's benefit, Mr. Becher explained that the Fiscal Court has been allocated \$5,000 per year to the Review Board to put toward historic preservation projects. The board spread that among two grant projects and aluminum fence repair at Old Burlington Cemetery in 2018-19 and toward historical markers and iron fence repair in 2019-2020.
6. **2020-2021 Funding and Potential Projects.** Mr. Becher confirmed that Fiscal Court has again allocated \$5,000 for preservation projects in FY 2020-2021. He added that it does not appear that the National Register project for African-American resources suggested by Ms. Striker and Dr. Jackson at the

last meeting would proceed until sometime in mid-2021. The other project discussed at the January retreat was a signage program for small family cemeteries, for which Mr. Becher has begun work on a list of potential sites. At the last meeting, there was discussion about asking the County Sign Shop to make/install the signs. Mr. Becher wondered whether that is the best approach and asked for Mr. Webster's input from the County's perspective. Mr. Webster stated that it would probably be best to contract out the work rather than have county personnel enter private property to install signs and potentially create an expectation that the county is assuming maintenance of a cemetery. After further discussion, it was decided that it would be best to seek input from the county attorney. Regarding a question about sign design and size, Mr. Becher shared examples of existing signs designed by Ms. Striker and made/installed in the mid-2000s by FastSigns of Florence. Mr. Becher briefly touched on the impetus for the signage program – i.e., that the Zoning regulations have had a mechanism for cemetery preservation within developments for over 20 years, but that signage was not part of the requirement. Ms. Birenberg asked whether the CLG-funded cemetery mapping program completed some years ago [1999-2000] had been put to any use. Mr. Becher replied that it was an “incredibly valuable” project that documented the locations and extent of over 50 small cemeteries, forming the basis for a GIS layer which presently includes over 225 cemeteries. Ms. Striker interjected that the cemetery GIS is used nearly every day by library patrons doing property or genealogical research. Ms. Birenberg was glad to hear the project was put to good use and encouraged the board to seek funding for additional projects in the future. Ms. Striker replied that the goal is to time the African American National Register Multiple Properties project to take advantage of both CLG and Fiscal Court funds in 2021-2022. Ms. Birenberg said to expect grant applications again this November. With that part of the discussion concluded, Mr. Becher noted that he had recently been contacted by Jan Garbett about the Souther Cemetery. Ms. Striker said she spoke with Ms. Garbett as well about installing interpretive signage for the African American burials at Souther. Ms. Striker and Dr. Jackson both feel that identifying cemeteries with known African American burials needs to be done, but that the scope goes well beyond a single cemetery. With over 80 cemeteries already on the list, a plaque or interpretive sign at each one would be a daunting task. Alternatively, a decal (with QR code) could readily be added to an existing sign to show the African American designation and provide link(s) to further information. Dr. Jackson suggested the next step is to have a conversation with Ms. Garbett to clarify her interests. To conclude the discussion on 2020-2021 projects, Mr. Becher noted that some of the large silver maple trees in Old Burlington Cemetery are at the end of their lifespans and have potential to cause serious damage to the fencing and grave markers as they fall apart. He is hoping that the Parks Department and county's tree contractor can take care of priorities but, if not, then some funds could be put toward tree removal. Ms. Wingo agreed and said to talk with Parks Director David Whitehouse and see what might be possible. Ms.

Striker said that if 2020-2021 funds were not put toward tree removal, she had some other ideas to present at the next meeting.

7. **Upcoming Review Board Meeting Schedule and Procedures.** Mr. Becher noted that the board's next meetings are scheduled for September 10 and October 8, adding that the September meeting should be the first "in person" meeting since the COVID shutdown began in March. If so, he would seek to have it held in a room larger than the board's usual meeting space. He added that he would be out of the office for a couple of weeks in July following shoulder surgery, but that his absence should not affect the Review Board in any way. Ms. Wingo asked Ms. Birenberg if there was any questions she had of the board or agenda topics. She replied no and complimented the board on "always doing a great job" and encouraged future use of the existing grant program. She added that she would follow up with an official letter from the KHC about the Review Board's CLG status and performance. She closed by inviting the board to participate in the 5-year update of the State Historic Preservation Plan, which should kick off in September.

V. Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Wingo asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Schiffer made the motion to adjourn at 5:00 PM. Ms. Striker seconded and all agreed. The next business meeting of the Historic Preservation Review Board will be September 10, 2020, 4:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Becher, Rural/Open Space Planner
Boone County Planning Commission

Thomas Schiffer, Recording Secretary

Pat Wingo, Chair
Boone County Historic Preservation Review Board

Date