Sparta-Hancock Historical Society Minutes 21 July 2019

The SHHS meeting opened at 2pm at Pierce Memorial Church’s Fellowship Hall.

Members present were:

Rick and Mauriel Joslyn

Nancy Stephens

Mark Phillips

Dip Polatty

Jan Garland

Maria Rodriguez

Scott and Vonda Garrison

Capronis

Minutes were read and adopted from the April Meeting

OLD BUSINESS:

Lafayette day was a success. Congressman Jody Hice, the French Consul from Atlanta, and Local politicians all attended and spoke. The only disappointment was the lack of media coverage. The only newspaper who covered the event was The Ishmaelite, and no one contacted radio stations or WMAZ 13 before hand to cover the event. Thus all our good work was not advertised. Maria brought DVDs which were done by the Chamber of Commerce. They are available at Rooms U Love. We decided it would not be viable to do this annually. Perhaps at the 2ooth anniversary in 2025.

NEW BUSINESS:

Dip updated us on the HPC. Sparta and Hancock County is now back in compliance after 15 years. The next step is do mail out notices to all residents of the Historic District to notify them what the ordinance means. Certificates of Approval will be needed for any new exterior changes to houses that are over 50 years old. He presented the photo survey that he and Rick prepared. This will also restore our Certified Local Government status that was allowed to lapse under the city administration. It will allow for many more grants to help the city improve both physically and economically.

The 1840s former police station situation was covered by Rick. He related the history of the building, the mayor’s attempt at demolition, and the neglect that has been allowed to continue under the mayor’s watch. The City and historical society grant application to the Watson Brown Junior Foundation was accepted and the group gave us $5000, to be match by $2500 from the city and $2500 from the Development Authority. This will cover a new roof to stabilize the building and keep water from pouring in.

Uses for the building are endless. It could be designated as office space for The Chamber of Commerce, with a public meeting/conference room, Historic Preservation Commission office, and other city needs. No repossession of the burned out neighboring Beauty Supply building has been done. It has had many past fires. The city had no insurance on the building, only the contents, and the police chief Evans claimed all that as his personal property so he got the $65,000 instead of the city getting it.

Question: What will be the requirement for hiring the work to be done? Will public notice for bids go out? Will the city have control? We think the Historical Society should have 50% decision making since we got the grant.

Nancy Stephens brought up the Scenic Byways and asked if the HPC ordinances can enforce it. That would help county visitation to advertise that we are on the Scenic Byways, which is a national designation. Dip asked what enabling legislation it has. The HPC has to abide by both State and Federal rules. He suggested taking a copy to the County and City. The Lovejoy house on Hwy. 15 has been demolished, and that would not have been allowed to happen if ordinances were enforced.

Rick mentioned receiving DOT notification about impacts on widening the Sandersville Hwy. Two historic properties would be affected. The Mt. Hope Church and the Victorian farm house of the Capronis. Rick has addressed this with the DOT in writing.

FUNDRAISING SUGGESTIONS:

House Tours — Christmas Progressive Wassailing Date of Dec. 7

tentatively chosen.

There will be a planning meeting later in the fall. We could sell two different tickets, one for evening tours and one for afternoons if people do not want to be out late.

Cookbook reprint — Rick bought an original Drummer’s Home cookbook

and discussion was held about possibly reprinting it.

Walking Tour — We have an old walking tour write up with a map. It will have to be updated since some houses are no longer there.Dip mentioned mini-grants from Hancock Health Improvement Partnership. Mauriel will look into applying for one.

Dip applied for one to get 50 copies of the Design Guidelines from the HPC.

Jan volunteered to take on the cookbook layout.

Nancy will get an estimate for reprinting the Old Postcard collection.

Sterling Everett’s 6 prints were a fundraiser for the old Foundation. Mauriel will try to see if he could give us permission to do a new reprint edition.

REVIVING THE BOARD:

Nancy Stephens raised questions about how the money has been spent on Mt. Zion and the Graves Barn. Rick provided her copies of all the financial spending that went on over a period of 10 years. She asked why we no longer had a Board to make decisions. Looking back through the early 2000s, most of those board members moved away, and when the current membership became the core of the SHHS, there were not enough people to have a large board. So decisions were brought straight to the membership and voted on.

Suggestion was made to run an ad in the paper to notify all members that we need to have an election, and discuss choosing members to be on a Board again.

GRAVES BARN

A clean up day was set for Sat. Aug. 3 to meet at the barn and take care of some of the over growth around it. The Garrisons who bought the Hattaway House across the street volunteered to have donuts and offered their house for restrooms. The Society will provide water.

Ideas were discussed about what kind of event we could hold there. A plan for drainage of the property is on paper but has not been funded. Nancy mentioned that sewer lines that run into the creek have been blocked because the city does not clean it out or the storm drains either.

Mark commented that Marilyn Meyers’ new barn contractor had left over materials.

Meeting date of Sept. 8 was set for elections, and Xmas planning.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15. Lemonade and cookies were served.