

Minutes
Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust
April 15, 2021

The Historic and Natural Resources Trust Board (HNRT) met for its first meeting on April 15, 2021 in the Innovate Building at 148 River St., Greenville from 4:00 - 6:15PM.

Members present: Carlton Owen (17), Brent Odom (18), Pam Shucker (19), Alex Reynolds (20), Dave Hargett (21), Joe Pulliam (22), Tripp Taylor (23), Doug Harper (24), Kenneth Baxter (25), Bryant Harrison (26), Dennis DeFrancesco (27)

Member absent: Matthew Thomas (28)

Guests present: Joe Kernell - County Administrator

Nicole Wood - Assistant County Administrator

Meredith Papapieris - Greenville County staff

Anne Peden - Historic Commission

Mike Stewart - Greenville County Soil and Water Commission

Kirk Brown – [The Greenville News](#)

Doug Harper as Acting Chair called the meeting to order. Being the first meeting, there were no Minutes to review. Members and guests introduced themselves. Harper reviewed the Agenda.

Election of Officers

Election of HNRT Officers was the first item of business. Joe Pulliam nominated Doug Harper as Chair with second by Pam Shucker. Vote was unanimous for Harper as Chair. Dave Hargett nominated Carlton Owen as Vice Chair with Tripp Taylor's second. With the unanimous vote, Owen became Vice Chair. Owen nominated Pam Shucker as Secretary with Taylor's second and with a unanimous vote Shucker became Secretary.

Review of Operating Procedures

Vice Chair Owen offered a review of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), which applies to any County Commission. He provided a summary of the most important points related to HNRT and encouraged the Board members to review the booklet mailed in the packet from Greenville County Administration.

As part of responsibility, members need to understand in order to comply with FOIA:

- All meetings will be open to the public.
- Public notice of the meeting agenda, place, date, and time must be posted by Noon on Friday the week before the meeting.
- Each meeting must have a quorum of 7 members.
- If an Executive Session is needed, possibly for legal advice or to consult on land contracts, no vote will be taken until return to meeting of the whole.
- No actions nor discussion of Commission business can be taken by email or phone unless such is a formal electronic meeting of the Board.

Harper asked County Administrator Joe Kernell to introduce his staff members present. Kernell offered their availability to the Board as well as legal counsel from County Administrator Mark Tollison, if needed. Regina McCaskill is staff support for County Council and to its Boards and Commissions. He expressed that this is a good time for this Board to work as Greenville is developing rapidly and he desires its best parts to be available for our kids and grandkids.

Budget Request

Harper introduced the need for HNRT's Budget Request. As Greenville County operates on a two-year budget that cycles in July, the Board has an urgent need to request seed money now to begin work for the next two years. HNRT will request grants from other organizations and non-profits that partner with HNRT, but in making such requests local contributions assure grantors of making a valid investment.

County Administrator Kernell discussed Greenville County's excellent AAA rating and the difficulty of taking previously budgeted funds from the needs of other organizations. He agreed that stimulus funds could be a place to find money to prove HNRT's value and to create a successful track-record. Kernell also indicated HNRT could approach the Council for additional funds if needed for special projects.

Owen proposed the following motion with second by Harrison. The motion passed unanimously.

We respectfully request that County Council approve an initial funding level of \$5MM/Year for each of the next two budget years. This amount will allow the Board to begin its important work. With rapid growth and escalating land values, we view this request as an interim step. It will enable the Board to prove itself and earn Council's and the public's confidence in accomplishing its mission and supporting the County's Comprehensive Plan.

While we believe that substantially more funding than \$5MM is necessary to adequately address the County's needs for open space, watershed and farmland protection, preservation of vital historic sites, and more, we are especially sensitive to other community needs and do not want funds to be taken away from them.

We make this request with the following understandings, that:

**To the extent possible and practical, at least for this initial budget cycle, we urge Council to look at potential one-time funding opportunities, such as federal stimulus funds to meet some or all of this request as the project areas of the Trust appears to align with the recovery measures outlined in the American Rescue Plan fund uses. However, if those opportunities are not possible, we urge you to provide the requested funding of \$5MM/year from the County's general funds.*

**A certain level of committed funding will be necessary to attract matching funds and to move rapidly to take advantage of opportunities that have very short windows of opportunity.*

**Even with a base funding level in place, exceptional opportunities may arise that require Council to consider additional special project funding; and,*

**Initial funding for this first budget cycle should be viewed as an interim step to establish future funding levels that address long-term needs.*

Future Work Priorities

Harper facilitated a discussion of future business and priorities. The list included:

- #1 *Create a budget and obtain funds from Council
- #1 *Discuss how individual board members interact with their Council representative
 - *Write working policies and procedures
 - *Develop a grant application with ranking criteria
 - *Develop collaboration with partner organizations
 - *Develop scoring mechanics for grant requests
 - * Build on other organizations' existing framework
- #2b *Create an educational workshop for Board members
 - *Identify voids we can fill and sensitivities
- #3 *Set time and place for regular meetings
 - * Create a sub-committee to review applications
 - *Avoid conflicts of interest
- #2a *Develop education components for meetings
 - *Collect inquiries from peers and public
 - *Set a timeline to be up and running

Following this discussion, Harper indicated he will invite speakers to future meetings for further Board education including “public comment” opportunities at each meeting. A dedicated County staff liaison is likely not available at this time.

Odom moved the meeting be adjourned. With several seconds and a unanimous vote, the motion carried and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Pam Shucker, Secretary
Approved 6.9.2021