

Walker County Historical Preservation Commission

November 15, 2021

Rossville Athletic Complex

301 Williams St.

Rossville, Georgia 30741

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm. by Chairman Culpepper

Public notice of meeting was emailed to the Walker County Messenger on 11/10/21 and posted on the Walker County FB page.

Commissioners present: Chairman John Culpepper, Vice Chairman Alan Slaven, Secretary Renee Griffin, Frances Cobb, Randall Pittman, Commissioner Patrick Cook, absent.

Introduction of Commissioners and Visitors.

Beverly Foster, President of the Walker County African American Historical and Alumni Association, Inc. advised Commission the Grand Masonic Lodge of Georgia had replaced the roof on the African Masonic Lodge located approximately one mile south of Chickamauga on State Route 341(Cove Road). She further stated the Grand lodge wants to be proactive in preserving the building and recognize its importance to the African American community in Walker County.

A quorum of Commissioners was established.

Commissioner Pittman made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Vice Chair Slaven, motion carried.

Commissioner Cobb made a motion to approve the October 18,2021 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Dorsey, motion carried.

Old Business:

Chairman Culpepper read Walker County Resolution R-048-21 that was adopted by the Walker County Board of Commissioners on October 28, 2021, for the purchase of the lot north of the Marsh House at a negotiated sale price of 42,851.58. The Commission had supported the purchase of the lot by Walker County.

Chairman Culpepper advised the Commission that Shannon Whitfield, Chairman of the Walker County Board of Commissioners had approved the purchase of name badges and name plates with holders as requested by the Commission.

Chairman Culpepper advised Commission that he had submitted the Georgia Certified Local Government Report and Evaluation and supporting documents to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Georgia Historic Preservation Division that is required for Walker County to regain its status as a Georgia Certified Local Government. Once certified Walker County can apply for Historic Preservation grants.

Commissioner Dorsey gave an update of the Commission Letterhead being designed by the Arts Department of Lafayette High School.

The Commission Facebook page is still in development pending county government input and approval.

Chairman Culpepper advised the Commission has the authority to accept donations and shall ensure that these funds do not displace appropriated governmental funds.

New Business:

Chairman Culpepper gave a status report on the District Hill African American Cemetery Restoration project located in the same community (Once Known as the Glades) as the African American Masonic Lodge south of Chickamauga which began in 2012. A ground penetrating radar study was funded by the Georgia Civil War Commission (GCWC) which located 125 unmarked graves. The GCWC was able to fund the study since Mark Thrash an ex-salve who helped bury the dead after the Battle of Chickamauga is buried in the cemetery. A landscaping plan from the University of Georgia was funded by the Lyndhurst Foundation. Georgia Power has improved the access road, the Frank Pierce Foundation provided funds for fencing, purchase of grave markers, landscaping plants, trees, and other items. Grave markers were put down by scouts and volunteers on November 13, 2021, and six hundred daffodils will be planted in the future. The goal is for the cemetery to be open to the public.

Secretary Griffin asked guest Beverly Foster to elaborate on the preservation of the Napier AME cemetery in the Center Post community.

Mrs. Foster advised Commission of her T.V program "The Beverly's Historical Moments", October show was about the Napier AME cemetery. The show is available on UCTV last Thursday of the month. She also gave a brief history of the three African American Rosenwald Schools that were in Walker County, one located at Dewberry, one at Wallaceville and one at Cedar Grove. They were constructed by funds provided by Mr. Julius Rosenwald who was part owner and president of Sears, Roebuck and Company. The Rosenwald Fund built more than 5,000 schools, shops, and teacher homes for the education of African American children primarily in the South during the early 20th century.*

Commissioner Pittman made motion to reconvene in January and skip the December meeting due to Christmas Holidays, seconded by Commissioner Dorsey. Motion carried.

The next meeting will be Monday January 17, 2022, at the Walker County African American History Museum and Cultural Center in the Wardlaw Building (old Long John Silver's building) in Lafayette beginning at 6:00 pm.

Commissioner Dorsey made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Pittman seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:27pm

Submitted by Renee Griffin

- Information from Wikipedia