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4 **Historic Preservation Commission**
5 **Meeting Minutes**
6

7 **October 8, 2009**
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9 Members Present: George Nicholos, Chair
10 David Heim, Vice-Chair
11 Sam Leary
12 Vanda Dixon
13 Ron Askew
14 Victor Pickett
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16 Staff Present: Mark E. Shea
17 Gary Walton
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19 Others Present: Cyndia Merrell
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21 The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. A correction was made to line 25 of the 9-
22 10-09 minutes to substitute the word "enable" for "in able". Mr. Heim made a motion to
23 approve the amended minutes. Mr. Leary seconded the motion and the motion was
24 approved.
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26 The meeting continued with a discussion of the draft interpretive guidelines. Guideline
27 #2 was seen as more of a zoning issue and that a site plan should be required showing
28 the location of the sign and where the parking is. Guideline #5 was changed to add the
29 word "face" to "sign" to make sure the size did not include the support structure. Add
30 an item to Guideline #8 to include the full name and address of individuals cited for oral
31 histories. Guideline #6 should be changed to add provision of material
32 recommendations. The Commission had an extensive discussion on whether there
33 should be a standard official local marker. Mr. Shea stated that this may get
34 complicated because of the various public, private and public/private projects that
35 include sign packages with different goals or themes. The Commission felt that it would
36 be good to have a standardized decorative sign for the recent proposals along City
37 roadways. The Commission suggested that a sign be looked into at the
38 Superintendent's house that would emphasize the need to repair the house. Mr. Shea
39 stated that a sign for the house was on the Dismal Swamp Canal Trail list and possibly
40 could contain this message.
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1 The next item of business was discussion of the Bell's Mill School sign. Mr. Shea gave
2 the Commission a brief summary of events regarding the Commission's continuation of
3 the sign and the subsequent discussions with Dr. Alexander. Mr. Gary Walton, Interim
4 Traffic Engineer for Public Works, then explained to the Commission that the sign shop
5 fabricated the sign after a request from the Sheriff's office. Staff from the Public Works
6 sign shop was not made aware that the sign had not been approved. Senior staff was
7 not consulted in the matter. Mr. Walton continued by stating that the Manager's Office
8 indicated that it would be more harmful to take the sign down at this point since there
9 was a public ceremony with the community of interest. Mr. Walton indicated that he and
10 the City Engineer were very upset about what happened and have taken steps to
11 prevent an un-approved sign from being installed again. The Commission expressed
12 concern about what had happened and understood how the mistake was made to erect
13 the sign. However, they did not understand why the sign was not taken down when the
14 mistake was uncovered. The Commission spent some time discussing what their
15 purpose was as a Commission and the Chair expressed that they need to go on record
16 to question whether their volunteer time and effort was meaningful to the City. After
17 further discussion, Mr. Pickett made a motion that the Bell's Mill sign be replaced when
18 the Commission and Dr. Alexander agreed on the message. Mr. Askew seconded the
19 motion and the motion was approved by unanimous vote. Mr. Nicholas indicated that
20 he may draft a letter to the appropriate authority if the sign message was not changed.

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22 The next order of business was discussion of the proposed Dozier's Corner sign. Mr.
23 Nicholas gave a suggestion on how the sentence dealing with the location could be
24 rewritten for clarity. Another suggestion was to give a unique reason why the 4
25 teachers should be called out or to leave the sentence out. There was also discussion
26 regarding the use of the term "colored" when referring to people and not the historic
27 name of the school. Other minor changes were suggested. The commission agreed
28 that the term African American would be better. Mr. Shea will make the suggested
29 changes to the text and forward to Dr. Alexander. If he does not agree with the text, the
30 item will be discussed in November. Dr. Alexander was strongly encouraged to attend.

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32 Mr. Nicholas requested that a Commission mission statement be discussed next month
33 along with the Commission's Strategic Plan and the City's Comprehensive Plan section
34 dealing with Historic Preservation. Mr. Nicholas also asked about participating in the
35 future Heritage Day's event. Mr. Shea will contact Parks and Recreation about what is
36 involved.

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38 There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.