

**Minutes of the  
New Bern Planning & Zoning Board  
November 1, 2011**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the New Bern Planning & Zoning Board was held in the City Hall Courtroom, 300 Pollock Street, on Tuesday, November 1, 2011 at 6:30 P.M. The meeting was a joint meeting between the Planning & Zoning Board and the Historic Preservation Commission.

**Planning & Zoning Board**

**Members present:**

Mr. Tim Tabak, Chair  
Ms. Stevie Bennett  
Mr. Jimmy Dillahunt  
Ms. Tiffany Dove  
Mr. Tripp Eure  
Mr. Patrick McCullough  
Mr. Kip Peregoy  
Mrs. Dorothea White  
Mrs. Velda Whitfield  
Mr. Paul Yaeger

**Members excused or absent:**

NONE.

**Historic Preservation Commission**

**Members present:**

Mr. Peter Adolph, Chair  
Ms. Peggy Broadway  
Mr. Rich Frye  
Mr. Jack Morton, Jr.  
Mr. Richard Parsons  
Mr. Tim Thompson

**Members excused or absent:**

Ms. Karen Britton (HPC)  
Mr. Bradley Cummins (HPC)  
Mr. Johnny Harrison (HPC)

**Staff present:**

Mr. Bernard George, Land & Community Development Administrator  
Mr. Mike Avery, Planning and Inspections Director  
Mrs. Rebekah Pelletier, Administrative Assistant

**Prayer:**

A prayer for guidance was given by Mr. George.

Chairman Tabak called the meeting to order. Roll call was taken and a quorum declared.

**New Business**

## **A. Consideration for recommendation of the Historic Preservation Plan draft.**

A presentation of the Historic Preservation Plan draft was given by Mary Ruffin Hanbury from Hanbury Preservation Consulting located in Raleigh, NC. The firm was hired by the city approximately one year ago for consulting purposes to help create the Historic Preservation Plan for the City of New Bern.

Ms. Hanbury began the presentation with a timeline of the planning process to create the draft of the Historic Preservation Plan. She stated the initial meeting with former City Planner Annette Stone included an objective of five tasks to be completed. In December 2010 a Steering Committee was formed to focus on the important issues related to the plan. December also included two public meetings guided by Hanbury Preservation Consulting to instruct approximately 44 attendees on what historic preservation is, a map exercise, and a survey for concerns of the general public. A joint meeting between the Historic Preservation Commission and the City of New Bern Planning Department was held in February 2011. September 2011 included another public meeting where an email distribution list was compiled for any citizen wishing to receive notifications of the process of the Historic Preservation Plan. Lastly, a public workshop was held in October 2011 at the City of New Bern public library. Ms. Hanbury stated that there is a website with content that includes all documents and results for public access. After reviewing the timeline, Ms. Hanbury gave a short synopsis of the table of contents for the plan that included a history of New Bern, previous preservation efforts, preservation players, regulatory framework for preservation, federal and North Carolina statutes, implementation chart, raw data in the appendix, and financial incentives. She then recited the vision statement and elaborated on the six goals of the Historic Preservation Plan draft.

**The first goal of the plan is to protect New Bern's historic resources. Ms. Hanbury explained in detail the ten proposed action steps to achieve this goal.**

### **Board Comments:**

Mr. George asked Ms. Hanbury to compare the local and national registers that were described in the first goal. Ms. Hanbury stated that the national register was created by the federal government with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The list includes important sites on the national, state, and local levels where famous people lived, historical events occurred, or architecturally historical buildings are located. It is a federal program with state level responsibility; the state historic offices are located in Raleigh and Greenville, NC. Ms. Hanbury denoted that it is a two part process for a site to be added to the national register. The national register is purely honorary and has no impact on private property rights. She also stated that the local register is directed by local zoning and Historic Preservation Commission guidelines. The local register is created with state statutes at the state level. A Certificate of Appropriateness must be acquired by the owner before being allowed to alter the exterior of the site. Ms. Hanbury declared that a site can be included on the national register, local register, or both.

Chairman Tabak asked Ms. Hanbury to expand on the tax benefits and financial incentives for individuals who owned sites with certain designations mentioned in the first goal. Ms. Hanbury responded that both the federal and North Carolina state tax code provide for tax credits for the

rehabilitation of historic sites. She also said there is a provision in the North Carolina state tax code that provides for property tax relief for local landmarks. There are certain guidelines to follow when applying for these tax credits.

**The second goal of the plan is to include more diversity by expanding designation, recognition, and participation. Ms. Hanbury explained in detail the six proposed action steps to achieve this goal.**

**Board Comments:**

Mr. Peregoy asked Ms. Hanbury to give an example of a cultural landscape mentioned in the second goal. Ms. Hanbury responded that a cultural landscape can be a designed landscape such as a garden, an area with vernacular use such as a tree line for the cultivation of adjacent farms, or a designed park or plaza. She referenced the nonprofit organization, The Cultural Landscape Foundation ([tclf.org](http://tclf.org)), for further clarification. Chairman Adolph gave a specific example of a canal located in Denver, CO believed to be the oldest structure by man still surviving in the city.

Mrs. Whitfield asked if the history of James City would also be included in the oral history project of action step three, goal two. Ms. Bennett clarified that James City is part of Craven County but not within the city limits of New Bern. The plan is prepared for only the area within the city limits. Ms. Hanbury added that James City would be a valuable prospect to add to the historic preservation effort at a later time.

**The third goal of the plan is to increase awareness and education about New Bern's history, resources, and preservation. Ms. Hanbury explained in detail the twelve proposed action steps to achieve this goal.**

**Board Comments:**

Mr. Parsons requested that the acronym HPF, Historic Preservation Foundation, respectfully be changed to NBPF, the New Bern Preservation Foundation. Ms. Hanbury concurred.

**The fourth goal of the plan is to identify and increase the resources for preservation and build capacity among partners. Ms. Hanbury explained in detail the six proposed action steps to achieve this goal.**

**Board Comments:**

Chairman Tabak asked if counties and cities typically work together for the historic preservation effort; for example James City and New Bern. Ms. Hanbury responded that both entities are able to. She added that the combined effort between two entities would be more likely to procure funds for historic preservation.

**The fifth goal of the plan is to review and improve existing municipal preservation program infrastructure and implementation. Ms. Hanbury explained in detail the eight proposed action steps to achieve this goal.**

**Board Comments:**

None.

**The sixth goal of the plan is to develop policies to address development including infill, parking, and height issues. Ms. Hanbury explained in detail the four proposed action steps to achieve this goal.**

**Board Comments:**

Ms. Bennett commented that for the last two years when she has visited downtown New Bern, there has been readily available open parking spaces. She denoted that the problem may be due to the fact business owners and employees park in the public spaces instead of leasing other parking spaces from the city for \$20 a month. Due to this knowledge, Ms. Bennett requested that action step four of goal six be left out of the Historic Preservation Plan draft.

**This concluded the presentation from Hanbury Preservation Consulting.**

**Board Comments:**

Ms. Bennett asked how the joint meeting was advertised. She was disappointed in the turnout and missed having more public input. Ms. Bennett also felt that the number of recommendations included in the Historic Preservation Plan draft was overwhelming and needed to be simplified and prioritized by a task group. With that said, Ms. Bennett requested the draft be held up until the new Development Services Director was hired by the City of New Bern and the reorganization of the Planning and Inspections Department to the Development Services Department had been completed. Finally, Ms. Bennett requested that the presentation for the Historic Preservation Plan be drastically shortened.

Chairman Tabak asked Mr. Avery for the date the presentation was scheduled to be given to the Board of Aldermen. Mr. Avery replied that the date is set for Tuesday, November 22, 2011. Chairman Tabak requested that the public, if watching, please attend that meeting to add any comments they might have. He also suggested shortening the presentation by only giving one or two bullet points per goal unless asked to elaborate more.

Chairman Tabak asked Mr. Avery his opinion on how the reorganization of the Planning and Inspections Department might affect the Historic Preservation Plan draft going forward. Mr. Avery responded with the amount of work already put in, that it would not be a good idea to hold the draft up any further or let it rest until the Development Services Director was hired. Several board members concurred.

Mr. Yaeger concurred with Ms. Bennett. He suggested that the six goals be summarized and to look at the action steps as sub goals. Ms. Hanbury responded that she would put only one goal per slide and keep only one to two key points per goal. Mr. Yaeger concurred. He also asked why there would be a need for a Preservation Specialist as mentioned in goal five, action step two. Ms. Hanbury replied that materials, code, building plans, and building processes are often different between different periods of history.

Mr. Yaeger inquired how a large renovation was inspected. Ms. Hanbury responded that any building has to have a permit and must be inspected. Chairman Adolph added that anything exterior to a historical site has to be cleared through the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr.

Morton also added that any changes must be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission and Inspections. Mr. Yaeger then inquired about the possibility of variances. Ms. Bennett responded that this possibility would be reviewed by the Board of Adjustment. Mr. Morton added that any tax credits for interior renovations are thoroughly inspected by a person that travels from the Greenville, NC Historic Preservation office.

Mr. Frye commented that the Historic Preservation Plan draft included a considerable number of action steps and required a large sum of money. He inquired as to the expectation of the Board of Aldermen approving the plan and who would be responsible for the plan going forward. Ms. Hanbury replied that if adopted, the plan would be a policy document where certain things would fall to the city to accomplish and other things would be partnered with other organizations. Mr. Parsons inquired as to whether or not the document bound the city to any set obligations. Mr. Avery responded that it was not a strategic plan focused on short term but a long term plan that depended on the community, preservation groups, and the Board of Aldermen to allocate resources over time.

Mr. Frye asked whether or not the new City Planner would be the main person heading the plan. Mr. Avery concurred and also added that taking any action steps from policy to implementation would require citizens, groups, or organizations as a whole to move it forward to the Board of Aldermen.

Mr. Parsons commented that the Historic Preservation Plan draft had been constructed well. He suggested giving the document in literary form to the Board of Aldermen but with a curtailed presentation.

Mr. Morton stated that the document was created by a large group of citizens for a plan for the City of New Bern. He also suggested acquiring recordings and mapping cemeteries by other historic preservation groups without involving a large amount of money. Mr. Parsons concurred and added that having the policy in place before new city positions are filled would be more appropriate. Chairman Tabak asserted that the plan could be used as training tool for new city positions as well.

Mr. Peregoy asked that the boards please remember that the city has many plans which provide guidance to the city staff as the city moves forward. He added that any challenge by the community would only further enhance the plan.

**Public Comments:**

Terry Startzman, 212 Change Street, was a member of the steering committee for the Historic Preservation Plan. He commended Ms. Hanbury on the job done by her firm for the City of New Bern. Mr. Startzman agreed that at the next Board of Aldermen meeting an overseer for the Historic Preservation Plan should be appointed until the position of City Planner is filled for the City of New Bern. He also denoted that the action steps should be prioritized for the city in order to take the most critical steps first. Chairman Tabak agreed with Mr. Startzman.

Alderman White, 1811 Durham Street, stated that the Historic Preservation Plan draft should be presented in full to the Board of Aldermen for comments and debate without regard to any time

constraint for that meeting. He also commented that having a joint meeting between the Planning and Zoning Board and the Historic Preservation Commission was a positive event for the City of New Bern.

There were no other public comments and the public comment segment was closed.

Chairman Tabak asked the Historic Preservation Commission to make a recommendation.

Chairman Adolph thanked Ms. Hanbury and Hanbury Preservation Consulting.

**Motion** by Chairman Adolph to approve the Historic Preservation Plan draft: The Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the plan to the Board of Aldermen.

Chairman Tabak asked for any comments from the Planning and Zoning Board members.

Mr. Dillahunt commented that the goals should be prioritized and the plan should go forward to the Board of Aldermen.

Ms. Bennett requested that one person be appointed to oversee the plan. Chairman Tabak and Mr. Avery commented that this could be done at the Board of Aldermen meeting by recommending an appointment by the board with the motion of acceptance. Mr. Peregoy agreed. Ms. Broadway inquired if the person appointed would have to be from the Historic Preservation Commission. Board members responded that that was not necessary and that it could be a group or a steering committee instead of just one person.

**Motion** by Chairman Tabak to approve the Historic Preservation Plan draft: The Planning and Zoning Board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the plan to the Board of Aldermen.

Mr. Avery thanked everyone who had taken time to work on the Historic Preservation Plan draft.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

---

Tim Tabak, Chairman

---

Bernard George, AICP, Secretary