COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Historical Society hears plans of coutywide program

By Heather Mathes
Of the Carlisle Mercury Staff

Portions of this storyware provided by Joan Conley.

Preserving the heritage and structural history of Nicholas County is coming into new focus these days.

A special called town-meeting continued to push the Historical Society in that direction.

The society meeting which began at 7 p.m., Monday, opened with a short welcome by Harry Young to the guest speaker from the Kentucky Heritage Council, Claudia Brown.

"We welcome questions or comments that have to do with nationally registering Kentucky places."

Young added, "We hope that historic representative planning will boost society's interest in the properties that are eligible."

Brown began her slide presentation with a short introduction.

"The first step in meeting eligibility criteria is to identify resources."

The Kentucky Heritage Council has surveyed Nicholas County and it has found a great wealth of historical architecture for the National Register.

The slide presentation is coordinated by the National Parks Department. It shows some of the criteria for eligibility and sites around Kentucky that are on the register.

The presentation began by explaining the National Register was created's because of thoughtless demolition of America's National Historic sites.

The categories preserved include buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts.

The levels of significance include national, state, local.

The criteria for eligibility, are first, the influence on certain areas.

This means the places that influence pre-historic government qualify for the national register.

The second is the association with significant individuals, such as presidents and leaders in other cultures.

The third is district association.

This includes architecture, works of masters, things of high artistic value, properties and some residential areas and archaeological districts.

The fourth is data.

This includes those that yield valuable information or something that can be studied to explain a certain period.

Those that are not usually on the historical register are birthplaces of famous people, cemeteries or churches unless they are of high artistic value, or property recently moved or created less than 50 years ago.

Those buildings or sites that have deteriorated are not usually on the register unless they can be feasibly remodeled to give special characteristics to environment and make that area unique.

After this slide presentation Brown said, "The official list of cultural resources provides a sense of identity with historic past.

Nomination for the national register does not interfere with private citizens' right to property.

The only restrictions that come into play is if the owner wants tax benefits.

The property can be eligible for federal tax benefits under the Section 106 review process.

Nomination for the national register is also a planning tool for federally assisted projects.

This means a federally funded project, such as building a road, must be checked by planners to see if historic sites are through the mitigated site."

Brown went on to explain the planning stage for Nicholas County if it is decided to nominate certain districts.

"The project for Nicholas County is a multiple project listing.

"This begins with a survey of Nicholas County. Cammille Wills' earlier survey of the county would be used, although each property would have to be resurveyed to assure that no alterations had been made to disqualify it.

"Also, properties from 1885-1937 would also be added to the survey.

"Around 100 sites in Carlisle and 30-40 in the county would probably be eligible."

The funding for the project will be $15,000 to $20,000 and will run about 12 months.

This figure is split 70 percent federal and 30 percent local.

The local figure may be split 15 percent cash money and 15 percent in kind services such as donated research.

"A state professional would be hired to work with local groups as liaison between property owners and the volunteer researchers, and would do all the technical work."

In closing Brown stated, "Nicholas County is at the edge of the boom in economic growth that is happening in the Bluegrass.

"Historic preservation will help to both attract quality development and manage growth."

After Young introduced Jo Lynn Garrett, local project chairman, she also showed slides of sites in Nicholas County that are of architectural and historical significance.

"Revitalization of the county and increased awareness for the benefit of insiders as well as outsiders and the education of our young people, would be derived from undertaking such a project," Garrett said.

Some of the slides shown were of the Carlisle five and dime. Garrett said, "The red limestone and cornice band represent a lot of craftsmanship."

Brown remarked at the showing of the courthouse, "The council has found Carlisle to have one of the three best courthouse squares in the State of Kentucky."

The 30-40 people present found Lerman Brothers Store to have two time periods represented.

The top half is turn of the century and the bottom half is art deco and the Carrera glass of the 1930s.

The pineapple motif atop the old hotel is a sign of hospitality in the south.

The ornamental work of cast iron fronts and the beautiful pediment above Hopkins Drug all represent the fine craftsmanship that was once represented in Carlisle.

At the end of the presentation Young said, "It is fortunate that we have so many unique things that have endured. We must consider them for what they are and then, how they could be enhanced and hopefully this will open your eyes to the need."

In the time for questioning Young asked about owner approval.

Brown said," If there are less than 50 people in a district then they will be notified by letter and if they contest they must do so by letter."

"If there are more than 50 people in a particular district then there will be a public notice and a public hearing.

"If some do protest then they will not be listed on the national register but listed as eligible and therefore if a federal project is underway they must still be considered."

Dr. Wendell Kingsolver asked how boundaries would be decided.

Brown said, "We are mostly talking about the commercial district and residential areas in the older part of town."

The Society has until November 15 to decide whether to accept the project.

The next meeting will be held Monday, October 26, at 7:30 p.m.

All persons interested in seeing this project go forward are asked to contact Jo Lynn Garrett or one of the Society Directors with any ideas on this subject before the October 26 meeting.

This meeting, as are all society meetings, is open to the public.

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