

**Beaufort County Historic Preservation Review Board
Executive Conference Room, County Administration Building
100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, SC 29902
June 21, 2012**

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Beekman Webb, Rosalyn Browne, Natalie Hefter, Rita Igleheart, Sally Murphy

Members Absent: Caroline Donaghy, Robert Jones

Staff Present: Tony Criscitiello, Planning Director, Beaufort County; Ian Hill, Historic Preservationist and Board Administrator, Beaufort County, Linda Maietta, Planning Assistant, Beaufort County

Other Attendees: Jane Frederick, Erin Moody, W. Thomas Logan, Edie Rodgers, Laura Von Harten

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Webb: Let's call the meeting to order (at approximately 1:00 p.m.) and I'm going to ask all the Board members to please introduce themselves. What it has here is public comment for the first thing but I think we'll put that off because it's kind of better to know what you're commenting on if you're a member of the public. We're here for one issue and that is the naming of the new rail trail. We're not naming it actually, we just make our recommendation to County Council and they either like it or they throw it out or whatever they want to do with it but it's up to us to make that recommendation. We have two speakers today, Jane Frederick and Tommy Logan are going to speak in favor of their different names that they are proposing. Jane, if you're ready.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Jane Frederick: Thank you, Mr. Webb. Jane Frederick. I'm a local architect here in town and I am engaged in helping form the Friends of the Rail Trail. We've been working on this for a couple of years, moving it forward. I'm a ninth generation Southerner so I'm very sensitive to place and the history that comes with it. But when we were naming the trail, and we want to name it the Spanish Moss Rail Trail, because that's a unique name. Magnolia Trail, which is the other one that's suggested; there are Magnolia Trails in Natchez, Mississippi; Tallahassee, Florida; Leesburg, Florida; and Magnolia, Texas. As an economic issue, we see this will be a very big draw for tourists coming to ride on the trail. Friends of ours that are bicyclists go all over the country riding on bike trails and having one with a unique name that is very evocative of the Lowcountry, I think will be a help in marketing our trail. We can copyright our logo, copyright our name and be able to do the marketing that we need for the County, for the City, with a unique name like that. We've been using the Spanish Moss Trail as a name since August 2011. If you Google it, there's over 80 instances where it comes up being referenced in newspapers, blogs, people talking about it, so it's been used around town for about nine months or so. And the County has consistently used the name in their minutes, in their memorandum of understanding with the Friends of the Trail and the Path Foundation who has put a substantial

amount of monies into the developing logos, amenities, and we have a donor that will be paying for the first section of the trail. So we have moved forward in good faith with this name and we've moved forward with the support of the Beaufort, Jasper Sewer Authority which is the owner of the property. So, we picked the name because we want to be able to be the destination where people come to know where the trail is because now if you say the Comet Trail, everybody knows that's Atlanta, and we want the Spanish Moss Trail to be Beaufort. We've also been talking to Larry Rowland and the volunteer naturalists so along the trail we will both have historical markers so the history of the trail is there and we will have natural markers so people will know the flora and fauna they're looking at too. I would hope that you would let us continue with the name that we have invested a lot of time and energy in using. Thank you. (Copy of letter dated June 14, 2012, from Ms. Frederick to Chairman Webb attached.)

Chairman Webb: Thank you, Ms. Frederick. Mr. Logan.

Mr. Tommy Logan: Mr. Chairman and members of the Board, my name is Tommy Logan. I have been an avid supporter of the railroad since around 2004 when the Ports Authority announced that they were going to scuttle the port and cease to operate the railroad.

This handout that I just gave you (copy attached) gives a little bit more detail in addition to the information that was in my letter to the editor. I think it spells out most everything. We do have a very unique history here and very few places rival our history and whenever possible we should try to preserve that. I asked Ms. Dot Gnann to be here today; she and I and a number of other members have always shared the belief that we shouldn't, we have so much going for us that we really shouldn't rewrite history.

I did attempt in 2005, I got Dr. Roger Stroup, I don't know whether he was a Doctor but he was the Director of SC Archives at the time, I think Ian was invited and a number of other municipal officials to come down and take a look at the entire 27 miles in hopes that we could turn it into national historic linear trail. Several things along those lines.

Gerhard Spieler gave a talk back in 1980 and claimed that the railroad had great influence on helping Beaufort grow.

Magnolias and live oaks are the most majestic and indigenous trees in our County.

The County, of course, has received a \$1.1 million federal grant towards this endeavor and I would assume that since they are overseeing the engineering and construction that the Council should have some say in the naming of it. Ian had asked me about other historical names and I think that's pretty clear in #8 that I associated with the trail.

In addition to that, I like the idea of the garden clubs being involved as a on-going community project and other organizations that could plant magnolias at various locations, at different times, special times of the year such as Arbor Day.

I think very important is the fact that the railroad did bring so many Marine Corp recruits to Parris Island through Port Royal and as I say in #11, in honor of those folks that rode the train and the many that did not return, I think the Magnolia Line would be most appropriate. I've always been curious to exactly how the naming process works. I've been told by several Council members that when it comes to roads and bridges and parks in the County that the

County actually has the final say and that sort of thing but I really don't understand how an organization entitling themselves as "friends" of a particular effort; I don't understand exactly how that works. The only time we had any sort of public input was back on June 4 when I attempted to explain all of this as it relates to the naming.

Several things, I think there is a Spanish Moss Trail in North Carolina near Greensboro. I noticed Ms. Frederick used the name the Comet Trail in Atlanta. I think the Comet Trail in Atlanta was named after the railroad that went through there like we had the name Nancy Hanks and others that ran on the CMWC line and I noticed in one of the presentations that the gentleman gave from the Cox family; one of the bridges there was named, maybe the entire line was named after the train, wherever it was, that ran across that particular right-of-way.

I think a little bit of misconception as it relates to the Water Authority is the fact that the Water Authority does not own that right-of-way. That right-of-way is under the jurisdiction of an outfit called the Service Transportation Board. The Service Transportation Board was created back in the late 1970's, early 1980's, as an arm of the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Service Transportation Board was charged with keeping all of these railroad right-of-ways, whether long-lines or short-lines intact. South Carolina has a State law that has a reversion clause in that particular law that states that when a railroad is abandoned that the adjoining property owners will receive that property back. That's a wonderful way of doing things in my opinion but unfortunately the Federal Statute trumps the State Statute and I also think it's a good idea to keep that right-of-way intact for any future use whether it be a highway or possibly another railroad. That's what all of this is all about. The Federal government also put into place when they did the Service Transportation Board something called rail banking. Rail banking is exactly what it says. It's placed in a bank where it can be reused at some point in time for the National good. Mr. Obama could request, if we determine a need, that there could be a railroad built back on this right-of-way at any point in time. It's not all about the Water Authority. It's a fact the Federal government now is in charge of that right-of-way; they are allowing the Water Authority to use it but it is still under the jurisdiction of rail banking and along with rail banking there is something called the interim trail use. In other words, it can be used for trail until such time it's needed again for the National good. And it was purchased by a quick-claim deed just like the Ports Authority purchased the railroad from the Atlantic Coast Line or the Sea Board, I can't remember which, back in 1960 for \$550,000 and the quick-claim deed says whatever it takes to operate a railroad. It says nothing about the real estate or the dirt, if you will. And I applaud Mr. Moss for everything he's accomplished along these lines but after all it was acquired by the Water Authority first and foremost as a utility right-of-way. Now we have the opportunity to turn it into this trail but in the future it could be reused for other things.

As it relates to the magnolias, I have several documentation here from a book called Varnville, SC, 1872 to 1897, where it says a company - when the railroad company was reorganized in - actually it was chartered in 1857. Then the war came along but construction was not completed until 1872 or 1873 and it was named the Magnolia Line at that time. And in 1877 the company planted a magnolia at every mile post from Port Royal all the way to Augusta so that name has been applied to this railroad since its inception. So that would be my - that's one of the basis of my argument. Also, there are magnolias that still exist on the line. The first one being the magnolia at Millette Park which is right at the entrance gate to the Port with a little plaque that says the park is named in honor of Mr. Millette who is one of the original folks that

helped put it together with another gentlemen by the name of Appleton. There are other magnolias in the Sheldon area next to mile post 90, it's 112 miles as I said from Augusta to Port Royal. Claude McLeod told me several days ago that there is a substantial magnolia tree right by his packing shed up there that is planted in the right-of-way or on the edge of the right-of-way. They couldn't get it too close to the railroad because there was a siding there and it's been there forever. And also several across the river on the Coosaw River side.

Another interesting thing that really has nothing to do with this but it is kind of interesting - sometime during World War II, 1939 to well in the 1940's, early 1940's - 1941, 1942 - President Roosevelt came down to visit the troops or review the troops on Parris Island. The train came in and turned and went up Waddell Road, it was what they called a Y connection and would always back into Port Royal. Parris Island sent some of their carpenters over and they built a loading and unloading platform with a ramp so the President could be wheeled down there and carried over to Parris Island. Richard Gray said he was about 10 years old but he remembers it perfectly. He also brought to my attention that there was a soldier in place ever 100' of the line from Yemassee all the way down to Port Royal for, I guess, in honor of the President as well as his security and protection. So, there's a lot that goes along with this endeavor and I would certainly hope that you would agree with me that we really shouldn't start rewriting history and we need to stick with something that's appropriate and everlasting; on-going, rather.

Also, the idea of the community input on planting additional magnolias on this stretch of it or wherever the route will be whether it be Port Royal to Whale Branch, but I think that would be a magnificent project for a number of civic groups to become involved in and make the line more appealing and something kind of unique.

Also, a lot of this stuff is documented in the South Carolina Historical Magazine by your good friend, Marty Davis. He wrote about a 30-page article. His interests, of course, were in the financing of it, issuing the bonds, and how it was actually financially put together more so than the construction of it. But he, as well, mentions the fact that there was - Duncan Carol Wilson who owned the comfort house - DC Wilson - he was the President in 1872, 1873 and at that time it was named the Magnolia Line. I would request, I would ask that you seriously consider the name of the Magnolia Line based on all of the information that I shared with you and I thank you for your time.

Chairman Webb: Thank you, Mr. Logan. Do we have any members of the public that would like to comment. Please introduce yourself, Ms. Rodgers.

Ms. Edie Rodgers: I'm Edie Rodgers and I guess I'm just a history buff. The first meeting concerning this rail trail that I've ever attended because I don't have the energy to ride a bicycle but more power to those who do, was the joint meeting early in June and I loved what the representatives there presented. I guess the gentleman from Atlanta and the idea that we could have something as nice was just very, very appealing but I loved even more the history lesson that I got from Tommy Logan. I'm not a local Beaufortonian. I didn't know that this was named the Magnolia Line all these years ago. I've just had some more history lesson right here. Hats off to you - you've obviously done your research which means you know how to use a computer unlike me. At any rate, it is wonderful to think we have a built-in story here with this trail. An absolute built-in, historic story that we could use on every brochure that's ever printed. And the story about President Roosevelt coming here is just gravy in my mind to what

we have there. Now I applaud the people who I assume have formed or are forming Friends of the Rail Trail. Are you already a 501(c)(3)? (The papers were filed.) And that's excellent. I believe in those organizations but I don't know how many, I mean I don't know if you have a board, who that board consists of, I don't know who is involved in that. I don't know if any of them knew the history of the Magnolia Line before they decided on Spanish Moss. Spanish Moss is wonderful; we love it but it's not unique to our area by any means. It's all over the southeast and along the coast, kind of forever and ever. And I don't know if anybody has done the research to see how many other trails might already be named the Spanish Moss Trail. I think it's a real possibility but even so if they are or not, after the meeting on the fourth I went up to speak to Joe DeVito who is the Chairman of the Joint Port Royal/Beaufort Commission, I believe, because this was a joint meeting of Planning Commissions and he said I went up to Greenville and I rode the Swamp Fox Trail at Greenville. I had already put in my thoughts that we really ought to jump on this history to name this line and he said, I went up there and I rode the Swamp Fox Trail at Greenville and I said, do you realize what you just said? The Swamp Fox Trail at Greenville; you didn't say in Austin, in Tupelo, you said at Greenville. So it doesn't matter to me that there are others already named Magnolia Trail because they're going to say I went to "da da da" and road the Magnolia Trail. Ours, actually I kind of like Magnolia Line Trail on that but there are just so many people who could tell us stories about that railroad that could also be a part of our story to entice these groups, these clubs to come here to ride our trail which is what we really want. So, I just hope that you will take a long, hard look at history and not lose this opportunity. Spanish moss is wonderful; I like it. Some people think it's weird and eerie, I happen to like it. I use it for all sorts of things but it's not unique by any means. I think our Magnolia Line is unique. The history of that railroad is unique. I hope that you will very serious consideration to sticking with the history instead of changing it. Thank you.

Chairman Webb: Thank you, Ms. Rodgers. Anyone else? I think that's it for the public comment. Members of the Board, would you like to comment on the naming?

Mr. Ian Hill: Ms. Von Harten would like to speak.

Chairman Webb: Sorry.

Ms. Laura Von Harten: I'm not exactly a member of the public because this comes up to County Council eventually but this is in my district and I feel so torn because I'm a great history buff but I'm also a great natural history buff and I think that's also part of the charter of this organization, of your group, is to consider the natural history of the area as well. When it comes down to it, I don't want things to stall any further. This has been a long time coming and there's already been the Friends of the Spanish Moss Trail in effect and I really feel pretty strongly like it would be in our best interest in moving forward to keep that name and perhaps do justice to the Magnolia Line by placing some historic markers and continuing the garden club involvement especially along this segment here in Beaufort. This is going to be a long trail. It's going to extend all the way up to Yemassee eventually and I see that whole piece of it as being called one thing and then maybe we can have different segments that are called something else. I've heard that mentioned by some other people. This has really been something that's difficult and I feel like we've had this Friends group that's been organized, that's incorporated, that's come forward and this naming process is sort of a formality of the County system at this point. It's different from some other parks and facilities where we haven't had a friends group to work with. For example, we just named the Tate-Corson Park on Lady's Island; you guys are

familiar with that and that was something that was only a County project and it did require a name. There's no history behind it and it really needed something that was appropriate to that park. But in this case we've got another organization that's already organized and it's coming to us and I just, I feel like in the interest of moving forward, I'd like to see it be the Spanish Moss Trail. That's for the entire Council to decide, of course.

Chairman Webb: Thank you, Ms. Von Harten.

Ms. Rodgers: The papers that were filed, did you use the name Spanish Moss Rail Trail before it had been officially named?

Ms. Frederick: Yes. We were a friends group and as a friends group, that's what we called ourselves.

Ms. Rodgers: And I don't know where lies the authority but I'm just thinking that was, in my view, a little premature and I suspect it could be amended if the Council decided not to name it Spanish Moss.

Ms. Sally Murphy: I have a question for Ms. Frederick. These other trails that you mentioned in Texas and Mississippi and wherever, do their names do their names include the word "Line?" Or just Magnolia Trail?

Ms. Frederick: They are Magnolia Trails.

Ms. Murphy: Then I don't see a problem with copyrighting if this one is called Magnolia Line Trail.

Chairman Webb: It's pretty easy to see both sides of it. Dean Moss has done a huge amount of work to make this happen and, of course, it's very nice to somehow recognize him for that work but also I think that historic names tend to go by the wayside too often and when we have one that is 140/150 years old, we really should consider strongly whether or not we change it to something else. Any other comments?

Ms. Rita Igleheart: In the last sentence in the letter it says they think it would be a shame to start over with a new name. Well, the new name is the Moss Trail. The old name is the Magnolia. I personally would rather stick with the old name, the original name, the name it's always been called.

Ms. Murphy: And won't it be kind of weird to put up historic monuments along this line that talks about the Magnolia Line yet it's not named that. That to me seems a bit incongruous.

Ms. Rosalyn Browne: I just have two things I'd like to ask. In keeping with the historical accuracy of the facts, point #3 for you, Mr. Logan, was there ever an approved designation for a National Historic Linear District? (No) That was just a request. My second question would be, what is the source that verifies the original name, the Magnolia Line?

Mr. Logan: The two sources that I have are the article written by Marty Davis in the South Carolina Historical. This is a publication by the South Carolina Historical Society. AS well as the book called Railroads and Sawmills from Varnville, South Carolina, 1870 to 1997.

Ms. Browne: Thank you. I thought it was important that we know the sources because I'm listening to both sides and I'm hearing comments about the indigenous, uniqueness of Spanish moss and magnolias. Neither are indigenously unique to this region. It's all across the south. But the names is really what you were referring to.

Ms. Murphy: This appeared in the paper. It looks like a schedule of stops. You can see at the top.

Ms. Browne: Oh, for the rail.

Mr. Logan: The question I have is the name Magnolia Trail or Route or Line in these other locations, are those names connected with something historical like we have here, the railroad being of the same name, or was it just indigenous to the area? Were there magnolias planted along the line or was there another railroad or some historical aspect of using the name, Magnolia, or is it like Spanish Moss? We just picked it out of the air.

Ms. Frederick: I have no idea.

Chairman Webb: Anybody else want to comment? Maybe time for a vote. Do I have a motion?

Motion: Ms. Murphy made a motion, and Ms. Hefter seconded the motion, **to have the rail trail named the Magnolia Line Trail.** The motion **was carried unanimously** (FOR: Webb, Browne, Hefter, Igleheart, Murphy).

Chairman Webb: Let the record show that the County Historic Preservation Review Board has recommended that the line be named the Magnolia Line Trail.

Mr. Hill: As I understand this, this will go to Gary and he will give it to Council, is that correct?

Ms. Von Harten: Bring it to Natural Resources Committee and then it will go to Council.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Webb: Do we have any other business?

Mr. Hill: No, sir.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Webb: Then I think we can adjourn our meeting (meeting adjourned at approximately 1:37 p.m.).