



MEN FOR CHANGE...

Local leaders of law enforcement are partnering with the Granville County's Families Living Violence Free (FLVF) organization to help bring awareness to the issue of domestic violence. As this year's "champions" of the 2017 *Men for Change* campaign, these community advocates challenge all citizens to make a difference and help raise \$22,000 - one month's operating expenses - for FLVF before Oct. 16, which is the kickoff date for the organization's Domestic Violence Month activities. Donations can be made in honor or in memory of a loved one or someone who has touched a life.

Pictured above signing the letters which will be sent out for contributions are Oxford Police Chief Al Coley, Butner Public Safety Director Danny Roberts, Stem Police Chief Mike Beal, Stovall Police Chief Craig Williams and Granville County Sheriff Brin Wilkins. (Not pictured but also participating in the campaign is Creedmoor Police Chief Keith King.)

Families Living Violence Free is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the vitality of the Granville County community and provides prevention and direct services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. For more information or to make a donation, call 919-691-1813 or visit <http://flvf.org/oursponsors/donate>.

Message from the new school Superintendent



Dr. McLean

I could not be more excited and honored to join such an incredible community of students, parents and guardians, school leaders, educators, concerned citizens, law enforcement officials, business and community partners. Thus far, my time has been spent getting acclimated and familiar with our schools, district personnel and various community representatives.

What I have learned is that the Granville Community is an absolutely awesome community and I am delighted to now be part of the family!

I plan to continue working with everyone in our community at our upcoming 'Listening and Learning' tours scheduled for:

- * Tuesday, Sept. 12 at Creedmoor Elementary School;
- * Thursday, Sept. 14 at Butner-Stem Middle School;
- * Tuesday, Sept. 19 at Northern Granville Middle School; and
- * Thursday, Sept. 21 at J.F. Webb High School.

All meetings are scheduled for 6 until 7:30 p.m. and everyone is invited to bring their best thinking around how we can make our district a

"World Class District!" These "Kitchen Table" type conversations are truly for all, so, please plan on joining us!

My enthusiasm about the upcoming year is already at high levels as our school and district preparations are well underway. Our goal is to ensure excellence in all we do.

In my opinion, the Granville County Public School System is poised for greatness. As such, I believe our new social media hashtag is befitting: #ggit! This stands for "Granville's Got It!"

I believe it. I believe in our schools. I believe in our district. Now, let's show the world together!

-Dr. Alisa McLean,
Superintendent,
Granville County
Public Schools

This Old House: Oxford



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

If you've been paying attention to College Street over the last year or so, you've noticed a remarkable transformation, having to do with one home in particular but also its inspiration on the surrounding area. The historic Brown-Watkins House has been saved from demolition - and from the further decay that would have advanced that demise.

Designed by an unknown architect and built circa 1911, the Brown-Watkins House was once one of the stately College Street homes constructed on the north side of town by successful merchants, industrialists and professionals, right around the turn of the twentieth century. The house design was predominantly Colonial Revival, with characteristics of the Queen Anne style, as well as a prominent, two-storied Federal style front entrance portico.

The first owners of the house were Samuel David and Magdelene (Lynch) Booth. Samuel was a veteran of the Civil War who attended the Medical College of Virginia Commonwealth and received his degree in 1867. He married Magdelene the following year and twelve years later was a physician in Oxford. The first known deed to the property was dated 1912, from Rachel E. Brown to Rose B. Mangum. In 1925, I.W. Mangum sold the home to Richard C. Watkins, whose son, George Benjamin, and daughter-in-law, Louise, lived there afterwards. They had a son and daughter, who co-owned the home after Louise passed away in 1994.

Sitting vacant for several years, the house began to suffer from serious neglect. The City gave the owners 30 days to correct the problems identified. Although the house received a fresh coat of paint and looked nice once again, the

effect was short-lived and, because of such severe underlying damage, the bright white paint quickly peeled away to reveal the ruin beneath. As additional time passed, the porch began to literally fall off, holes in the roof expanded and the structure became a home to vermin, prompting complaints by citizens regarding the public safety and triggering the City's new Demolition by Neglect Ordinance.

Oxford's Demolition by Neglect Ordinance was enacted in 2009, at the time that its Historic Preservation Ordinance was also enacted, partly in response to the circumstance of the Brown-Watkins House. The purpose of the Ordinance is to protect the City's historic architectural resources when a property suffers deterioration "potentially beyond the point of repair," and where "the structure and its character may potentially be lost to current and future generations." The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), working alongside the City's Planning Director, administers application of the Ordinance.

As a result of the steps taken by the HPC and the Planning Director, the property was eventually turned over to Preservation North Carolina (PNC), which set about identifying someone to save it through its "Endangered Properties Program."

PNC has been cited by the National Park Service as "the premier statewide preservation organization of the South, if not the nation" and by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as "the model organization of its kind." The program has been credited with saving more than 700 endangered historic properties in North Carolina, and thereby generating an estimated \$350 million in private investment. When asked about the importance of the

Brown-Watkins House, Cathleen Turner, Regional Director of PNC said, "its loss would have impacted the remaining houses on the street in a negative way, creating more instability in property values. As we anticipated, its restoration has spurred additional rehabilitation projects and private investment in historic properties in Oxford - an excellent outcome."

Although the process of finding the right person to take on such a project might have taken years, Turner identified such a person. Interior designer Beverly Nichols was doing some design work for Commissioner Al Woodlief, who introduced her to the home.

"After many years of neglect, the home was in dire disrepair," Nichols said about taking on the challenge. "Many contractors and locals had looked at the home and said it could not be saved. With my many years of experience in the business, however, I knew it could be done."

She acquired the home from PNC in October 2016 and, with the help of contractor Don McClean, quickly got to work repairing structural damage and tackling the dilapidated exterior. Although it was also necessary to gut the interior of the home, McClean says it will also be renovated "to include the functionality and amenities of today's fine homes, yet maintaining its historic charm."

Nichols received the 2017 Oxford Historic Preservation Commission Stewardship Award for her exemplary work to save the Brown-Watkins House. With work still in progress, the community looks forward to seeing the finished home. It is currently for sale "as is," or with the help of Designer Nichols.

"The restoration of the Brown-Watkins House is an extraordinary testament to the bold vision of the City's Commissioners, whose adoption of the Historic Preservation and Demolition by Neglect Ordinances in 2009 made a path, authorized by the State of North Carolina, to protect Oxford's architectural treasures," remarks HPC Chairman Tony Armento. "In their Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina, authors Catherine Bisher and Michael Southern said that College Street 'ranks among the most beautiful residential thoroughfares in the state.' The foresight of the Commissioners, the diligence of the HPC and the Planning Director, the intervention of PNC, and the efforts of Ms. Nichols and Mr. McLean, have all worked together to help Oxford reclaim this splendid compliment for our town."

Look for the HPC's next column to find out more about *This Old House...* Oxford!

CITY from page 1

By LYNN ALLRED
Ledger staff

At the City's August meeting of the Board of Commissioners, several matters were discussed.

Patrice Dunn of the Oxford Bicentennial Committee presented the final financial report. After all expenses have been paid, \$5,327 is left over from the 2016 series of events, which were scheduled throughout the year to celebrate the City's 200th anniversary. A detailed report provided to Board members included total sales of approximately \$27,336, donations totalling about \$38,051 and expenses of approximately \$60,067.

Sales, it was explained, included Bicentennial T-shirts, calendars, raffle tickets and Lewis Bowling's *Looking Back 200 Years* book, which was

published especially for the Bicentennial celebration. All of the sales were taxable, it was reported.

Donations included sponsorships, advertising in the program and individual contributions.

At the Jan. 10, 2017 meeting, Board members had agreed by consensus to use any remaining funds from the City's Bicentennial to help set up a permanent historical display in a room on the third floor wing of City Hall. The Board at that time agreed to allow Comm. Al Woodlief to pursue the project, working with the Granville County Museum.

In a separate presentation, Rupal Desai, Transportation Engineer with the Department of Transportation, Ann Stroobant of the Kerr Tar Regional Council and Justin Jorgensen, Senior Transportation Planner for

Granville County Development presented a draft version of Granville County's Comprehensive Transportation Plan, which identifies long-range highway, transit, rail, bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Recommendations for the City included installing a median on College Street and a roundabout on the corner of Spring and Main Streets - also part of the City's Downtown Master Plan. Improvements had also been suggested for the Oxford Loop, Hwy. 158, Hwy. 96 and Hwy 15 (in the Stovall area). On Oct. 5 from 4 until 7 p.m., a public meeting is planned at the Senior Center in Oxford about these recommendations, with a meeting also scheduled at the South Branch Library on Oct. 10.

In new business, Comm. Frank Strickland had asked to be put on

the agenda to discuss a policy matter. As chair of the Personnel Committee, Comm. Strickland stated that he had several concerns about what he called a "lack of accountability," and "unacceptable conduct" in one department, which he did not name. Strickland stated that he had prepared a public statement to be read but had made a last-minute decision to turn information - which included a former City employee's exit interview - over to the City Attorney instead.

When questioned about his intentions and the manner in which the information was obtained, Comm. Strickland stated several times that his concerns involved City "policy" and were not "personnel matters," and that he wanted to be "ethical to every employee." After much discussion, Comm. Al

Woodlief made a motion to revisit the issue in closed session following the meeting. The motion was approved.

In other business, the Board adopted a City Ordinance allowing "pedicabs" within the City limits. The proposed ordinance sets guidelines for licenses, taxation and business regulations for "vehicles with three or more wheels propelled or pedaled by human power and used for transporting passengers for compensation."

At the July meeting, John Mooring of Round-Town Rickshaws, based in Warrenton, had asked the Board to consider allowing him to do business in Oxford. At that time, the City had no policy in place to set guidelines for "for hire" business services such as these. The recommended ordinance presented last week was approved with