

**Final Minutes of a Meeting of the Brown Fisher Association, Inc.**  
**Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors of the Brown-Fisher Association (BFA) held its quarterly meeting on Saturday, April 21, 2018 at Michael Braun's House (MBH) in Granite Quarry, NC. President Stephen Brown called the meeting to order shortly after 10:00 a.m. Attending: Deane Brown, Stephen Brown, Ken Clifton, Rod Kesler, Cathy Kirchin, Norman Ribelin, Sandra Phillips, Doug Robinson, Linda Shelton, and Keith Wolfe. Absent: Candace Elliott Brown, Larry Brown, Sarah Brown, Carolyn Miller, Debbie Brown Taylor and Paul Bryant Walker. Aaron Kepley, Executive Director, Rowan Museum, Inc., was our guest.

**MINUTES** – Minutes from the previous meeting were emailed by Secretary Pat Beck. Keith Wolf made a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve them as sent. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously. President Brown called for someone to keep minutes in Pat's absence and Doug Robinson offered.

**FINANCIAL REPORT** – Treasurer Larry Brown was unable to attend and did not submit a financial report.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Coordinator's death – President Brown began the meeting by delivering news of the March 11, 2018 death of Coordinator Juanita Fisher Lagg. He said that, to put it succinctly, Juanita was simply Mrs. Brown-Fisher Association. She quietly but effectively carried out her multiple responsibilities, carefully documenting things as she went, while allowing her home to become the ad hoc storage facility of association & family records. She's irreplaceable, but we must soldier on and she would demand nothing less. He called for a moment of silence in her memory. He stated that one of his fondest memories of past BFA meetings was Juanita's warm welcome & that we certainly want to continue delivering that hospitality to each attendee.
2. Secretary resignation – President Brown then announced that our Secretary of 18 years, Pat Beck, had submitted her resignation. Doug Robinson reported that she has been diagnosed with cancer, has had surgery but is undecided as to whether she will undergo chemotherapy treatment. President Brown stated that Pat's dedication to the preservation of the genealogy of the Fisher family and various other Rowan families cannot be understated. On behalf of the Board, he extended his heartfelt thanks & appreciation to Pat for a job superbly done & asked Doug to send a letter to that effect. He then asked

**Final Minutes of a Meeting of the Brown Fisher Association, Inc.**  
**Board of Directors**

everyone to keep her in our prayers & thoughts as she battles her disease. **ACTION REQUIRED**—Doug to send letter to Pat.

3. Replacements for Coordinator and Secretary – With the above two positions becoming vacant, we must undertake the difficult task of naming replacements. These positions do not serve traditional 3-year terms on the board. Rather, they serve in the position until resigning or until being removed by a vote of the full Board. **ACTION REQUIRED** - Contact President Stephen Brown should you wish to serve in one of these crucial roles or should you wish to nominate someone else. Please note that you must obtain agreement to serve from the person you wish to nominate and ensure their commitment to the position in advance. Nominees will be voted upon by the membership at the annual reunion.
4. Interim Coordinator Duties - The group then discussed who would cover the coordinator's responsibilities. President Brown said that Larry had Juanita's computer & is covering her responsibilities for the time being. Aaron Kepley said Rowan Museum could be a backup for the membership list. Norman Ribelin made a motion to accept Rowan Museum's offer to serve as a backup repository for our membership list. Motion seconded by Keith Wolf. Motion passed unanimously. Further discussion occurred regarding changing the official address for BFA. Doug Robinson asked about a PO Box, however that incurs an annual fee. Aaron Kepley offered Rowan Museum as BFA's postal mail receptacle. He proposed creating an inbox at Rowan Museum where all BFA incoming mail would be placed & then picked up by the coordinator. The address would be BFA, c/o Rowan Museum, wherever their mailing address might be, e.g. should they decide to use a PO Box rather than 202 N. Main Street, Salisbury. **ACTION REQUIRED**—Aaron to create BFA inbox.
5. Membership Ledger – President Brown indicated that Larry Brown had begun reviewing Juanita's files in search of the BFA membership ledger & it has not been located. Doug Robinson reported that he had the most recent member report (as submitted to Diversified Graphics) & had reviewed it with Juanita at the last Board meeting. He stated that he's received no updates since the last meeting, so we need to locate Juanita's membership files to determine any changes. **ACTION REQUIRED** – Doug Robinson to contact Larry Brown so that he can review membership files.
6. Nominations for 2018-2022 BODs – Three directors' terms end at the annual meeting: Candace Brown, Linda Shelton, & Keith Wolf. Each are eligible for re-election to new three-

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**Board of Directors**

year terms if they so choose. These names or those of three other nominees must be presented to the membership for election at the annual meeting, so we prefer to finalize this item ASAP. **ACTION REQUIRED** – Candace, Linda and Keith are asked to call (704-785-5425) or email ([goheelz1986@gmail.com](mailto:goheelz1986@gmail.com)) the interim secretary so we may begin the search for a replacement(s) if they do not want to serve another 3-year term.

7. Annual Reunion Meeting – Aaron Kepley, Executive Director of Rowan Museum, said that last year's Germanfest/BFA Reunion was a tremendous success, with approximately 3,000 attending compared to 200 the previous year. He stated that BFA's efforts now and over the past 100 plus years in preserving the MBH was crucial to that success. He stated that Rowan Museum certainly wants BFA to be involved again this year. Additionally, an event this size is now of interest to the town of Granite Quarry. The event will begin with a Patron's dinner on Friday, September 14. On Saturday, September 15 activities begin in the morning once again with a Volksmarch Road Race, a German tradition, which be run by the NC Volksmarch Association. Larry Brown has been working with them and hopes that they will make this a sanctioned event, thereby bringing even more visitors to MBH. Germanfest will follow and New Sarum Brewery will once again be on site, providing three times the alcoholic refreshments as last year as they ran out in 45 minutes at the 2017 event. They will offer a special German beer, brewed in a rocking barrel over three months which is the approximate time our ancestors would have spent coming to North America from Germany. Aaron stated that he's working with Rowan Convention & Visitor's Bureau (RCCVB) to develop a Germanfest package with reduced hotel rates.

Having this information, President Brown opened the floor for discussion about when to hold the upcoming annual reunion meeting. He noted that while last year's joint event with Rowan Museum was successful, we should keep in mind that there are some older members who may oppose a joint event going forward and perhaps we should consider holding the annual meeting at MBH or another location on the Sunday following the Saturday events. There were complaints about being unable to hear during last year's meeting and of distractions caused by Germanfest activities. If we agree to hold a joint event this year, the group agreed to place one or two tents on the south side of the caretaker's house (at carport) to shield extemporaneous noise as much as possible and to perhaps place the PA system in this area for use during the meeting. A suggestion was also made to reserve this area so that non-BFA Germanfest attendees do not wander into the meeting area. Discussion then occurred as to whether holding a joint event would impact

**Final Minutes of a Meeting of the Brown Fisher Association, Inc.**  
**Board of Directors**

the number of out-of-town attendees who may or may not be able to find local lodgings. Additionally, we must consider our desire to entice new and younger members to BFA and that the Saturday events may appeal to that population rather than simply the meeting with a meal. President Brown noted that we need to rethink our registration process, perhaps even a separate entrance, if we agree to a joint event this year considering the number of non-BFA members attending the day's events. He recommended that we develop a means of registration to capture the names of attendees, their family ancestry (Brown and/or Fisher), contact info, etc. Rather than use registration books, this can be accomplished with a computer spreadsheet which Doug Robinson offered to create. **ACTION REQUIRED** - Discuss registration process at next meeting. **ACTION REQUIRED** – Doug to create registration log. After additional discussion, Keith Wolfe made a motion to hold the meeting on the same day as the Rowan Museum's Germanfest. Linda Shelton seconded, and motion passed unanimously.

8. Brown descendants reunion – Vice President Deane Brown announced that he and Larry Brown will hold their Brown descendants' reunion at Lower Stone Church. All are invited.
  
9. Property Long Range Plan – Norman Ribelin then presented an initial artist's rendering reflecting removal of the caretaker's house, placement of the corn crib, and proposed additions of a barn, a garden spot, a storage building and a spring house (Cathy Kirchin said her grandfather had told her it was near the present kitchen). The drawing also reflects the addition of the McCombs Cabin, and discussions are ongoing as to whether to turn it into a "replica" of the slave cabin (County records reflect that Michael Brown had 15 slaves in 1790 and gave away 2 in his will.). According to Aaron, the logs in the McCombs Cabin came from a barn in the Saw crossroads community, between China Grove and Enochville. Eugene McCombs bought the barn in the 1950s-60s, moved the logs to his property and built a bonanza-style cabin. It is not a true historical recreation of a Rowan County cabin. An extension on the cabin will have to be torn away to move it, so it can be reassembled as desired or used in a different manner. Larry Brown has a contact who knows of a log barn at the intersection of Irish Potato Road & Old Concord Road and we may be able to relocate that barn to the property as well. The rendering also reflected achieving part of BFA's mission as stated in the by-laws by building a proposed 80' x 40' structure to hold the archives which could also include an office, kitchen, restrooms and a covered shelter on the back for picnics, etc. as well as adjacent handicapped parking. The drawing also includes a proposed Amphitheatre which could be of great use during history

**Final Minutes of a Meeting of the Brown Fisher Association, Inc.**  
**Board of Directors**

camps, special events, etc. Currently, the parking lot and the original three acres are in town limits and the 16 additional acres are not. The property is zoned historic, so any changes will need to go through an Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) zoning process. Currently there is no water and sewer near the property, but Norman said that the mayor of Granite Quarry indicated that they would like to plan for that in the next five years because a pump station will need to be installed. Rowan Museum is also investigating doing an archeological sub-surface survey of the property to analyze underground dirt for evidence of other unknown structures that may have previously existed. Norman stated that all the above improvements could potentially cost a minimum of \$500,000-\$750,000. This proposed plan has not been presented to Rowan Museum and is simply a possible blueprint should all funds be raised.

Aaron then reported that Juanita Lagg's estate included a gift of stock through Wells Fargo to Rowan Museum designated for use on the MBH grounds. Depending upon the fluctuation of the stock market, sale of the stock could result in a gift of +/- \$200,000. Aaron stated that he would ask Rowan Museum name the proposed archives building in memory of Dr. Elmer and Juanita Lagg.

Regarding a proposed columbarium near the family cemetery, Keith Wolfe reported that he has spoken with the town zoning coordinator who said ordinances presently do not address placement of them in town limits, however language could be easily added but would need an official request from Rowan Museum to get started.

Norman reported that the first deed written for MBH was done in 1927 when the house & 3 acres were purchased by 4 Brown descendants. It reflected the name as the "Michael Braun Haus". Accordingly, Aaron Kepley stated that Rowan Museum has changed the name of the house on their stationery to Michael Braun House which will differentiate ours from the Old Stone House in Georgetown, adjacent to Washington, DC. This will also differentiate ourselves in other areas such as web searches, tourism, etc.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Caretaker's House history – Aaron reported that Ed Brown had indicated that the caretaker's house was originally built to hide the well at the rear of the house. Cathy Kirchin? countered that her grandfather said the caretaker's house was built to protect the

**Final Minutes of a Meeting of the Brown Fisher Association, Inc.**  
**Board of Directors**

contents of MBH, as many antiques had been stolen while the house was in such disrepair. It is believed that the Michael Braun books also reference that artifacts were stolen during this time.

2. Movement of the McCombs Cabin – At a previous meeting, the Board committed \$10,000 towards the repair or demolition of the MBH caretaker's house. Following that commitment, further inspection revealed that the caretaker's house was beyond repair and the Rowan Museum Board voted to tear it down. Also, at a previous meeting, Aaron announced that Rowan Museum agreed to accept a gift of the Eugene & Jean McCombs Cabin and move it to the MBH grounds. Since that time, Mrs. Jean McCombs, Eugene's wife, passed away and her heirs would like the cabin moved sooner than planned. The McCombs heirs have offered a gift to Rowan Museum of \$5,000 to assist in moving the cabin. Aaron reported that he recently spoke with someone who would like a gift of the caretaker's house and is willing to move it away at their own expense. This proposal would be a win-win for Rowan Museum as they've received estimates of \$10,000 to tear down caretaker's house and \$15,000 to move the cabin to MBH for total expense of \$25,000. Aaron requested BFA to consider applying the \$10,000 it previously offered to repair the caretaker's house towards the approximately \$15,000 cost to move the McCombs Cabin. This in addition to the \$5,000 McCombs gift would mean Rowan Museum could complete the project at no cost. Norman Ribelin rescinded his motion approved at the 9/21/2017 meeting as follows: "that BFA fund up to \$10,000 to inspect the caretaker's house, roof and make repairs to make better use of the facilities." Keith Wolfe made a motion to approve \$10,000 for partial costs involved with moving the McCombs Cabin to MBH grounds." Motion seconded by Norman Ribelin. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Parking Lot use – Doug Robinson reported he'd seen unauthorized use of the parking lot at night and asked whether we should consider blocking the entrances. President Brown questioned the manpower required to open and close the lot and recommended affixing no trespassing signs and granting the Granite Quarry/Faith Police authority to remove trespassers. **ACTION REQUIRED** – Aaron will work with his Board to ensure signs are made and posted and contact the GQF Police regarding enforcing no trespassing.
4. Michael Brown House Signage – Doug Robinson asked if Rowan Museum had any plans to add directional signs to MBH on US Hwy. 52. It was reported that Granite Quarry's Tourism

**Final Minutes of a Meeting of the Brown Fisher Association, Inc.**  
**Board of Directors**

Committee plans to add wayfaring signs that would include MBH. Aaron reported that a sign in front of MBH was on his to do list.

**EDITOR'S REPORT**

Cathy Kirchin reported that Sandra Phillips has agreed to be assistant newsletter editor. She requested new articles and plans to highlight the Long-Range Plan, including a photo of the artist's rendering if possible. She noted that BFA has had an Improvements Fund for many years and she'd found information regarding the creation of the fund in prior editions of Rowan Roots and will include that info in the article. Cathy said she'll use the same mailing list as was used for the previous edition until a new process can be implemented. President Brown requested she include articles on Juanita Lagg's death and Pat Beck's resignation. She also noted that we need to be sure to include info regarding where to send donations since there will likely be memorials sent in Juanita's memory.

**NEXT MEETING** - The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for June 30, 2018, from 10:00am until 12:00pm at a location TBD.

Doug Robinson – Interim Corporate Secretary