

**Quality of Life
Arts and Culture Strategy Committee Meeting
July 25, 2007**

The Arts and Culture Committee of the Quality of Life Foundation met on July 25, 2007 in the Chamber Community Room. Present were Cay Billingsley, Tracy Pinkerton, Alisha Burrow, Denise Davis, Jacqueline Becker, Mary Jo Gorden, Jonathan Gerland, Kris Barringer, Mark Hicks and Susie Cardwell. Guest were Barbara Thompson, Director of Downtown Main Street, and Dale Allred, Building Official - City of Lufkin.

Pines Theater:

Barbara Thompson gave the committee a quick overview of the recently purchased Pines Theater. The City of Lufkin has not determined exactly how this building will be used and is open to suggestions.

Barbara mentioned that the style of the theater is more of an art deco style and is in need of a lot of work. The City will need help with the funding of the restoration and is in need of photos of the original building through the years. There is a lot of memorabilia still in the theater, such as two projectors, film, etc. The City has been receiving some calls regarding possible uses and people who remember special events that took place there, including the auctioning of the first ticket sold to the theater when it opened. The public has expressed some sentimental "first" that took place at the theater such as first dates, first kiss, an engagement, etc.

Downtown Broker:

Mark Hicks has contacted Coldwell Banker regarding having a specific real estate company or broker to work with parties interested in buying or selling downtown properties for restoration purposes.

Downtown Restoration:

Dale Allred presented information on how communities have restored areas of their town. Dale has 25 years of experience in this area and has recently gone to work for the City of Lufkin as their Building Official. He has a passion for restoration and would like to work with the community and the City to help move toward more restorations and overcome some of the deterrents.

The Committee would like to put together a brochure or flyer to give to people interested in restoring property to help make the process easier and better understood. Dale's suggestions were as follows:

1. *Create the guidelines for historical preservation.* This would contain the special ordinances with flexibility to allow for preservation of the buildings rather than bringing them up to modern day codes. There is a 2006 Existing Building

Code that provides flexibility for restoration, but still provides safety that may need to be adopted.

2. *Get the community involved.* Show how this will benefit the community such as the Paramount in Abilene is used for different things during the week. One night is black and white classic movies (which is a sell out), bringing in live performances, benefits, etc. Get the community excited about it and supporting.

3. *Look for funding and sources of money.* Determine how the projects will be funded. Will the City do any matching of funds or a % of funds? The state and national Register may be a source of funding on qualifying projects. Local businesses and people who have attended the theater (or building) may want to be involved in financing the restoration. Also, we will need to pull in people who qualify to help but are not interested.

4. *Create a historical preservation committee for the approval process.* This should be made up of an engineer, an architect, an attorney, etc. This group would coordinate with the Building Official for approval or problem and how to overcome them. The goal is create a safe and historically accurate building. City Council will need to be involved in this and set up the committee and appoint a person to head this up. They will give approval for specific building restorations and make sure the integrity of the restoration is intact.

5. *Collect photos* of buildings at all times to help with the process of restoration and approval.

The process Dale has used in the past for restorations and getting them started is as follows:

1. Plans/blueprints are presented to Dale for approval by the City. This may take a couple of days for review.

2. If the plans are okay, Dale alerts the presenter that the plans are being forwarded to the Historical Preservation Committee for review and this may take up to a month to review. (This Committee meets on a regular basis and depending on when they receive the plans would determine how quickly they are reviewed.)

3. Upon review of the Historical Preservation Committee, if the plans are approved, this committee alerts Dale that they are okay and he will issue a permit for the work to begin.

Dale also recommends that a lock be put on all buildings that need or have the potential to be restored. That way someone can't come in and do anything they want to these buildings without approval of the City and historical preservation

committee. As soon as the plans have been approved by both, the lock is removed.

The Pinewoods Cultural Association:

Mary Jo Gorden reported that some time in September, The Pinewoods Cultural Association will become a part of the Chamber and will be called the **Lufkin/Angelina County Chamber of Commerce Cultural Arts Council**. The First Street Art Center will be operating independently on it's on..

Fall Symposium:

Mary Jo would like to see more unity, better marketing, and a better understanding of the different agencies that are functioning independently to promote our community. She recommends that we produce a symposium of the different groups such as 4B, Texas Forest Country Partnership, the retirement initiative, etc, so the community will have a better understanding of what they do and also to market the community more effectively by joining forces. She would like to hold this event in the fall and will need a sponsor.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 12th at 4:00 p.m. in the Chamber Community Room.