

DATE: May 15, 2009

160 years and just beginning

Tonight the Historic Preservation Commission is holding a public meeting to present a proposed update of the Design Guidelines for the local historic districts. Preservation of Wilson encourages you to get involved and learn what new changes will be suggested and offer your views on the plan. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. and will be held at the Wilson Public Library.

Even with a city that is 160 years old, we are now beginning fresh to create the historic districts we want for the future. There is a growing interest in historic preservation, and through a variety of grassroots efforts, our unique architectural and cultural heritage is being celebrated.

Years ago, the City of Wilson completed the work necessary by law to have our historic properties and neighborhoods recognized according to national standards. We have five historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and three of them are local districts.

The local districts are regulated by design guidelines, which are written locally following U.S. Department of the Interior standards. Tonight's meeting gives the public an opportunity to comment on these new guidelines before they go to City Council for approval. They are not legally mandated. Each community determines what it wants for its own historic districts.

A benefit of these designations is that they offer Historic Tax Credits. A residential project may benefit from a 30% state tax credit. A commercial project could see a 20% state and a 20% federal tax credit. This is an attractive incentive to reduce project costs without any expense to our local government.

The mission of Preservation of Wilson is separate from the Historic Preservation Commission. The Historic Preservation Commission is a municipal board which enforces design guidelines for historic properties and historic districts. Preservation of Wilson is not involved in regulation of historic district appearance standards.

Allow me to share our mission, vision and our strategic initiatives so we can take this new beginning and help each other succeed.

OUR MISSION

Preservation of Wilson provides leadership in the revitalization efforts of Wilson County's unique architectural heritage. As stewards of Wilson's historic buildings, we actively promote historic, architectural, and culturally significant properties. Our efforts are to ensure that revitalized properties will contribute in the aesthetics of the community, increase the value of surrounding properties, and create a safe and welcoming environment.

OUR VISION

We envision the future of Wilson County's historic districts will offer residential areas:

- That welcome people from all walks of life
- That have a growing number of preservation minded property owners
- That when there is a vacant and abandoned property it is viewed as an economic development opportunity
- That tell the *Wilson Story* with its rich heritage and unique architecture
- That are pedestrian friendly neighborhoods which offer a safe and comfortable place to call *Home*

THE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

1. Recruit new owners to revitalize properties that are architecturally unique
2. Promote interest locally, regionally and nationally
3. Focus on the *Old Wilson Mile* as a pilot area to gain better understanding of how to promote an economically strong residential historic district
4. Operate a Revolving Fund to be used in preservation real estate activities
5. Foster Preservation of Wilson's long-term success through on-going partnerships with other organization

