

February 7, 2019

The courthouse square and Old Courthouse building are on the National Register of Historic Places as well as having Local Historic Landmark status. Any work proposed for these areas will require approval, Certificate of Appropriateness, from the Morganton Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC). This project is expected to have State funding through the NC Arts Council so may trigger a SHPO review; however no Federal funding nor any changes to the building are expected. Depending on the design, consultation may be sought from SHPO by the MHPC.

There are historic photos, postcards and etcetera of the Old Courthouse and Jail as well as the square and monuments. Sanborn maps of the square may also be obtained. These items can be found by searching on line, through the Morganton Burke County Library – North Carolina Room – Picture Burke program, as well as some that the City may have on file.

We have an older survey that can be updated by our City surveyor and/or provide you with that information. Surveying should be listed as a separate line item when quoting prices as it may be possible for the City to provide that service in the design phase. Construction phase would also have this as a separate line item.

Location of utilities should be possible through NC811/ULOCO and mapped on the survey. There is and irrigation system present which has no mapping or locate wire. It may need to be abandoned and a new system installed. There also may be a steam tunnel from the Jail to the Old Courthouse which is unknown.

Regarding the County owned/Designated portions of the square; Items such as grading, walkway changes, stone walls, trees, monuments and the like will all need to be coordinated through informal public meetings and through City and County Staff, with formal approvals needed by the Morganton Historic Preservation Commission, City Council, and County Commissioners. Most all of these items have some flexibility in their treatment, but again, that will have to be determined by those reviewing the design.

The County owned building is home to the Historic Burke Foundation. The City has a long term lease through 2032, which can be extended through 2047, on the building and square and maintains both.

Large maintenance requires approval from the County and/or others mentioned previously and funding for such items is usually shared. Funding for this project will primarily be by the City.