

November 19, 2000:

Michael Dowell, Executive Director of the Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley, Pulaski
Maple Shade Project, 3PM, Blacksburg Library, 200 Miller Street, Blacksburg.



Original Pen & Ink by Brian Hart

Enhancement by Leslye Bloom

The Maple Shade Project is an exciting initiative to create a cultural complex housing the Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley and the Town of Pulaski's museum of local history. There will also be a grand hall for meetings and conferences as well as fully equipped studio/classrooms. Both the galleries and storage spaces will meet AAM standards for climate and security control.

The facility will recall the grand style of the Maple Shade Inn, a resort hotel built by the N? Railroad in 1884. Although razed in 1963, this hotel remains one of Pulaski's best known landmarks. The Maple Shade Cultural Center will be unequalled by anything between Roanoke and Abingdon in Southwest Virginia. With three galleries devoted to the arts in the New River Valley region it promises to be a true showplace for NRV artists.

Michael Dowell has been leading this initiative for the past two years and will share plans for the project. He will also discuss ways the new facility can be beneficial to all communities in the New River Valley.

Roanoke Times, Oct. 5, 2000, NRV2:

[**Maple Shade project moves ahead**](#)

Pulaski Town Council decides against having an architect draw up alternate plans to keep two buildings as retail spaces. By PAUL DELLINGER THE ROANOKE TIMES

PULASKI Pulaski's Maple Shade project narrowly avoided drastic alterations this week, and town officials are still wondering if they can finance it.

The project as originally planned was to build a facility in the former Maple Shade Inn and demolish vacant buildings on both sides that most recently housed the Cosmos Skate Center and a Wades Grocery.

And that is still the plan, following a Pulaski Town Council meeting Tuesday night when the governing body considered having an Architect draw up alternate plans to keep the buildings as retail spaces.

Michael Dowell, executive director of the Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley, urged council to stay on the track it accepted in May. He said drawing up the alternate version would take many months and cost thousands of dollars, when "we should be asking for actual construction drawings this year."

In the end, that was the decision. After discussing a motion to have Lynchburg architects Wiley & Wilson prepare both concepts, council voted unanimously for a substitute motion by Lane Penn to go with construction drawings.

The vote followed a cautionary note from Town Manager Gary Elander that Pulaski might have trouble funding the original plan, estimated at \$4 million.

"The town of Pulaski does not have a lot of resources available for a major project at this time" he said. The town has secured grants of about \$340,00 but he said, "you'd use every bit of that for the construction drawings and you might even have a slight shortage."

But construction drawings were what the money was supposed to fund and if they were not made the money would simply be returned to its funding sources. Council decided it had nothing to lose by proceeding with the drawings.

"It's a fairly major decision, Elander said. The town has other funding applications pending, he said, but "we won't know how much money is going to be available for some time." The planned 35,700-squarefoot building would house the Fine Arts Center, now in quarters on Main Street, and the Raymond E. Ratcliffe Memorial Museum, now in the town's restored train station depot across Washington Avenue from the shopping center.

The town bought the center at the end of 1998 after Pulaski lawyer Tom McCarthy offered it to Pulaski for half its \$417,900 value.

The historic Maple Shade Inn, a thriving enterprise when Pulaski was a rail center, was demolished four decades ago to make way for the shopping center. Today, the center only has two small stores still operating.

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