

WINNESHIEK COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Steven Johnson, Chairperson
David Stanley, Secretary
Elizabeth Lorentzen, Treasurer
LaVonne Sharp

Roger Bergan
Ferneva Brimacomb
Dennis Karlsbrotten
Kim Glock
Terri Mozzone

Minutes of the Winneshiek County Historic Preservation Commission February 13, 2016 at the Lower Level of the Decorah Public Library.

Present: Dave Stanley, Kim Glock, LaVonne Sharp, Roger Bergan, Elizabeth Lorentzen, Ferneva Brimacomb, Dennis Karlsbrotten, and John Beard, BOS liaison.

Roger opened the meeting by with a review of the January minutes. Roger moved to approve the minutes as is and Ferneva seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

Elizabeth presented the treasurer's report. Dennis moved to approve the treasurer's report and Kim seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

John presented the current status of the Smith Building which is in need of upgrading and maintenance. John noted that the County budget has a line item of \$200,000 for work at the Smith Building but it is not known at the time just what these funds will be applied to.

Roger brought up the issue of non-members of the Commission accessing the HPC files. Dave stated that we can't just allow people to rummage through our file cabinets especially since there is archeological site location information in those files that are protected by the Iowa Code. Dave thought that a request for a specific document is one thing while fishing expeditions is another. The topic was shelved for the time being.

Elizabeth distributed two brochures that were prepared by the Tourism and Convention Bureau with assistance from Elizabeth and Kevin Lee. One brochure includes mapped routes showing the locations of all the barn quilts and pioneer cemeteries. The second brochure is pocket sized and documents the trail signs' route. Both brochures will be widely available to the public.

The next topic focused on the Commission developing a web site separate from the County web site. The reasoning would be that the Commission could then put up a great deal of information regarding reports that have been completed, activities, etc. Ferneva said that the County Historical Society recently hired someone to create their web site. She said the initial cost was \$500 for the setup

and than a \$25 per year fee to maintain the site. After a brief discussion Ferneva volunteered to look into this on behalf of the Commission.

James Myster, an archeologists and historic preservation specialist with the Fish and Wildlife Service (F&WS) called into our meeting. The specific topic was in regard to the White House in Bluffton, a small limestone cottage in Bluffton. This structure was purchased by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in 2008 using F&WS funds. The DNR had an architectural survey completed for the building and it was determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NR). Because the DNR used federal funds to purchase the property it is required to abide by Section 106 of the 1966 Historic Preservation Act. The Commission has been invited to participate in the consultation process.

James explained to the Commission the Section 106 process and how it applies to the White House. He also outlined the general sequence of events regarding the DNR purchase.

James indicated that the DNR has five options:

- 1) Sell the house and a small acreage to someone interested in restoring and preserving the structure.
- 2) Keep the land and sell the structure to someone who would move it to another location.
- 3) Sell the structure to someone but not the land. The buyer would then lease the land from the DNR.
- 4) The DNR keeps the structure, mothball it, and then maintain it.
- 5) The DNR demolishes the structure.

The general consensus of the Commission was that the DNR should make a good faith effort to sell the house and a small acreage. A meeting with the DNR, the F&WS, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was scheduled for February 26th at 1 P.M. at the Bluffton Store. A tour of the structure would occur after the meeting.

Kim moved to adjourn the meeting and LaVonne seconded the motion which was passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM. Next scheduled meeting is for March 12.