

**Minutes of the Winneshiek County  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Meeting  
June 9, 2007  
8:30 A.M.  
Old Winneshiek County Jail**

**Present**

Kevin Lee, Dave Stanley, Steve Johnson Ferneva Brimacomb, Rob Shadwick.

The Freeport Cemetery issue dominated the discussion at this meeting. The main issue was how we should proceed with gaining access to the cemetery in relation to the Iowa Burial Code. Dave suggested that we need to establish the chain of ownership and how the present owner got title to the cemetery. This would include checking the tax records.

Kevin noted the property is presently in a forest preserve and the current County Attorney, Andrew VanDerMaaten at one time owned the property so there may be a conflict of interest if we request his help in accessing the cemetery. Kevin pointed out that a key issue is how the disappeared from the deed and questioned whether or not we should go over the County Attorney's head as outlined in the letter from Shirley Schermer if the County Attorney won't help us.

Ferneva pointed out that we should avoid any publicity at this stage and the commission was in agreement. She also suggested that we first approach the County Attorney and see how he responds. Dave suggested that we need to line up our ducks by outlining the key issues. These include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Describe the recent problems with Lensing specifically the attempts to fence off the cemetery.
- 2) Note the need for an archeological survey as outlined in Shirley Schermer's letter.
- 3) Include a copy of the Iowa burial code, noting that some of the burials are over 150 years in age.

Kevin volunteered to put together a draft letter and circulate through the commission and have a final version ready for the next commission meeting. Steve noted that the letter should be copied to Shirley. Kevin said we should include the Pioneer Cemetery Association and Ferneva pointed out that we need to bring the Board of Supervisors in on this as well. Kevin brought up the need to also outline the physiographic context of the cemetery so it is clear that the only access is across Lensing's property because of the two deep ravines.

Ferneva suggested that once a draft letter has been put together someone should meet informally with Dean Darling the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. Steve agreed, pointing out that the Board of Supervisors is the actual CLG and we are only an advisory board. There was a brief discussion. Ferneva and Kevin agreed to set up a meeting with

Dean Darling to outline the issues, show him a copy of the letter, and let him know we are going to apply for a CLG grant to do an archeological survey. The commission decided it was important to have a July meeting in order to discuss the letter and the meeting with Dean. Dave agreed, noting that the letter should be signed by the entire commission. Dave also said the 2008 grant application form has not yet been posted on the State Historical Society's web site.

Steve wondered if we should have a Plan B in case we did not get the grant. Ferneva suggested other grant sources such as the Gaming Revenue Board. Dave said that regardless of whether or not we get any grants we need to access the cemetery and volunteered Bear Creek's services if necessary to map the cemetery and do a reconnaissance survey.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 A.M. Next Meeting is tentatively scheduled for July 9<sup>th</sup>, 5:30P.M. at the Old Jail.