

CLAYTON COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes for November 10, 2023

The November 10, 2023 meeting of members of the Clayton County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC) was held at the home of Rita and Dave Dudley located south of Elkport, Iowa between 9:45 and 10:30 am. Attending were Deputy Chair Brandie Backes, Secretary Chris Schoen, Ellen Collins, Kathy Koether, and Rita Dudley. Absent was Chair Roger Thomas. Guest Dave Dudley was present.

Prior to beginning the meeting, commissioners toured the interior of the Elkport Immanuel Church. Extensive efforts have been made in recent years to clean the sediments deposited in May 1999 into the basement and sacristy of this historic German Lutheran church, paint the interior and exterior, and replace the roof. Plans are to place new plexiglass over the 1917 stained glassed windows to protect them. Apparently, the stained glass in the windows is unusual as they are a combination to true stained glass and painted glass. Funding for the windows was accumulated by the women members of the church. The future of the building is uncertain. It lies at the edge of the floodplain and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) would require the structure be raised 6 inches to be eligible for federal flood assistance. To move it any significant distance could diminish the historic sense of setting and viewshed. Further, it has deep sentimental roots for the members of the parish and community, which would be lost should the church be relocated some miles away.

After the meeting was called to order by Backes, a motion was made to approve the agenda by Koether and seconded by Collins. The motion was passed unanimously. Minutes from the September 8, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Dudley made a motion to approve the minutes and Collins seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

The current balance for the 2023-2024 fiscal year beginning in July is \$2050.

OLD BUSINESS

Ellen Collins reported that repairs to the Keystone Bridge in Elkader are nearly complete. The reopening of the bridge is planned for early December 2023 and a rededication on May 7, 2024 to mark the 135th anniversary of its construction. Brennan Dolan, Archaeologist for the Iowa Department of Transportation, has agreed to briefly talk about the historic significance of the bridge. A member of the City of Elkader Planning Committee for the Keystone Bridge rededication ceremony attempted to contact Iowa Public Television about doing create a documentary on the bridge but had had no response to the request has been recieved.

With regard to the Cardinal-Hickory Creek 345-kV Transmission Line Project, Schoen reported that on August 11, 2023, the USDA Rural Development, Rural Utilities Service (RUS) recommended a finding of adverse effect to the newly proposed Turkey River South Bluff Archaeological District and that various Native American tribes have had opportunity to be involved in discussions and make recommendations. The District was proposed after archaeological survey and LiDAR mapping of the bluff ridge overlooking the Mississippi River near the confluence of the Turkey River determined that there are many more Prehistoric mounds on the landform than previously recorded.

Schoen stated that Tribal members will have future access to this Traditional Cultural Property (TCP). Tribal monitors, trained for such activity, will be on-site during transmission line construction in the District's area. To minimize the potential of adverse impacts to the ground and any archaeological deposits, construction will be performed when the ground is frozen. No grading will occur before timber matting is laid for vehicles, equipment, and materials. Old power poles will be cut flush with ground surface rather than dug out. Excavations of new structures will be done in ways that minimize ground disturbance.

Collins confirmed that the keystone arch bridge/culvert of the drainage situated on 125th Street between Dogwood and Dove Roads in Monona Township is listed on the website for the stone structures identified in Clayton County. She said that she would contact the Clayton County Engineer to determine its status with regard to replacement. Perhaps the stone structure can remain but be modified by a culvert under the arch or material over the arch to support the weight of heavy vehicles rather than removal of the historic structure.

Collins stated that Thomas had arranged for the plaques commemorating the original, National Register of Historic Places listed, Mederville Bridge to have new frames built. The status of this work is not known. The plan is to have the plaques installed on one of the concrete rails of the bridge.

Backes reported that the Museum Trail banner is currently being repaired by Thomas.

NEW BUSINESS

Collins proposed that the Commission determine whether annual funding not used near the end of any fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) might be spent to assist or complete some project in the county. Possible uses suggested by commissioners were for historic signage, helping to fund renovation of the Clear View Farm “round” barn, or building concrete bases for cemetery markers. Collins noted that the Clayton County Pioneer Cemetery Commission has been fashioning concrete bases for grave markers. The question as to whether CCHPC funds can be used for such projects needs to be posed to the Clayton County Board of Supervisors.

Commissioner Lee Lenth passed away on October 12, 2023. The commission will begin looking for a replacement for him.

Dudley discussed her attendance at the National Register of Historic Places Workshop in Decorah, Iowa on October 20, 2023. Jeri Barnhart, a member of the Elkport Immanuel Church group also attended. They were told that National Register nominations were not being accepted for churches, which seems contrary to the fact that many churches in Iowa are on the NRHP, including the basilica at Dyersville, St. Mary’s Church in Guttenberg, and others. Dudley and Bahls were intending to pursue getting the Elkport Immanuel church listed.

Laura Sodowaski from the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) presented remotely. She stressed that it takes considerable time to complete a nomination and have it reviewed by Iowa SHPO and the National Park Service, who manages the National Register.

Dudley reported that Shay Gooder from Bear Creek Archeology, Inc., gave a presentation regarding their survey of Winneshiek County to locate mills and other water-powered industry sites. They used historic maps, LiDAR, and other remote sensing methods to identify 71 mill sites. She shared three publications by the Winneshiek Historic Preservation Commission: *The History of Mills and Water-Powered Sites*, a self-guided tour of *County Schools*, and a self-guided tour of *Stone Structures*.

There were no committee reports or other open comments.

The next scheduled meeting will be December 8, 2023 at 9:00 am at the Economic Development Office in Elkader, Iowa. Collins made a motion to adjourn at 10:30. Dudley seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted November 15, 2023
Chris Schoen, Secretary