

# CLAYTON COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

## Meeting Minutes for December 8, 2023

The December 8, 2023 meeting of members of the Clayton County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC) was held at the Clayton County Development Office in Elkader, Iowa between 9:00 and 10:45 am. Attending on site were Chair Roger Thomas, Secretary Chris Schoen, Ellen Collins, and Kathy Koether. Rita Dudley attended via telephone. Absent was Deputy Chair Brandie Backes. Guest Bob Meyer was present.

After the meeting was called to order by Thomas, two additional topics were added to the agenda. A motion was made to approve the amended agenda by Collins and seconded by Schoen. The motion was passed unanimously. Minutes from the November 10, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Koether made a motion to approve the minutes and Dudley seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

The current balance for the 2023-2024 fiscal year beginning in July is \$1969.60. Dudley had submitted an invoice for \$80.40 for reimbursement of travel costs for attending the National Register of Historic Places Workshop in Decorah, Iowa on October 20, 2023. Jolene Jensen (Jensen Products) submitted an invoice for \$224 for maintenance of the CCHPC's webpage and its Go Daddy domain.

## OLD BUSINESS

Ellen Collins reported that repairs to the Keystone Bridge in Elkader were complete. A reopening celebration was held on December 1<sup>st</sup> at the Central State Bank in Elkader. Collins stated that plans are developing by the City of Elkader Planning Committee for the Keystone Bridge for a rededication of the bridge on May 7, 2024 to mark the 135<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its construction. Plans are being made to redo signage for the bridge which would include the name of the builder. Collins said that Mallory Hanson, a member of the Planning Committee contacted Iowa Public Television about creating a documentary on the bridge but that no response to the request has been received to date. Koether suggested that the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) be involved in this effort. Thomas noted that the CCHPC commission should review the text of anything written regarding the history of the bridge.

Collins reported that she had contacted the Clayton County Engineer, Casey Stickford, to get permission to put up a brown colored sign (for historic points of interest) on Iowa Highway 13 to direct travelers to the historic Mederville Bridge. Stickford passed the request to the Iowa DOT and Craig Wood of that agency sent Collins four sign options to consider. Collins presented the four options to the CCHPC, which unanimously agreed on the option that has "Mederville" centered over "Historic Bridge". The brown colored sign will be placed directly over a green colored sign that says "Mederville 2 miles".

Thomas reported that he will mount the two brass plaques that discuss the construction of the original Mederville Bridge to the side of the bridge.

Collins reported that she also asked the Clayton County Engineer whether the Roads Department planned to replace the keystone arch bridge/culvert located on 125<sup>th</sup> Street between Dogwood and Dove Roads in Monona Township. Collins suggested two options to the County Engineer to save the bridge: build over the current bridge or place a culvert under the historic bridge to support the weight of traffic. Stickford replied that he was aware of the historic stone structure and would look into its status at a later date. He thanked Collins for making him aware of the Clayton County Stone Structure webpage created by the CCHPC.

Collins stated that she had received a thank you note from Lee Lenth's family for the flowers sent for his funeral.

Collins said that she had attended the Cemetery Walk hosted by Dave Beck at the Elkader Cemetery. Discussion was held regarding erecting signs that gave brief histories of three of Elkader's founders: John Thompson, Davis,

and Boardman. Koether stated that examples signage for that purpose could be found at the cemetery in McGregor, Iowa. Collins said that she would coordinate with the City of Elkader regarding this proposal.

Koether discussed the renovations of the former Masonic Lodge building in McGregor, Iowa. Black Swan Architecture led the renovations, which include a business space at street level and a total of 11 apartments on the second and third floors. She noted that the structure had twice burned down and was rebuilt. Koether suggested that the CCHPC might meet with the McGregor Historic Preservation Commission at the former Lodge to view the space and discuss preservation projects.

Schoen reported that the Guttenberg Heritage Society and the Guttenberg Historic Preservation Commission were having discussions with the Guttenberg Masonic Lodge about turning their historic building into a city museum. The lodge is interested in preserving the 1926 two-story brick building. The main room in which Masonic ceremonies and meetings are held might be retained as a living museum display about the Masonic organization while other spaces adapted for displays regarding the diverse history of Guttenberg.

The Commission discussed ideas for funds not expended near the end of each fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). Possible uses suggested by commissioners were for historic signage or plaques, helping to fund renovation of the Clear View Farm "round" barn, or for an honorium to a speaker to high school students about a career related to history and historic preservation. It was suggested that the application be simple.

Robert Meyer has indicated his interest in joining the CCHPC to replace Commissioner Lee Lenth who passed away on October 12, 2023. Thomas will assist Meyer in submitting an application to the Clayton County Board of Supervisors.

Thomas reported that he had received the minutes from a November 30, 2023 internet/phone virtual meeting hosted by SWCA Environmental Consultants regarding proposed treatment measures for Segment IA-2 of the Cardinal-Hickory Creek 345-kV Transmission Line Project. The meeting was an opportunity for consulting parties to provide comment and concurrence on the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) proposed treatment measures. The CCHPC is a consulting party. Schoen had provided comments to the proposed treatment measures on October 27, 2023. In the meeting it was decided to create the Turkey River South Bluff Archaeological District and recognized that the current proposed boundaries for the district are subject to change following archaeological and Native American tribal field survey and testing. Application to the National Register of Historic Places is planned for the district to give it National Landmark status. The district also will be recognized as a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) for Native Americans. Thomas shared the meeting minutes and map of the district to the CCHPC members just prior to the meeting.

Schoen reviewed some of the information he had regarding the character of the district and noted that tribal monitors were planned during construction to help minimize or prevent damage to mounds and archaeological site deposits. He reported that no grading was to be done prior to laying down matting for machinery, equipment, and materials.

Dudley wondered whether landowners of the property in which the district is located might get easements to help to protect the cultural resources and general landscape from future adverse impacts.

## NEW BUSINESS

Thomas reminded the commissioners of the upcoming Preserve Iowa Summit, which will be held June 6-8, 2024 at Mount Pleasant, Iowa. Commissioner attendance is encouraged. Thomas suggested consideration of making a presentation regarding the CCHPC's projects at the meeting.

There were no committee reports or other open comments.

The next scheduled meeting will be January 12, 2024 at 9:00 am at the Economic Development Office in Elkader, Iowa.

Koether made a motion to adjourn at 10:45. Schoen seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted December 20, 2023

Chris Schoen, Secretary