

CLAYTON COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes for February 9, 2024

The February 9, 2024 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 10:05 am. Attending on site were Chair Roger Thomas, Secretary Chris Schoen, Ellen Collins, and Bob Meyer. Deputy Chair Brandie Backes and Rita Dudley attended via telephone. There were no guests.

A motion was made to approve the agenda by Schoen and seconded by Backes. The motion was passed unanimously. Minutes from the December 8, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Collins made a motion to approve the minutes and Meyer seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

The current balance for the 2023-2024 fiscal year beginning in July is \$1745.60.

OLD BUSINESS

Roger Thomas reported that Registration for the June 6-8, 2024 Preserve Iowa Summit is now open. It will be held in Mount Pleasant, Henry County, this year. He explained what the summit was about to new commissioner, Bob Meyer, and encouraged everyone to try to attend.

Thomas briefly outlined the Cardinal-Hickory Transmission Line project so that Meyer understood the where is located and how the CCHPC was involved as a consulting party. He asked Chris Schoen to discuss the highlights of the new Programmatic Agreement (PA) for the project that relates to mitigating potential adverse effects to identified cultural resources in the Turkey River South Bluff Archaeological District (TRSBAD) near Millville. On October 23, 2023, Schoen had sent an email to Thomas offering his comments on the proposed PA.

- Schoen concurred with the plan to give tribal elders and tribal members involved in tribal culture preservation easy access to the TRSBAD for spiritual/religious purposes.
- He agreed with the plans to minimize adverse surface and subsurface impacts to the District by performing work while the ground was frozen, prohibit grading, using timber matting for vehicles to operate on, and cutting off old transmission poles at the ground surface rather than digging them out.
- He concurred that a management plan be made that protected cultural resources for future maintenance of the line, vegetation control, and other activities that might cause negative impacts to cultural resources.
- Schoen agreed it was important to have tribal monitors on site but emphasized that the tribal monitors had authority to suspend construction activities if cultural resources were threatened.
- He agreed that the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) provide training to its employees and contractors regarding tribal issues and sensitivity.
- He suggested that the Ioway Tribal National Park or the Turkey River Interpretive Center being created at the Elgin Historical Museum might be better location for tribal cultural displays related to the TRSBAD.
- Schoen opined that the proposed \$30,000 monetary donation by the RUS is completely inadequate for “conducting additional research that supports the understanding of the District and its connection to the greater landscape”. He said that the \$30,000 might fund a graduate student for a class project or for a summer intern project. Schoen proposed that at least \$100,000 be allocated to tribal members to complete the research and to create text and prepare materials for museum quality displays.

These comments were taken under consideration by the RUS and as a result \$100,000 is being awarded to the tribes to perform the research, which will be used to nominate the TRSBAD to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and/or inclusion to the Prehistoric Mounds of the Quad State Region of the Upper Mississippi River Valley NRHP-listed multiple property nomination. Trained tribal monitors, known as Traditional Cultural Specialists, will monitor construction activities. If TCS monitors are not available, other qualified archaeologists may do the work.

The University of Iowa Office of the State Archeologist (OSA) agreed to receive the funds on behalf of the tribes and act as Project Manager. The other proposed mitigations discussed above also were implemented.

Ellen Collins reported that the rededication celebration for the Keystone Bridge is scheduled for May 7, 2024 at 3 pm to mark the 135th anniversary of its construction. A video is being prepared that discusses the history of the bridge and its repairs. Invitations to attend are being extended to the Governor, the Secretary of Transportation, and state representatives. Thomas said that he had reviewed the proposed text for a plaque to be placed on the bridge. Dudley asked if it could be made possible for school children to attend.

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

Thomas said that he had spoken to Sara Davis of Guttenberg and Gary Seigworth who have begun to rehabilitate the “Coulee Creek Barn” near Elkader as a community gathering space for culture, art, events, and music. Davis and Seigworth inquired whether the barn was eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Thomas did not think that the barn would meet any of the NRHP criteria for listing.

Schoen reported that the Guttenberg Heritage Society and the Guttenberg Historic Preservation Commission were still looking into converting the historic Guttenberg Masonic Lodge into a community museum. 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.

Dudley again suggested that the CCHPC support developing a system of presenters at high schools to promote careers in history and historic preservation. She inquired whether the Commission had funding that might be used to pay honorariums to professionals to do the presentations. It was agreed that she should prepare a draft plan called “Clayton County Outreach” to present to school administrators.

NEW BUSINESS

Thomas reported that the Commission had met most of its 2023 Work Plan goals. He is preparing the Work Plan for 2024 to submit to the State Historic Preservation Office. Among the 2024 tasks will be (1) attending the Preserve Iowa Summit or other historic preservation training, (2) prepare a National Register of Historic Places nomination for Floral Hall in Elkader, and (3) erecting plaques in the Elkader cemetery for the city’s founders.

Collins said that she was continuing her research into the appropriate kind of plaque to put up at gravesites to commemorate the Elkader city founders. Meyer made a motion to pay for the plaques. Thomas seconded. All members voted to approve the motion.

Dudley complimented the display of historic Valentine’s Day cards that 3 Elkader high school students created as a project at the George Maier Rural Heritage Museum.

Thomas said that he was going to see if he could get some students to make a similar display or story board for Floral Hall.

Thomas reported that he and Schoen had visited the 14-sided round barn being restored by Cathy Krausmann north of Elkader. Krausmann had hired Amish contractors to replace damaged concrete block on some foundation walls, replace wooden door framing, replace rotted floor joists, and replace rotted or damaged wall boards. She is looking for a source of 20-foot-long boards for that effort.

There were no committee reports or other open comments.

The next scheduled meeting will be March 8, 2024 at 9:00 am at the Economic Development Office in Elkader, Iowa.

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

Respectfully submitted February 21, 2024

Chris Schoen, Secretary