

## **CLAYTON COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

### **Meeting Minutes for April 12, 2024**

The April 12, 2024 meeting of members of the Clayton County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC) was held at the Motor Inn, Motor Mill Historic Site in Clayton County, Iowa between 9:00 and 10:00 am. Attending on site were Chair Roger Thomas, Secretary Chris Schoen, Ellen Collins, Kathy Koether, Bob Meyer and Rita Dudley. Deputy Chair Brandie Backes was absent.

A motion was made to approve the agenda by Koether and seconded by Collins. The motion was passed unanimously. Minutes from the March 8, 2024 meeting were reviewed. Dudley made a motion to approve the minutes and Schoen seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

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

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Ellen Collins reported that the rededication celebration for the Keystone Bridge is scheduled for May 7, 2024 at 3 pm. Attendees are expected to gather at the small park at the west end of the bridge. A reception will be held at The Collective art studio. Images of the bridge will be on display. It is not yet known what the cost is for making the video documentary by Gerald Borman. Roger Thomas noted that the CCHPC has voted to contribute to the cost.

Collins reported that she had spoken with Craig Woods at the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding placing a sign of Highway 13 directing visitors to the historic Mederville Bridge. Mr. Woods said that the signs were made and would soon be emplaced by the DOT. Thomas said that he had asked Clayton County Supervisor Ray Peterson whether the county could clean up debris at the bridge site.

Thomas reported that he has some concern about the State Historical Preservation Office's approval to build the proposed Clayton County Safety and Emergency Communications tower at the edge of a farm field on Eagle Drive. He said that he thought that the location could be an adverse visual affect to prehistoric mounds recorded in the area.

Bob Meyer passed around a newspaper article that reported that the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Dairyland Electric were being sued by that the National Wildlife Federation, the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, and the Driftless Area Land Conservancy regarding the crossing of the Mississippi River by the Transmission Line Project. The suit contends that the USFWS did not have authority to exchange some of their wildlife refuge lands on the Wisconsin side of the project to accommodate the project. An injunction is in place and work stopped.

Thomas reported that he and Schoen had presented at the Clayton County LEAD meeting held at the Driftless Center at McGregor on February 14, 2024/ Thomas spoke about what the CCHPC has been doing regarding historic preservation and Schoen spoke about the activities done by the Guttenberg Historic Preservation Commission (GHPC) of which he is currently Chairman.

Thomas noted that renovations had been completed by Amish contractors for Cathie Krausmann of the 14-sided historic barn at Clear Creek Farm. Unfortunately, it seems that none of the original boards covering the exterior were able to be reused. However, the structure is now stable and able to be reused and enjoyed. While it is not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the barn should be submitted for listing on the State Inventory of historic structures. A newspaper article is being written regarding the barn.

Thomas also reported that the Coulee Creek Barn, located in Elkader, is being renovated by Sara Davis and Gary Siegworth to be used as an event venue. The barn does not meet criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Meyer reported that temporary signs placed by the graves at the Pleasant Grove Cemetery of important individuals were only there seasonally beginning in October. The signs are made of cardboard by Supreme Graphics. He noted that 47 veterans are interred there and plans were being made to honor them on Veteran's Day. Collins said that she was looking for something more permanent, such as a brass plaque.

Dudley said that she needed to speak with local school superintendents regarding creating a History Career Day in which students could learn about possible careers in history and preservation.

## NEW BUSINESS

Thomas said that he would be asking the Clayton County Board of Supervisors to recognize May as Historic Preservation Month.

The Summit Iowa conference will be held June 6-7 in Mount Pleasant. Registration of Commissioners is \$100 as they are associated with a Certified Local Government (CLG) - Elkader. The CCHPC will reimburse attendees for mileage, lodging, and meals. Receipts must be submitted.

Thomas reported that he had attended the Iowa Eats event in Waterloo. He passed out Museum Trail rack cards as well as packets of basil and lettuce seeds. The packets were labeled "Rural Heritage Museum" on the back.

Thomas reported that an estimate of \$43,000 will be needed to repair and renovate Floral Hall, also known as the "Shelter House" on the former fairgrounds by the Rural Heritage Museum. Planned improvements include a new roof and gutters, painting, replacing some siding, restoring widows, adding additional electrical outlets and LED lighting. Elkader high school students are being invited to create a display about the history of the structure that includes photographs. Thomas and Schoen will submit documentation towards getting the building listed on the State Inventory of historic structures.

Collins, who serves on the Pioneer Cemetery Board, reported that an abandoned cemetery dating from about the 1850s had recently been brought to her attention. Some 15-20 headstones had been unearthed. They are being repaired by Monumental Restoration located in Des Moines. Sarah Gunderson has been recording the cemetery for a 501c3 non-profit organization. The landowner is setting aside a 90x90x90-foot triangle of land to put the stones. The graves are believed to be for members of the Universalist Church.

Thomas reported that Susan Snow, Superintendent of the Effigy Mounds National Monument (EMNM), asked whether the CCHPC wanted to have a table at the planned Junior Ranger Day activity focusing on historic preservation. The event will be held on May 25 at 10 am to 2 pm at the park. Schoen said that he would represent the commission.

Thomas reported that students from the Elkader high school created a display for the arrowheads curated at the Rural Heritage Museum.

The next scheduled meeting will be May 7, 2024 about 3:30 pm at The Collective in Elkader, Iowa following the bridge rededication. The June 16 meeting will be held at the home of Roger Thomas. A visit to the Clear Creek Farm on Basswood Road to see the barn renovations by Cathie Krausmann will follow.

Dudley made a motion to adjourn at 10:00. Koether seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously. The commissioners toured the first floor of the Inn and Motor Mill after the meeting.

Respectfully submitted April 21, 2024

Chris Schoen, Secretary