

CLAYTON COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes for January 10, 2025

The January 10, 2025 meeting of members of the Clayton County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC) was held at the Clayton County Economic Development Office in Elkader, Clayton County, Iowa between 9:00 and 10:45 am. Attending on site were Chair Roger Thomas, Secretary Chris Schoen, Ellen Collins, Kathy Koether, Bob Meyer and Ed Ruff (new Commissioner to replace Rita Dudley). Deputy Chair Brandie Backes attended via cell phone. There were no guests.

A motion was made to approve the agenda by Collins and seconded by Koether. The motion was passed unanimously. Minutes from the November 6, 2024 meeting were reviewed. Meyer made a motion to approve the minutes and Schoen seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

The current balance for the 2024-2025 fiscal year beginning in July is \$2050.00.

OLD BUSINESS

With regard to the proposal to place commemorative plaques at cemeteries for the founders of Clayton County communities, Roger Thomas reported that there are 17 communities in Clayton County, including Postville, which straddles the Clayton and Allamakee County lines. Of the 3 founders of Elkader – John S. Thompson, Timothy Davis, and Chester Sage – there has been no success to find a photograph of John Thompson or of Chester Sage. Dave Beck, the president of the Clayton County Genealogical Society, is going to make additional search. Thomas proposed making a sign for Elkader's founders and use it to show other communities what we are intending. Kathy Koether proposed taking a photograph of the founders signage for McGregor that is put out on Memorial Day. She also noted that the Monona Historical Society was very active and might have a lot of information to contribute about their community founders.

Ellen Collins proposed photographs that the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) stone dam structure and steps on Bob Meyer's property near Giard be added to the Stone Structure Inventory made for Clayton County. She would contact Jolene Jensen, our Website manager to have them added. Chris Schoen suggested that it should also be added to the Iowa Historic Structures Inventory, if it is not already listed. Bob Meyer noted that he had had an opportunity several years ago to speak with one of the men who had helped to construct the dam.

NEW BUSINESS

Brandie Backes has been renewed as a Commissioner. Ed Ruff is the new Commissioner who is replacing Rita Dudley. Dudley resigned in November of 2024. The members introduced themselves and explained their preservation interests. Ruff gave an overview of his background.

Meyer reported that there is a memorial to Basil Giard at Marquette that he would like to see moved to Giard. He said that the monument is currently hard to see. Thomas said he would contact the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office to see if we could get permission to move the memorial.

Collins commented that there is a cabin at the mouth of Bloody Run Creek that had been occupied by Giard and his Native American wife.

Collins reported that she had photographed a stone pumphouse on the Wanda Brinks property on Gunder Road in Boardman Township. She would see that it was added to the Stone Structure Inventory.

Collins also said that the stone commercial building at 116 West Mission Street in Strawberry Point is currently identified on the Stone Structure Inventory as being in Cox Creek Township. It should be in Cass Township.

Koether reported that there is a stone pumphouse on the Farley Farm in Giard Township that should record on the Stone Structure Inventory.

Thomas noted that with regard to stone structures spanning drainages, they are considered by the Department of Transportation to be “culverts” if they are less than 33 feet long and “bridges” if greater than 33 feet.

Koether suggested that the Commission write an editorial or opinion article about the Stone Structures Inventory on the Web to make the public aware of it. Darla Ketchen asked if Thomas would speak about it on a radio program she hosts. He agreed.

Thomas reminded everyone that the Preserve Iowa Summit will be held in Muscatine over June 5-7. He encouraged members to attend and reminded them that registration, travel expenses, and per diem were reimbursable.

Thomas reported that he is preparing the annual Certified Local Government report to be submitted to the Iowa SHPO. It will include the 2025 Work Plan for the Commission and report what we have accomplished over the past year. Koether made a motion to accept the proposed Work Plan. Meyer seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Thomas reminded the Commission that we had voted to provide up to \$500 as a match grant to the Clayton County Economic Development Office for a Museum Trail planning guide to draw visitors to the several museums in the county (e.g. George Meier Rural Heritage Museum, Carter House Museum, Froelich Tractor Museum, Elgin Historical Museum, McGregor Museum, etc.). Koether suggested there be a punch card so that visitors could complete the entire trail circuit over an extended period. Darla Ketchen said that the Tourism group would be meeting on January 29 to discuss the concept.

The next scheduled meeting will be March 14, 2025 at 9:00 am at the McGregor Museum in McGregor, Iowa.

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

Respectfully submitted January 17, 2025

Chris Schoen, Secretary