

CLAYTON COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes for May 9, 2025

The May 9, 2025 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 10:15 am. Attending on site were Chair Roger Thomas, Secretary Chris Schoen, Ellen Collins, Kathy Koether, and Bob Meyer. Deputy Chair Brandie Backes attended via mobile phone. Absent was Ed Ruff. Guests were Scott Koether and Emma Koether.

A motion was made to approve the agenda by Collins and seconded by Schoen. The motion was passed unanimously. Minutes from the March 14, 2025 meeting were reviewed. Collins made a motion to approve the minutes. Meyer seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Thomas reported that the current balance for the 2024-2025 fiscal year beginning in July is \$1,826.00. Two expenditures were discussed: (1) \$500 contribution to the Economic Development Office towards the Museum Crawl scheduled for the month of June 2025 and (2) \$40 to update the CCHPC website by Jansen Products, who maintain the website. Koether made a motion to approve the expenditures. Collins seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously. This leaves a balance of \$1,286.00.

OLD BUSINESS

Thomas reported that he and David Beck had drafted basic text for the Elkader's Founders sign planned to be erected by the Elkader Founders Park. Recognized are John H. Thompson, Clarence Sage, and Timothy Davis. Currently only a photograph of Sage has been located to include on the plaque. The metal plaque will measure 24 x 24 inches and be made for \$60 by Sports World in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin.

Thomas reminded members that the Preserve Iowa Summit will be held in Muscatine, Iowa June 5 to 7, 2025. Schoen said that he will attend.

Several county museums will participate in the Museum Crawl scheduled for each weekend in June from 10 am to 4 pm. The Carter House Museum reported that they would not have sufficient staff to participate. Staff at each museum are encouraged to offer some interactive activity for visitors that relates to that museum's focus. Museum visitors will receive a card listing the museums in the county and have a place to receive a stamp from each museum. Visitors who collect at least 6 museum stamps will be entered into a pool for prizes. Winners may receive a basket of local products valued at \$300 or \$300 in Chamber of Commerce Bucks redeemable by local business. Each participating museum contributed \$25 towards the prizes. The Museum Crawl will be advertised by posters, Facebook, radio, and newspapers.

Thomas reported that the McGregor Historic Preservation Commission is partnering with the McGregor Museum and the Chamber of Commerce to apply for a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant to digitize their historic walking tour using a national computer application called "TravelStorys". Brandie Crozier at the McGregor Economic Development Office thought that the CCHPC or the City of Elkader might be interested in also pursuing a grant. It would require matching funds.

Thomas reported on improvements to the Elkader Shelter House. The flat rubber roof was installed during the previous week. Most of the roofing was paid for by a Upper Mississippi Gaming Commission (UMGC) grant of \$24,000. A Community Foundation grant of \$1,000 and donations of about \$800 through a Go Fund Me account also have been obtained. Thomas is repairing screens for the windows. Various local groups also have been donating time and materials for the rehabilitation effort. Thomas has contacted preservation specialist Paula Mohr to assist with preparing a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination for the structure.

NEW BUSINESS

Koether reported that the Marquette Historical Society has not responded to her request to move an extant sign recognizing Basil Giard as a founding father of the area to the village of Giard. Meyer stated that he has requested a permit from the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Clayton County Roads Department to prepare a site for this or a new sign near Highway 18 at Giard. It was recommended that the Clayton County Attorney be consulted regarding liability associated with visitors in the public easement for the highway.

Koether suggested that a new sign be made. Her granddaughter, Emma Koether, would like to take that activity on as an Eagle Scout project. The sign could include an overlay of the map of the Giard Tract awarded to Basil Giard by the Spanish Government over a map of the county. Collins made a motion to move ahead with the project. The motion was seconded by Schoen. The motion passed unanimously.

Koether also reported that Ronnie Harris was preparing a new Giard Historical Calendar that would include historic photographs of people, places, and events in the Giard area.

Thomas reported that the City of Luana, Iowa is planning to upgrade their wastewater treatment plant with the addition of a three-cell controlled discharge lagoon. The project area includes the existing plant, an adjacent open grassy area and a small stream. An archaeological survey of the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the project will be made to determine whether any potentially significant archaeological remain are present. The project will be funded by a State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan. Thomas said that he will examine the proposed project area to determine whether the CCHPC has any concerns or comments.

Thomas reported that he plans to attend the Effigy Mounds National Preservation Day event on May 18, 2025. Thomas will provide information about Clayton County historic sites and museums to visitors to the park on that day.

Thomas asked whether the CCHPC would agree to send a letter of support to the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for an Historical Resource Development Program (HDRP) grant to the Clayton County Conservation Board and the Motor Mill Foundation to help fund efforts to stabilize two support piers at Motor Mill. The two support piers were constructed on the face of a limestone ledge that has been sufficiently undercut by flood waters that the piers could shift, thereby potentially causing catastrophic damage to the historic grist mill. These two, and 10 additional support piers, support the interior six floors of the structure. The board agreed to send a letter of support.

The next scheduled meeting will be June 13, 2025 at 9:00 am at the Economic Office in Elkader, Iowa.

Backes made a motion to adjourn and Koether seconded it. The motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted May 20, 2025.

Chris Schoen, Secretary.