

CLAYTON COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes for September 5, 2025

The September 5, 2025 meeting of members of the Clayton County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC) was held at Maggie's Restaurant near Giard, Iowa between 9:10 and 11:10 am. Attending on site were Chair Roger Thomas, Secretary Chris Schoen, Ed Ruff, Kathy Koether, and Bob Meyer. Attending via cell phone was Deputy Chair Brandie Backes. Absent was Ellen Collins.

Schoen asked that potential impact on historic parish buildings be added to the agenda. A motion was made to approve the agenda as amended by Backes and seconded by Koether. The motion was passed unanimously. Minutes from the August 8, 2025 meeting were reviewed. Meyer made a motion to approve the minutes. Ruff seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Thomas reported that the current balance for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, which began July 1, was \$2050.00. Koether reported expenditures associated with developing the Giard Wayside, including \$25 for the flagpole.

OLD BUSINESS

Koether noted that a more sturdy flagpole for the Giard Wayside may be donated to the project. She said that the earthmoving done to prepare the site was donated. There will be some landscaping rock placed at the site. Two driveways onto the site are marked. Plants are estimated to cost \$200-\$300. Photographs were taken of the project activities with other documentation. Thomas reported that he had signed off documents with the Boy Scouts of America to acknowledge completion of activities by Emma Koether for the project towards her Eagle Scout award.

Thomas reminded the Commission that the German American Museum and the St. Lucas Historical Society will be hosting the Conference on the Ho-Chunk Turkey River Reservation and Restoration of Fort Atkinson on September 17th. Advanced registration is \$20.

Thomas said that he had spoken to Allison Archambo, the CLG Coordinator at the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the apparent lack of Native American response concerning a proposed cell tower in Clayton County. Only the Arapahoe Nation responded. Archambo said that she would create a session at the next Preserve Iowa Summit to discuss this issue.

Koether reported that the National Park Service (NPS) requested an amendment to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination submitted for the German Methodist Episcopal Church at Giard. The NPS indicated that the church would be better identified as significant for its architectural elements rather than its contribution to important events. Jan Full, the contractor preparing the nomination, made the appropriate changes and resubmitted to the NPS. The nomination will be evaluated in October for approval.

Thomas said that he was asked to sign a waiver for review and concurrence for the amended nomination so that it is not delayed. The Clayton County Board of Supervisors also will need to approve the waiver in the next few days. Schoen made a motion to sign the waiver. Meyer seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Thomas reported that he sent a letter supporting an application by Elkader for a Main Street Challenge Grant. The grant will be used to improve the main façade of Shera's Restaurant (109 South Main Street) and complete two upstairs apartments to address housing shortages in the community.

Thomas reported that he had reviewed a proposed cell tower along Grandview Road near Elkport. The 275-foot-tall self-supported tower will be placed partway uphill north of the Volga River. The proposed Area of Potential Effect (APE) for construction of the tower is 100 x 100 feet. No on-site issues or viewshed issues were identified by Thomas.

Schoen expressed concern that historic churches and other parish buildings may be adversely affected by proposed reorganization by the Catholic Church's Archdiocese of Dubuque. The Archdiocese is very large and encompasses most of the NE quarter of the state of Iowa, from Buffalo City in Winnebago County, Brit in Cerro Gordo County, and Webster City in Hamilton County east to the Mississippi River and from the Minnesota State Line south to Tama in Tama County, Mt. Vernon in Linn County, and Mequoketa in Jackson County. Some 199 parishes would be impacted and initially 10 parish churches could be closed. It seems likely that unused churches and rectories would be sold.

Ruff suggested that the historic preservation organizations begin to consider the significance of Monument Rocks being installed and painted to commemorate veterans. These monuments have been emplaced in recent years at several communities. Schoen offered to contact SHPO to inquire whether there is a program for these monuments.

The next scheduled meeting will be October 10, 2025 at 9:00 am at the Economic Office in Elkader, Iowa.

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

Respectfully submitted September 14, 2025.

Chris Schoen, Secretary.