

CLAYTON COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes for December 12, 2025

The December 12, 2025 meeting of members of the Clayton County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC) was held at the Community Center at Garnavillo, Iowa between 9:00 and 10:45 am. Attending on site were Chair Roger Thomas, Secretary Chris Schoen, Ellen Collins, Ed Ruff, Bob Meyer, and Kathy Koether. Vice Chair Brandie Backes was absent. Guests were eight members of the Northeast Iowa Vietnam Veterans: Dennis Mason, John These, Randy Moose, Mike Steffler, Greg Clark, Gary Meyer, Jerry Kruse, and Larry Moser.

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

Thomas reported that the current balance for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, which began July 1, was \$1468.27. He stated that had discussed with Jennifer Garms possible line item changes for the budget as currently there is no line for Special Projects. Thomas proposed reducing the amount in Office Supplies (which is currently \$200) and use some of that money for Special Projects.

Thomas also noted that the Clayton County Board of Supervisors typically awards \$500 to each of the museums in the county if they apply for it. Thomas proposed to Garms that the CCHPC assume that responsibility to foster use of those grant dollars by the museums.

OLD BUSINESS

CCHPC and the members of the Northeast Iowa Vietnam Veterans discussed the planning activities for the wayside rest area being developed at Giard, which will henceforth be identified as the “Giard Memorial Park”.

Mason reported that the City of Marquette appears okay with the plan to move the Basil Giard historic marker sign from its current location to the new wayside. Mason will meet with the City to confirm this. Koether will attend the meeting with him to represent the CCHPC and the Giard United Methodist Church, which owns the property on which the wayside is being developed. Thomas stated that the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) also are okay with moving the sign.

Mason said that the veterans had contracted with the Iowa State University (ISU) for a landscape architect student intern to create a rendering of a concept plan for the two memorials. Mason said that this would cost about \$4,000. He reported that they had already received donations of over \$2,000 for the project following a December 3rd article by Audrey Posten in area newspapers and word of mouth discussions. The veterans will meet with the Veterans Commission on January 17, 2026 to formally present the project and initiate fundraising. They also intend to discuss the project with various veteran organizations across NE Iowa as part of the fundraising effort. Money remaining after completion of the project will be used to pay

for future maintenance activities and other expenses relating to sustaining the memorial park. The veterans will have a Zoom meeting on December 15th with the ISU intern and professor to discuss the project scope and deliverables. Thomas stated that Lily Jensen at the NE Iowa RC&D may be able to assist with grant writing.

Because the wayside will include two distinct memorials being developed by two different organizations - the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) and the NE Iowa Vietnam Veterans – coordination will be needed between the two groups. Koether said that two other Eagle Scout projects are planned for completing the Basil Giard memorial. These include a shelter and picnic table. Mason reported that they are planning to include a concrete restroom built by the Swale Concrete Company (estimated cost \$11,000), a glass-sided building for the current traveling memorial, three flag poles, and a memorial stone with the names of the 53 NE Iowa Vietnam veterans who had died during that war.

Diagonal parking along the north side of Giard Road is proposed. Koether and Bob Meyer will get approval for the parking from the Church Council. The Secondary Roads Department has already approved the parking. Concern was expressed by Moose regarding avoiding impacts to the overhead powerlines at the site. They are high now, but planned fill to raise the grade of the wayside will reduce that difference in elevation. Permits and coordination with the Iowa Department of Transportation for signage will be required.

Koether and Meyer also will propose an easement by the Church to the veterans for the memorial. Thomas suggested that the Clayton County Attorney might be able to assist them with the legal work.

Thomas stated that he had submitted to the Preserve Iowa program the Endangered Properties Nomination for the former barn at the White Springs Supper Club in McGregor. Letters of support were submitted with the nomination by the City of McGregor, the Clayton County Economic Development Group, and the CCHPC.

Thomas reported that as the organizing lead for the 2026 Museum Crawl planned in June, he has contacted the 15 museums in Clayton County, the Elkader Opera House, and Susan Snow, the Superintendent for the Effigy Mounds National Monument. Thomas is proposing that the participating venues be open for their regular hours and perhaps additional hours if they care to. The Museum Crawl Passport materials will list the regular hours and contact information. QR codes will link with the Clayton County webpage for more information.

NEW BUSINESS

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Collins reported that for the 250th Anniversary of the formation of the United States she is preparing text for signage regarding the Revolutionary War skirmish that occurred on the Mississippi River near the mouth of the Turkey River in southeast Clayton County. The British prevented fur traders from shipping a load of

furs and whiskey to St. Louis anticipating that sale of the goods would fund American resistance. Commemorating this event would be done by Clayton County.

Thomas said that he has been unable to locate images of Timothy Davis and John Shannon Thompson, two of the three founders of Elkader.

Thomas reported that he is completing the year end report of the activities of the CCHPC to the SHPO.

The next scheduled meeting will be February 13, 2026.

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

Respectfully submitted December 13, 2025.

Chris Schoen, Secretary.