

# CLAYTON COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

## Meeting Minutes for February 13, 2026

The February 13, 2026 meeting of members of the Clayton County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC) was held at the Community Center at Garnavillo, Iowa between 9:00 and 11:00 am. Attending on site were Chair Roger Thomas, Vice Chair Brandie Backes Secretary Chris Schoen, Ellen Collins, and Kathy Koether.

Guests included several members of the Northeast Iowa Vietnam Veterans (Dennis Mason, Mike Schmeltzer, Greg Clark, and Jerry Kruse). Molly Moser from the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque met with the veterans to discuss setting up an endowment for the planned Vietnam Veterans memorial at Giard prior to them joining the CCGPC meeting.

A motion was made to approve the agenda by Collins and seconded by Backes. The motion was passed unanimously. Minutes from the January 15, 2026 meeting were reviewed. Backes made a motion to approve the minutes. Collins seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Thomas reported that the current balance for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, which began July 1, was \$1140.87.

## OLD BUSINESS

Thomas proposed that the CCHPC renew its membership to Preserve Iowa at a cost of \$50. Collins moved to renew membership. Schoen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Thomas reported that the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office was receptive to receive the preservation nomination for the White Springs historic site and publish it on the Preservation Iowa webpage.

Collins reported that the text was completed for a plaque to commemorate the Revolutionary War engagement that occurred on the Mississippi River near the mouth of the Turkey River in southeast Clayton County. She said that a brass plaque compatible in design with National Park Service plaques and measuring 24 x 18 inches would cost \$1,464.90. Schoen suggested applying for a grant to help pay for the plaque. The plan is to install the sign at the Cassville ferry landing, which is near the site of the engagement as part of the Celebrate America 250 program. Collins is trying to determine which of 3 agencies would need to approve its placement – the US Corps of Engineers, the US Fish & Wildlife, or the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Thomas said that he also wanted to do a sign for the 3 founders of Elkader to be placed at the cemetery in Elkader. He said that the text for that sign was ready.

Thomas reported that all of the Clayton County museums, the Elkader Opera House, and the Effigy Mounds National Monument are going to participate in 2026 Museum Crawl planned in June. The Read Cemetery also will be listed as a place to visit. The venues be open for their regular hours and perhaps additional

hours if they care to. Thomas said that the e Museum Crawl Passports were being made. He said that a trifold brochure will be distributed rather than a rack card.

Thomas reported that the 13-star flag at the George Meier Rural Heritage Museum in Elkader that was at the Moody Ridge School, located southwest of McGregor, Iowa, was made using a sewing machine rather than hand-stitched. Therefore, the flag could not have been flown during the War of 1812. It is currently thought that the flag was made to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the war and hung at the Moody School.

Thomas reported that he had drafted a Repurposing Plan for use of the limestone from the keystone arch bridge/culvert on Drumlin Road which the Highway Department intends to replace. The plan was drafted to meet the Iowa DOT and Clayton County Secondary Roads standards. Some of the stone may be used to line the façade of the new culvert to retain the feeling of the original architecture/engineering. Allison Archambo (SHPO CLG Administrator) asked that the CCHPC document where the stone goes for storage and reuse.

At this time, the members of the Northeast Iowa Vietnam Veterans (NEIVV) joined the CCHPC meeting to discuss the current status of the combined Giard Tract and Vietnam Veterans memorial (Giard NE Iowa Veterans Vietnam Memorial Park).

Koether reported that an Upper Mississippi Gaming Commission (UMGC) grant application will be prepared to help pay for the proposed shelter, flag structures, and story board relating to the Giard Tract. Koether and Meyer are scheduled to meet with an attorney to discuss whether an easement or license should be created for the NEIVV. Thomas suggested that the Giard United Methodist Church (Church) keep the memorial site property but they may want to deed it to Clayton County Historic Preservation Commission so that the County could assume long-term maintenance.

Mason reported that their veterans group had signed with the Greater Dubuque Foundation to create an endowment. He said that their group had been advised by an attorney to get an easement rather than a license as a license could be revoked. They would need to be assured of long-term/perpetual access because of their new endowment. He noted that for the NEIVV to get a grant from the UMGC for their portion of the project, they would need to have an easement in place. Schmeltzer stated that should the NEIVV dissolve, the money in their endowment would go to the Church.

Mason proposed to share cost of the legal fees with the Church. Koether replied that the Church is willing to assume all of these costs.

Thomas said that he had contacted the District Engineer, who gave recommendations on signage and sign spacing along US Highway 18 to tell drivers of the park. As a result, the Iowa DOT is aware of the project.

Thomas suggested that a Facebook page be made for the project. Crowd funding could be done through Facebook. Mason replied that the NEIVV already had a Facebook page.

Thomas also suggested that a large sign be erected at the project site to announce it as the future location of the park.

Mason stated that they estimated some 100,000 square yards of fill would be needed to raise the grade. Schmeltzer said that they already had a source for the fill.

Mason reported that they will have a Zoom meeting on Thursday (February 19<sup>th</sup>) with the Iowa State University (ISU) landscape architects to discuss the design developed since the January 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. They expect to be shown three concept design options that will have the proposed locations of the various elements identified for the park. Currently, the veterans are proposing to place the vault toilets between the two memorial projects, just north of the parking area. This way it would be easily accessible by visitors and not obscure the view of either memorial. Schmeltzer added that they are planning space for about 10 vehicles parking perpendicular to the park. He also noted that they can get the toilets pumped out for \$185 for each service call.

Thomas said that the Giard memorial will include the extant Giard Tract plaque which will be relocated to the new park, a story board for the Giard Tract and a story board for the Giard townsite.

The next scheduled meeting will be March 13, 2026.

Schoen made a motion to adjourn and Collins seconded it. The motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted February 18, 2026.

Chris Schoen, Secretary.

Clayton County Historic Preservation Commission  
2026 CLG Work Plan

1. Meet all State Certified Local Government criteria
2. Submit year end CLG report
3. Report yearly commission activities to county board of supervisors
4. Declare May as Preservation Month
5. Attend Preserve Iowa Summit on June 2 and 3 in Ankeny IA
6. Attend any preservation workshop available in the region
7. Assist in promoting county museums through the Museum Crawl
8. Continue the development of the Giard Memorial Park
9. Work with Monona Eagle Scouts to continue the Basil Giard Tract story
10. Develop a story or event about the War of 1812 in Clayton County to Celebrate America 250
11. Continue to improve and update the Clayton County Stone Structure website
12. Continue to develop the Clayton County community founders' plaques
13. Hold preservation meetings at county museums
14. Review any Section 106 requests
15. Assist with National Historic Registry nominations
16. Provide guidance on National Registry guidelines
17. Work with CCPCC-Clayton County Pioneer Cemetery Commission to publicize their event of recognizing either a Revolutionary War event or a War of 1812 burial in the county.
18. Assist and pen any grant proposals
19. Assist County Auditor with commission's fiscal year budget
20. Organize a tour of county churches to promote their preservation