

Decorah Historic Preservation Commission
March 4, 2019 Meeting Minutes (FINAL)

1. **Roll call.** Chairperson Mark Muggli called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. Commissioners present were Adrienne Coffeen, Hayley Jackson, Steve Kelsay, Diane Scholl and Judy van der Linden. Lois Humpal was absent. Also present were guests Chad Bird, city manager, Jeremy Bril, city engineer, and Andy Nimrod, city parks/recreation director. Decorah citizen Janelle Pavlovec also attended.
2. **Review and approval of Minutes from February 11, 2019 meeting, and from February 26, 2019 worksession, distributed by Commission secretary Judy van der Linden.** Judy will correct a name (from Nord to Orton) in #2b of the Feb. 26 minutes. Hayley moved and Adrienne seconded a motion to approve both sets of minutes with that correction. Motion approved unanimously.
3. **Update on Court Street work with city manager Chad Bird and city engineer Jeremy Bril.** Jeremy explained the city's proposal to fix uneven pavement and drainage problems on Court Street -- which is paved with brick between Water and Broadway streets -- by installing a concrete gutter along the east side of Court street between Main and Broadway, and by replacing the center of the intersection of Court and Main with concrete. Brick would be used to delineate the four crosswalks at the intersection. Mark suggested the city consider a solid rather than striped brick crosswalk on Main Street at the intersection. Chad noted that at some time in the future, the city may repair Court Street between Main and Broadway by laying concrete underneath the brick. Judy was concerned these changes might affect the street's contributing status in the downtown historic district. Mark suggested we stay engaged with the street department so we can monitor and influence decisions they make.
4. **Update on Iowa Great Places grant "iconic stone reconstruction" project by city Park-Rec director Andy Nimrod.** Andy reported the city received the grant and has matched it with funds from DPR endowments, memorial fund and hotel/motel fund monies for a total of \$328,000. Grant projects, located in four different city parks, must be completed in three years. Andy briefly described some of the projects and said flexibility may be needed to address certain ones. The city is leveraging this grant money to apply for an additional grant for signage.
5. **Luther College Campus Historic District update and action item.** Mark reported that the state of Iowa has determined the campus is potentially eligible for the National Register under criterion A. One disappointment was that state officials did not think any of the Jens Jensen landscape should contribute. Consultant Jan Full will still give much space to the landscape when she writes the nomination. College officials decided to go forward with the nomination and will pay \$3,000. *Mark will write a grant proposal before April 19 to the state for the remaining \$6,000. Hayley and others volunteered to read his draft.* Hayley moved and Diane seconded a motion that DHPC move forward with the National Register nomination for the Luther College historic district in cooperation with Luther College. Motion passed unanimously.
6. **May Historic Preservation Month activities.**
 - a. **Historic Preservation Award possibilities.**

- i. **St. Benedict Church (and First Lutheran?)**
- ii. **Weiser Mansion Carriage House and Poultry Coop**
- iii. **Other?**

Members discussed the first two possibilities and were convinced to give awards to both St. Ben's and the Weiser buildings by Hayley's observation that one represents a sensitive addition to a historic building and the other a careful restoration. First Lutheran will be considered another year. Steve moved we give the two awards this May, pending acceptance from the awardees. Adrienne seconded his motion and all approved. If one refuses the award, commissioners agreed to give just the one remaining award. *Mark will contact both Steve Runde and St. Benedict's Church, and will let us know their responses before our next regular meeting.* Mark suggested we be thinking about where and when to do the award ceremony.

b. Other activities.

- i. **Second Story Water Street.** We will wait on this idea.
- ii. **Water Street Scavenger Hunt [or throughout town?]** Commissioners decided to do the scavenger hunt for Water Street for Preservation Month.

- 7. Signage on historic buildings and in historic districts.** Commissioners discussed their meeting with Chad Bird last Friday. Chad implied that DHPC now can legitimately advise on sign designs because the downtown has been put on the NRHP. Most likely some change in city ordinances will be needed to officially establish and define that input. Judy suggested DHPC advise P&Z; in the case of a disagreement, a super majority of P&Z members would be required to override our recommendation. All agreed DHPC should act in an advisory role, and only for buildings in the historic district. Commissioners finally decided to hold a fact-finding gathering to develop a set of signage guidelines. We can review these at our April meeting before taking them to P&Z for discussion later that same day. *Steve will finish putting together the guidelines document and will contact the rest of the commission to set a date for the gathering.* With regard to the Beacon-Schneider maps Chad mentioned, *Judy will get maps of the city's two historic districts to Jon Lubke so they can be incorporated into the Beacon maps.*
- 8. Report on meeting with Vesterheim Director Chris Johnson concerning long-range planning, Snohetta, etc.** Mark reported Chris is sensitive to Vesterheim's historic Water Street facades and wants to preserve them. Snohetta is helping the museum develop a new entry, which Chris is sure will look modern. The modern Cary garage will likely be torn down, but the 19th century Cary building facade and the Silas Dayton store will be preserved. Actual construction may proceed slowly, depending on when money is available. Vesterheim has also received a grant of 1-2 million dollars to do landscaping. Some DHPC members will be invited to look at their long-range plan in April.
- 9. Luther College Women's Club Program "Current News," March 19, 2019, 1:30, Peace Dining Room.** Hayley volunteered to make the presentation about DHPC activities.
- 10. Local historic resources and Wikipedia.** Did not discuss.
- 11. Charles Altfillisch project update.**

- a. **Luther College acquisition of Altfillisch papers update.** Hayley will reschedule a meeting with Kim Glock to collect final papers from the Mound Street home.
 - b. **Long-term goals and ongoing tasks for Commission members.** Did not discuss.
- 12. **Decorah Commercial Historic District updates.** *Steve will act as a liaison between DHPC and the city as the Main Street USA study continues.*
- 13. **Broadway-Phelps Park amendment.** Did not discuss.
- 14. **DHPC Municipal website revision.** Did not discuss.
- 15. **Continuing education opportunities.** Did not discuss.
 - a. **Preserve Iowa Summit, Newton, June 6-8, 2019.**
- 16. **Commissioner Reports.** Did not discuss.
- 17. **Public Comment.** Did not discuss.
- 18. **Possible upcoming meetings: Monday, April 8, 2019.** We will meet this day.
- 19. **Adjournment.** Meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.