

Decorah Historic Preservation Commission
Sept. 5, 2019 Meeting Minutes (FINAL)

1. **Roll call.** Chair Mark Muggli called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. Present were commissioners Adrienne Coffeen, Lois Humpal, Steve Kelsay, Judy van der Linden and Diane Scholl. Hayley Jackson was absent. Decorah businessman John Jenkins and resident Janelle Pavlovec also attended.
2. **Review and approval of Minutes from August 12, 2019, distributed by Commission secretary Judy van der Linden.** MOTION - Mark moved and Steve seconded a motion to approve the minutes as written. Motion passed.
3. **Decorah Commercial Historic District.**
 - a. **Revision of Decorah ordinances Chapter 15 “Design Criteria” and permitting process.** Mark reported that an ad hoc committee that included him, Steve, John and others met to discuss possible revisions. The group is proposing greater attention to the commercial district’s historic character and also changes in the review procedure for permits.

Commissioners generally agreed to the ad hoc committee’s proposed changes to sections 15.04.010, 15.04.040 and 15.04.050 of the ordinances. *Mark will reword some parts and send the changes to Chad for distribution to the Planning & Zoning Commission.* Mark requested that *all commissioners review all of Chapter 15 by Monday at noon to make suggestions for other specific changes.*

Chad, Mark and John will present different elements of the ad hoc committee proposal at the next P&Z meeting. Chad will introduce a checklist he created of current requirements for permit applicants. John will list items the ad hoc committee hopes to address, including an element of staff review, the possibility of incentives for historic design, changes in signage guidelines, and the addition of design guidelines for upper story windows and doors. Mark will present the proposed changes to the three sections of code listed above. He wants to gauge P&Z members’ response and interest. If there is sufficient interest, both groups may hold a workshop to hammer out actual changes to the ordinances.Commissioners agreed that if DHPC were included in design review in the future, it might be necessary to move the regular DHPC meeting day so members have more time to consider permit applications before they are passed on to P&Z.
4. **Main Street Program.**
 - a. **Updates from Steve Kelsay and Judy van der Linden.** Steve and Judy reported that although Decorah was not selected for the Main Street program, MSI officials said they believe it is a good fit for MS and encouraged Decorah to apply again. More community and city organization support is needed.
 - b. **Possibility of downtown survey completed by Main Street personnel.** MS personnel plan to do a downtown assessment next spring for the discounted fee of \$1,000. Commissioners agreed many groups, including those who opposed the MS program, should share in the cost of the assessment. This may serve to bring divided persons together in a common goal. *Judy will ask Llew Jenkins if*

she has approached groups about helping pay for the assessment. If she has not, this is something DHPC could do.

5. **Discussion of Hobby House/Agriculture Building at Fairgrounds.** Mark spoke again to Steve Johnson who will make inquiries about this building's history and potential fate.
6. **DHPC website and NRHP nominations, survey reports, and site inventories (newly available from SHPO).** Mark learned from Paula Mohr that her office has not quite finished scanning all nominations, site inventories, etc., that it has. Mark didn't see site inventories for the Montgomery mansion or Ingvaldstad Lumber Company among the Winneshiek County documents we received. He's concerned that other building inventories were never sent to the state and asked commissioners to look for them. *Before the deadline in three weeks, Judy will ask at Decorah Genealogy Association; Diane will ask at Winneshiek County Historical Society, and Adrienne will approach Vesterheim. They will photocopy any inventories or other documents they find for Mark.*
7. **Contacts with DHPC about historic preservation issues.**
 - a. **Bill Stone, Cedar Valley Realty, concerning history of home at 308 Court St.** Mark wasn't able to help Bill Stone, who asked about the history of this home.
 - b. **Jan Full, Ryan Engleman, Peter Jorgensen concerning Cedar Rapids Gazette article on Decorah's downtown.** All three of these people read the article and commented to Mark about it.
 - c. **Peter Jorgensen concerning Luther College Ashmore-Jewell Barn.** Mr. Jorgensen is the person who restored the barn. He asked Mark if he could think of a use for it other than storage. Mark volunteered to contact Eric Runestad at Luther. Eric will get back to Mark.
 - d. **Chris Johnson concerning Vesterheim's commitment to Water Street: ongoing project is the Heritage Park landscape redesign; next project likely to be restoration of old Cary Welding building.** Chris reiterated Vesterheim's support for the downtown and said the museum's outdoor campus work likely will begin next spring.
8. **Commissioner Reports.** Mark reported: The county courthouse committee will be meeting next month; he toured the Jenkins home at 901 Park St., a well-preserved Altfillisch home, and a 1-day preservation conference will be held Oct. 26 in Independence. Lois said she is working on the Altfillisch home she recently purchased on East Broadway. Judy reported that she filed Lois's blueprints in the commission's file cabinet in the library, and that the cabinet is slated to be moved.
9. **Public Comment.** Janelle said she thought Susan Jacobsen's papers were given to DGA. They may include site inventories, etc.
10. **Possible upcoming meeting: Monday, Oct. 14, 2019.** Next month's meeting was tentatively set for Oct. 14 at 4:30 p.m.
11. **Adjournment.** Meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.