

Decorah Historic Preservation Commission
February 23, 2022 Meeting Minutes (FINAL)

1. **Roll Call.** Meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chair Mark Muggli. Commissioners present were Mark Branum, Hayley Jackson, Diane Scholl, Karen Tjossem and Judy van der Linden. Adrienne Coffeen was absent. Decorah resident Janelle Pavlovec also attended.
2. **Review and approval of Jan. 26, 2022 minutes. *Distributed by DHPC secretary Judy van der Linden.*** Mark declared the minutes adopted as written.
3. **Altfillisch project update.**
 - a. **Printed brochure.** Commissioners examined a draft of the brochure produced by staff of the Chamber of Commerce.
 - b. **Web content.** Although the Altfillisch web content has not been officially uploaded to the city website, Mark said one can see some entries by searching.
 - c. **“One-hour Tour” / Primary / Secondary Properties issue.** Mark said the Chamber’s Jessica Rilling asked for 3-5 properties to make up a 1-hour tour for visitors who were short on time. Mark and Judy chose 5-6 properties. Mark asked if DHPC should drop the distinction between primary and secondary properties in the brochure and commissioners agreed it can be dropped.
 - d. **Recent content changes.** There have been small changes to the brochure and web content since it was submitted.
 - e. **Launch party?** Commissioners agreed with Mark that a party to launch the brochure would be fun. It could be outdoors, or inside or near an Altfillisch building. Mark encouraged members to think of possible places. Regarding the **Decorah Fire Station**, Mark attended this week’s city council meeting and was surprised to hear the city manager say the best location for a new fire station is existing city hall property on Heivly Street. DHPC had offered to consult on the new station but was not contacted or included in discussions. Commissioners agreed Goedken’s proposed plan could detract from or even obscure a portion of City Hall. *Mark will draft a memo to the mayor, city manager and council stating the importance of City Hall and asking to be part of the fire station discussions.*
4. **National Register brochure update.**
 - a. **Funding.** MOTION: Karen moved that Mark pursue a \$2,000 grant from The Depot to pay for a brochure describing National Register properties in Decorah. Hayley seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Mark will meet with Depot representatives on March 8.
 - b. **Project participants.** Elizabeth Lorentzen will be an individual collaborator on the brochure project, but no organization will be a co-sponsor with DHPC,
5. **C-3 Permit Requests.** (see attached responses for both applications)
 - a. **118 E. Water St. C-3 Sign Permit application.** Mark prepared the response to this application. MOTION: Judy made a motion that Mark’s response endorsing the application be accepted. Mark B. seconded. Motion passed 6-0.
 - b. **400 Heivly C-3 Design Permit application.** Mark wrote the draft response. Commissioners were concerned about apparent plans to paint or stain brick for

signage. MOTION: Mark made this motion: "We endorse Skyline's addition and exterior renovation. We commend them for improvements to the building which will bring it much more in line with C-3 code requirements, but we resist the painting of brick on one section because it could set a precedent for ignoring the code requirement that brick not be painted." Karen seconded the motion and it passed 6-0.

6. **Meier House, Monona.** Mark reported that the Porter House board recently took a field trip to see Meier House, a Frank Lloyd Wright home, in Monona. The home's owners will present a program on the house March 13, 2 p.m. at Porter House. DHPC may be interested in attending the program or seeing the house some time.
7. **Discussion of Distinctive Decorah Properties project.** This project was put on DHPC's 2022 work plan last month.
 - a. **Landmarks vs. Site Inventories vs. Local Cataloging.** Landmarks are one way to think of distinctive properties in the city, but Mark advised against using this name because of a state landmark program that is strictly regulated. An alternative is completing Site Inventories for each distinctive property, although the state SI form is a fairly demanding format. Local cataloging is a third way to envision the project. Hayley argued the SI form is a good tool, especially if SHPO doesn't require every item be completed. DHPC will have to decide if finished SI's will be turned into the state. *Mark will find out if SHPO welcomes only partially completed SI's.*
 - b. **Include NRHP / Site Inventory / Local guide book and sign properties?** Commissioners discussed how comprehensive to be...should the project include properties that have already been researched or focus on lesser known ones? They decided to focus on ones that haven't been written about already.
 - c. **Method of sharing with the public (file cabinet, print, web PDR's, web pages, etc.).** Members suggested sharing via web PDF's, newspaper articles or individual tours.
8. **Locust Road Cave sign project.** Paul Scott gave Mark more information about the cave, including an online description of it on WCHPC's Stone Structures of Winneshiek County site. Judy reported that City Manager Travis Goedken wants to wait before erecting any sign about the cave until the city has decided on wayfinding signage. *Mark will email Paul Scott to explain DHPC's position regarding the cave research and sign.*
9. **Contacts.**
 - a. **Annual Report to City Council (Feb. 21, 2022).** Mark presented DHPC's annual report to the council and received these comments: The Mayor thanked DHPC for the professionalism with which it approaches all of its projects; the Mayor attended Mark's Rotary talk on Charles Altfillisch and found it very interesting; council member Steve Zittergruen said he felt DHPC's responses to Planning and Zoning applications had been very helpful; councilman Kirsten Olson thanked DHPC for doing the Charles Altfillisch project. :)
 - b. **John Fuller, Kellog, Idaho (offering Decorah newspaper clipping).** Mark was contacted by John, who found a 1947 Decorah newspaper and wondered if DHPC wanted it. Mark said no.

