

Decorah Historic Preservation Commission  
Minutes of Oct. 26, 2022 Meeting (FINAL)

- 1. Roll Call.** Meeting was called to order at 4:30. Present were commissioners Mark Muggli, Chair, Mark Branum, Kathy Buzza, Diane Scholl, Adrienne Coffeen and Judy van der Linden. Hayley Jackson was absent.
- 2. Review and approval of September 28, 2022 minutes (*distributed by secretary Judy van der Linden*).** Mark requested one change to item #9, which Judy will make. Minutes otherwise were declared adopted.
- 3. DHPC membership.** Mark noted that Kathy Buzza was officially voted on as a new DHPC commissioner on Oct. 3. This is her first meeting.
- 4. Iowa Deaf Seniors Association presentation (October 12, 2022).** Mark reported that he gave a talk on Decorah history to this group.
- 5. Decorah Parking Ramps ordinance.** Mark and Kathy sat in on a City Council public hearing about proposed changes to city ordinances regarding parking ramps. DHPC had sent a memo to council members before the hearing stating several concerns. Mark and Kathy agreed council members seemed mostly sympathetic to DHPC's concern that certain restrictions for parking ramps be applied to all of the C-3 district and not just to Water Street. The council held a working session on the proposed changes on Oct. 25, and another public hearing likely will be scheduled.
- 6. C-3 District Permit Application Review.**
  - a. Ace Kitchen Sign permit (101 E. Water St.).** Mark wrote the response to this permit application for two signs and eight decals. Commissioners voted 6-0 to approve the design application.
  - b. Magic Morpho (130 W. Water St.) Sign Follow-up.** DHPC did not see this sign application because zoning administrator Greg Swanson approved it along with the owner's remodeling permit. Opinion on the sign among commissioners was mixed.
  - c. Old Armory (421 W. Water St.) Follow-up.** A 1-story addition on the east side of the Armory was demolished earlier this month. Mark contacted Greg Swanson to ask if he had known about the demolition, and he replied that he never received a permit. Greg will talk to the owner or contractor.
- 7. Charles Altfillisch project.**
  - a. Brochure & website.** Corrections were made to DHPC's Altfillisch property brochure and it is now printed and available.
  - b. Launch celebration.** The Altfillisch grandchildren have offered the south side patio of their grandparents' home at 801 Mound St. for a public celebration of the project's completion. Commissioners will hold the celebration there on Wednesday, Nov. 2, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be served. Commissioners will "meet and greet" the public and hand out brochures, highlighting the project website address on the brochures as they do. *Mark volunteered to write a press release. He also offered his coffee urn to heat apple juice. Members will decide via email who will bring snacks or sweets.*
- 8. Iowa Cultural and Entertainment District update.**
  - a. Application date: early May 2023.** Mark reported that Jessica and Amanda at the Chamber office offered to write the application.

**b. Contacts: Chamber, Vesterheim, ArtHaus, Decorah Betterment, SMID.** Mark and Jessica have contacted or will contact representatives of these groups, and also will talk to a representative of the City of Decorah.

**c. Planning meeting: Tuesday, Nov. 15, 11:00 am, Chamber of Commerce.** Jessica offered to provide lunch for the planning meeting. Mark hopes to form a moderate size planning group and a larger group of supporters. He shared a map he made of proposed district boundaries.

**9. Significant Decorah Properties project.**

**a. Project Guidelines and goals.** Mark reminded commissioners why this project is important: a) Provides a property list that's available online; b) Allows DHPC to establish the significance of a property before it is threatened with demolition or major alteration; c) Leads to writing of more site inventories; d) Helps DHPC recognize buildings or neighborhoods that might qualify for the National Register of Historic Places.

**b. List development.** Commissioners agreed to complete the list of potentially significant properties and have it on DHPC's website by Dec. 28th. *Mark will go through the Planning for Preservation book to look for potential properties. Diane will look through Winneshiek County histories. Judy will double check the Vera Harris book properties already on the list. Adrienne will check on dates and builders for the Montgomery mansion and David Faldet's house.* "The 19th Century Architecture of Decorah" thesis was also mentioned as a resource. Mark suggested each entry on the list have a substantial 1-2 sentence description of the key elements of significance. Possible homes mentioned for the list included the Col. Caldwell house, the Thornton house at 207 E. Broadway, the home recently restored by David Wadsworth at 409 E. Main St., a Queen Anne home at 506 E. Main St., the former Immaculate Conception School at 408 John St., George Phelps house on Day St. (in Vera Harris book), a bungalow at 302 North St., a home at 604 River St., the Peter and Mary Jorgenson home on Pleasant Hill, Nancy Barry's home at 207 Hollihan St., and a well-preserved Sears house, if there is one in Decorah.

**10. Contacts.** There were none to report.

**11. Commissioner Reports.** There were none.

**12. Public Comment.** There was none.

**13. Upcoming meeting: Wednesday, November 30, 2022, 4:30 pm.**

**14. Adjournment.** Meeting was adjourned at 6:05 pm.

October 26, 2022

TO: Decorah Zoning Administrator

FROM: Decorah Historic Preservation Commission <historicpreservation@decorahia.org>

TOPIC: 101 E. Water St. (Ace Kitchen Hardware) Sign Permit Application

### I. The Property

101 E. Water St. is an important 1891-92 Italianate/Queen Anne brick building with a large distinctive wraparound oriel window over the Water/Washington St. corner entrance. Although the conical top of the window blew off around 1919 and was never replaced, the rest of the building retains much of its historical detailing. Built by Andrew Sampson as a grocery store, the building was renovated and served as a bank from about 1906-1933. It is a “contributing” building in the 2017 National Register Decorah Commercial Historic District.

### II. The Proposal

Judging by the photos attached to the sign permit application, the building occupants plan a series of signs and decals:

- A large rectangular sign between the first-story windows on the north elevation.
- An identical, but smaller rectangular sign past the first window on the west elevation.
- A decal in the transom space over the corner entrance identifying the business name.
- Product-naming decals in the transoms over the three north elevation windows and over the one west elevation window.
- Black picture decals in the rounded tops of the three west elevation windows.

### III. DHPC Response

Stylistically, the two proposed signs and the eight decals are reserved and historically appropriate. And the two primary signs are more appropriately-sized than the two overly-large business signs in the same general location that they will replace. The three black product decals in the west windows add a restrained, but a somewhat whimsical/historical touch. These new signs and decals will fit well with this important building and will make an unobtrusive addition to the downtown’s lively historic feel.

**MOTION: On October 26, 2022, the DHPC voted 6-0 to endorse the proposed signs for the “Ace Kitchen Place” at 101 E. Water St.**