

Decorah Historic Preservation Commission
Minutes of July 26, 2023 Meeting (FINAL)

1. **Roll Call.** Meeting was called to order at 4:35 p.m. by Hayley Jackson, sitting in for Mark Muggli, chairperson, who was absent. Present were commissioners Kathy Buzza, Adrienne Coffeen, Nan St. Clair, Diane Scholl and Judy van der Linden. Decorah resident Janelle Pavlovec arrived later in the meeting.
2. **Review and approval of June 28, 2023 minutes distributed by secretary Judy van der Linden.** Minutes were approved as written.
3. **Altfillisch project.**
 - a. **609 W. Broadway centennial celebration.**
 - i. **Sunday, August 27, 1-4 pm.** Dale Goodman told Judy that Lois Humpal seemed cool to the idea of having guests come indoors. Members thought it made sense to have the insides of all three nearby Altfillisch homes closed to visitors. Only the Goodman's home will be open for indoor viewing.
 - ii. **Brochure update.** Commissioners were pleased with the brochure insert that Dale and Susan created. *Either Diane or Nan will ask owners of the Ingvaldstad house about the wood siding mentioned in the brochure, and will get back to Judy or the Goodmans.*
 - iii. **Needs.** Diane suggested commissioners might bring fruit and/or cheese and crackers to the celebration. Hayley wants to meet one more time before Aug. 27, preferably with Goodmans, to clarify who will do what to help at the party. The group discussed moving the August DHPC meeting to Aug. 23 from Aug. 30. Members will run that possibility by Mark.
4. **C-3/Commercial District**
 - a. **306 E. Water St. (Helms Funeral home) sign permit.** Kathy wrote the response to this permit application. Commissioners were pleased with the response and voted unanimously to approve the application. *Judy will forward the response to Travis and Greg, and also to Hayley, who will add it to DHPC's digital document files.*
5. **Steyer Bridge sign project.** *Diane will forward the research she and Nan completed to all commission members.*
 - a. **Include 1963 Highway 52 bridge and refer to overhead Highway 52 bridge?** Commissioners seemed to agree that trying to discuss three bridges in the Steyer Bridge sign might be confusing.
 - b. **Progress on roadbed and barriers.** No members had checked on bridge repair progress recently.
6. **Iowa Cultural and Entertainment District.** Hayley noted the ribbon cutting and encouraged everyone to attend if possible.
 - a. **Ribbon cutting, Thursday, Aug. 24, 5:45, Washington St., by Impact Coffee, preceding Lawn Chair Night.**
7. **Decorah Demolition permit process.** Hayley has been unable to do more research so Nan volunteered to continue it. *Hayley will send Nan anything she has so far.*

- 8. Significant Decorah Properties project.**
 - a. Publication.** Kathy said that some people have told her they were surprised that their homes were not on the SDP list. Diane mentioned the circa 1865 Ann Edgerton house at 508 Terrace St. as a possible addition. Hayley suggested we ask Mark about starting a list of potential new SDPs.
 - b. Additional SI commitments?** There were none at this time.
 - c. Iowa Site Inventory form discussion.** Judy described the SI form. *She will send commissioners the narrative description and the statement of significance she recently wrote as examples. She will also send a link to the fillable SI form.*
- 9. Decorah 175th Anniversary (1924).** *Diane will ask Mayor Lorraine Borowski if there are plans for the anniversary, and Hayley will ask at Luther College and check with Stacey Gossling at Winneshiek County Historical Society about any plans underway.*
- 10. Contacts.** There were none.
- 11. Commissioner Reports.** Adrienne reported that she did some research on C. C. Cook (the jeweler who advertised in the newspaper found in Phil Iverson's log home) and was able to find an article about him in the archived Decorah newspapers. She printed it out, took it to Sarah Iverson and thanked Sarah for Phil's tour.
- 12. Public Comment.** Kathy asked Janelle about the recent Emma Big Bear celebration.
- 13. Upcoming meeting: Wednesday, August 30, 2023, 4:30 pm.** An earlier possible meeting date is Aug. 23, 2023 at the same time. *Hayley will email Mark and commissioners about meeting earlier.* She also agreed that DHPC could meet the Goodmans at another time, or skip meeting and simply coordinate plans via email.
- 14. Adjournment.** Meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

July 26, 2023

To: Decorah City Manager, Building Officer, and Property Owner
From: Decorah Historic Preservation Commission (historicpreservation@decorahia.org)
Re: C-3 Sign Permit for 306 East Water St. (Helms Funeral Home)

I. The Property

The newly-remodeled commercial building at 306 East Water St. originally included a two story frame house on the east with front porch and square tower, designed by Decorah architect William S. Bucknell in 1895. The residence first became a funeral home in 1930 when purchased by L.B. Willis and P.J.Ness. In 1986, a one story metal frame building was added on the west, along with a second one story metal frame addition in 2002. The two story building, which housed the offices of Fjelstul Funeral Home, was approved for demolition in 2022, replaced by a one story expansion on the east.

II. The C-3 Sign Application

The Helms Funeral Home sign application was submitted after the signs on both the east and south sides of the building were installed. The applicant was not aware of the C-3 sign permit process, which includes review by the Decorah Historic Preservation Commission prior to issuing a sign permit. The application includes photos of both signs and their dimensions, but does not include a description of materials.

III. DHPC Response

The installed sign font is attractive and the single-cap branding logo also fits well with the general character of the Historic and C-3 districts. We assume the signs are within the allowable percentage of their respective facades. We would have wished, however, that the eastern-facing sign had been smaller, both because it overwhelms its own space and because it competes too directly with the more important Water Street-facing sign.

MOTION: At its July 26, 2023 meeting, DHPC voted unanimously to endorse the 306 East Water St. sign permit application. It was noted that the permit application did not follow the C-3 sign permit process, as it was submitted after installation of the signs.