

Decorah Historic Preservation Commission
Minutes of Oct. 25, 2023 Meeting (FINAL)

1. **Roll Call.** Vice chairperson Hayley Jackson called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. Present were Kathy Buzza, Adrienne Coffeen, Diane Scholl and Judy van der Linden. Mark Muggli and Nan St. Clair were absent. Decorah resident Janelle Pavlovec and Decorah Driftless Journal reporter Denise Lana also attended.
2. **Review and approval of September 27, 2023 minutes distributed by secretary Judy van der Linden.** Minutes were approved as written.
3. **C-3/Commercial District**
 - a. **202 E. Water St. (Decorah Bank and Trust) temporary banner sign permit.** Kathy Buzza wrote the response to this permit application. Members agreed that although the sign/banner was slightly oversize, it was tasteful, in scale with the bank entryway, and would be only temporarily displayed. A MOTION to approve the permit was passed 5-0 (see attached).
4. **Altfillisch project**
 - a. **Brochure reprint in process (1000, covered under Motel/Hotel tax grant).** Commissioners were pleased to learn the reprint was in progress.
5. **Steyer Bridge sign project**
 - a. **November 15 meeting at Steyer Bridge with Andy Nimrod, Jeremy Bril, Scott Vande Krol, Nan St. Clair, Mark Z. Muggli.** Judy noted that Kevin Lee sent her photos of two gravestones fashioned by Michael Steyer, one of which is in Freeport Cemetery. She also said that St. Benedict's staff are unaware of any records of who carved grave markers in the church cemetery.
6. **Decorah 175th Anniversary (2024).** Hayley and Diane talked to Stacey Gossling and Mayor Lorraine Borowski, respectively, about the anniversary. Neither the Winneshiek County Historical Society nor the city has any plans, although Stacey said she would help if others made plans. Commission suggestions included: Diane— recognize some important Decorah pioneer family sites during the month of June; Hayley—organize a cemetery walk/theatrical production with Kristin Underwood's help; Adrienne—tap Elizabeth Lorentzen to do a Water Street walk/talk, or publish a newspaper article. Adrienne could draw on her sister's local postcard collection and writings of her grandfather for an article. Commissioners will mull the possibilities.
7. **Decorah Demolition permit process.** There was no report.
8. **Significant Decorah Properties project progress.** Commissioners learned from Denise Lana that she and her husband own an Altfillisch home, built in 1939 for Lloyd and Lily Brown and located at 604 Center Ave. (Project book #3812) She has original architectural drawings and a photo from the 1970's that show the home's former front porch and window shutters. She volunteered to write up a paragraph about the house for inclusion on the SDP. Denise and her husband want to restore the exterior by adding a porch and shutters and possibly removing the home's vinyl siding.
9. **DHPC, City Council, Planning and Zoning, Board of Adjustment updates.** Kathy

checked meeting agendas and minutes for these organizations for October. She and Judy were concerned that what appears to be new ordinance language permitting and regulating electronic signs in Decorah does not specifically exclude the C-3 district from such signs. DHPC will continue to monitor that language, and also possible changes to the city fire station. Denise reported that the city council did approve Brunton Architect and Engineers to do an assessment of the fire station. Adrienne will be the city monitor for November.

10. Continuing education reports: WCHPC/SHPO Workshop (Oct. 20, 2023, Decorah Lutheran Church). Kathy and Adrienne attended the entire workshop, Judy was there for the morning sessions. Adrienne reported that the morning was intense, with talks about CLGs and completing the NRHP form. (Kathy requested a copy of the NRHP powerpoint presentation and said commissioners who are interested can request it from presenter Lorinda Bradley.) The afternoon featured information about the Smith Hospital NRHP application process, a talk about historic mills and a tour of the county courthouse.

11. Commissioner Reports. There were none.

12. Public Comment. Denise reported that the electronic signs issue (see #9) is still being discussed by the city. Janelle noted that Dale Goodman will give a tour of his house to her Questers group Oct. 26 at 11 a.m., for commissioners who might want to attend. She also said she remembered the city's 100th anniversary in 1949 very well. She said DHPC might be able to build a 175th anniversary tour around the early pioneer family sites, noting streets named after them, their graves, etc. Judy added there are also several homes the Day family reportedly lived in or built.

13. Upcoming meeting: Wednesday, November 29, 2023, 4:30 pm. This will be the Wednesday after Thanksgiving week.

14. Adjournment. Hayley adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

October 25, 2023

To: Decorah City Manager, Building Officer, and Property Owner

From: Decorah Historic Preservation Commission (historicpreservation@decorahia.org)

Re: C-3 Sign Permit for Decorah Bank and Trust, 202 E. Water St.

I. The Property

Decorah Bank and Trust is a modern, 2-story bank building designed by architect Bob Jamieson and constructed in 2005. Faced with brown brick and trimmed with limestone, it fits well into the commercial district with its size, scale and architectural details.

II. The C-3 Sign Application

The sign application is for a 12' x 4' banner that includes the words "Merry Christmas" in white script on a blue background, with two stylized trees below the script and curved lines in shades of blue above the script and below the trees. The banner will be hung vertically to the left of the bank's angled front entrance on Water Street. The application includes an image of the banner and its dimensions, but does not include a description of materials.

III. DHPC Response

The banner, created locally by Letterwerks, is an attractive sign similar in size to the one used by Decorah Bank and Trust during Nordic Fest. The banner is for seasonal use only, fits the scale of the entryway, and does not create a safety or traffic hazard.

MOTION: At its October 25, 2023 meeting, DHPC voted unanimously 5-0 to endorse the 202 E. Water Street sign permit application.