

Decorah Historic Preservation Commission
Minutes of Nov. 29, 2023 Meeting (FINAL)

1. **Roll Call.** Meeting was called to order by chair Mark Muggli at 4:31 p.m. Present were Kathy Buzza, Adrienne Coffeen, Hayley Jackson, Diane Scholl, Nancy St. Clair and Judy van der Linden.
2. **Review and approval of October 25, 2023 minutes, distributed by secretary Judy van der Linden.** Minutes were approved as written.
3. **C-3/Commercial District**
 - a. **212 Winnebago St. (Wilmarth, Anderson, etc. law firm) sign permit update.** DHPC did not act on this permit because the only change being made to the sign was the addition or removal of a name.
 - b. **404 W. Water St. (Kanpai Soda Shop) sign permit.** Mark wrote the response to this application. Members voted unanimously 7-0 to approve the permit (see attached).
4. **Altfillisch project**
 - a. **Brochure reprint.** Mark reported that another 1,000 copies of the brochure were printed and are in. He encouraged commissioners to take and distribute brochures any time.
5. **Steyer Bridge sign project**
 - a. **November 15 meeting at Steyer Bridge with Andy Nimrod, Jeremy Bril, Mark Z. Muggli.** Andy, Jeremy and Mark met about the proposed sign. They decided: The signage should discuss all of the Twin Springs area, not just the bridge; two signs might be needed, one by the bridge and a second nearer the springs; the sign by the bridge should be located on the same side of the road as the parking area; an RC&D employee could do the signs' layout; Andy and Jeremy probably have enough money for the signs; DHPC members will write the signage copy.
 - b. **Plans.** *Nancy volunteered to work on the copy after Jan. 1, and Diane may help her.* Mark suggested the rough copy be completed by Feb. 15.
6. **Decorah 175th Anniversary (1924).** Commissioners agreed they do not want to be the lead for an anniversary celebration. *Mark volunteered to ask Jessica Rilling at the Chamber of Commerce if the Chamber would take the lead, including organizing, doing publicity and helping arrange events. He will let commissioners know as soon as he gets a reply.* He thought DHPC and WCHS could contribute by organizing some events. Nancy proposed a committee of the Chamber, Porter House, Luther College, DHPC and Vesterheim work on the celebration, and Diane suggested it take place in June. Adrienne thought Decorah newspapers might participate with historic photos or ads. The anniversary theme could be part of NordicFest, Hayley added.
7. **Decorah Demolition permit process.** There was no report.
8. **Significant Decorah Properties progress.** Mark said he knew about Denise Lana's Altfillisch home, but he believes it does not have enough integrity to be on the SDP list. *He volunteered to email Denise and ask her to write a house description for DHPC's online Altfillisch building list.*

9. **Web updates.** City Clerk Keri Sand has updated the DHPC web pages with changes submitted by Mark. She said making the updates was easy, and that she can continue to do so as long as only a few changes are submitted at a time, and update requests don't come during the busy summer.
 - a. **Judy van der Linden DGA article on establishing building history.** *Judy will tweak her article on researching buildings so it can be put on DHPC's website.*
10. **DHPC, City Council, Planning and Zoning, Board of Adjustment updates.** Adrienne summarized minutes of the Nov. 13th P&Z meeting having to do with electronic signs. The minutes indicate that P&Z hasn't acted on the issue yet, but don't clearly describe its deliberations. *Judy volunteered to ask Travis Goedken about the proposed sign changes.* Hayley will monitor city commission activities in December, Diane in January, Mark in February, Nancy in March and Judy in April.
11. **Contacts:**
 - a. **Pat Downs (406 High St.).** Pat believes that her 1926 home has many of the same features as the Altfillisch home at 408 High St., and wonders if hers was designed by Altfillisch. 406 was apparently built for Orlando "Pip" Qualley, a longtime Luther College employee, whose name is not in Altfillisch's customer project book. Mark suggested someone may want to check at the courthouse.
 - b. **Peter Jorgenson (Luther College Farm, NRHP 1979).** Peter contacted Mark looking for support and ideas for new ways to use the LC Farm building, which needs some repairs. Mark encouraged any interested commissioners to contact Peter to help.
12. **Commissioner Reports.** Mark had four items: a) His proposal that DHPC write a brochure about Decorah's historic churches was met with widespread enthusiasm, and will be started at a later date, b) He reported that the city is asking groups to cut their budgets for 2024, but a consensus of commissioners agreed that DHPC should maintain its \$2,000 budget, c) He said arrangements for a brass plaque honoring Luther College's NRHP listing are back on track, and he will help work on wording for the plaque, and d) He described a new award to be given for Decorah/Luther College collaborations, and suggested DHPC apply, citing the city/college effort to place the college on the National Register. Jessica Rilling encouraged the application, so *Mark will draft it in the next few days and Nancy and Hayley volunteered to read it.*
13. **Public Comment.** There was none.
14. **Upcoming meeting: Wednesday, December 28, 2023, 4:30 pm.** The commission will meet Dec. 28, although Mark, Nancy and Hayley will likely be absent.
15. **Adjournment.** Meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Nov. 29, 2023

TO: Decorah Building Officials Greg Swanson and Travis Goedken
FROM: Decorah Historic Preservation Commission <historicpreservation@decorahia.org>
TOPIC: 404 W. Water St. (Kanpai Soda Shop) C-3 Sign Permit Application

I. The Property

404 W. Water St. building was built around 1890, was in 1916 enlarged and given a new tapestry brick facade similar to the current Decorah Hatchery Building next door at 406 W. Water St., and was in the early 1960s given its current lava rock facade. (For fuller details of the building's history, and a photo of the 1916 tapestry brick facade, see Judy van der Linden's 2017 *Decorah Journal* article, included on the DHPC website <https://www.decorahia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Decorah-Journal-Thursday-January-26-2017.pdf>).

Because its modern facade lacks historic integrity, 404 W. Water St. is a non-contributing building in the 2017 Decorah Commercial Historic District.

II. Kanpai Soda Shop proposes a rectangular, self-constructed wooden blade sign with a decorative frame and incised lettering. The sign would be hung with chains from the current metal blade-sign bracket above the entryway and below the single goose-neck light.

III. DHPC Response

The Kanpai Soda Shop sign will provide an interesting variation on the many different blade signs that now so effectively highlight many C-3 businesses. The sign's somewhat rustic style should be compatible with the building's lava rock facade—a highly unusual facade that doesn't in itself call for any particular sign style. The sign's ¾" cedar base should be weather-worthy, but the owners will need to monitor the sign trim and polyurethane finish in order to make sure that the sign retains its original fresh look.

At its November 29, 2023 meeting, the DHPC voted unanimously 7 to 0 to endorse the new signage proposed for 404 W. Water St. (Kanpai Soda Shop).