

Decorah Historic Preservation Commission
Minutes of September 25, 2024 Meeting (FINAL)

1. Roll Call. Chairperson pro tem Kathy Buzza called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. Nan St. Clair and Judy van der Linden were present, and Adrienne Coffeen, Mark Muggli and Jenny Werner joined by Zoom. Hayley Jackson was absent.

2. Review of August 28, 2024 minutes distributed by secretary pro tem Kathy Buzza. Minutes were approved as written.

3. C-3/Commercial District. Mark wrote the responses to both applications (responses attached to end of minutes).

a. 212 W. Water St. (Getup) rear elevation site plan. Jenny made a motion to endorse the permit application (although work on the project is apparently already underway). Nan seconded it, and members voted 6-0 to endorse.

b. 201 W. Water St. (JNC LLC) site plan. Commissioners agreed this site plan was incomplete and unclear. Mark and commissioners rewrote the response motion to urge the city to seek more information about the plan, to emphasize that the addition of windows should not be considered a minor alteration, and to address confusion about the Homstad mural. Mark moved, Jenny seconded and members approved 6-0 the following **MOTION:** At its Sept. 25, 2024 meeting, DHPC voted 6-0 that we feel compelled to abstain from commenting on the proposed changes because of inadequate information. We also strongly encourage the city zoning officials to not treat these windows as a minor alteration, given their potential to change the building's overall impact. We strongly encourage getting further information from the building owner, in order to give DHPC, P&Z and the City Council a basis for judgment. We also think it is important for the building owner to be clear about his intentions regarding the preservation of the historic Homstad mural. *Mark will send each response to the city and to the appropriate business owner.*

4. Steyer Bridge sign project. Text and layout for this sign are complete except for one photo, and commissioners are pleased with its content and the final format, which was designed by Deb Paulson. *Kathy will follow up with Elizabeth Lorentzen about the remaining photo.*

5. Significant Decorah Properties progress.

a. Site Inventory progress reports. Adrienne reported she continues work on a site inventory for her home at 900 Pleasant Avenue.

b. Highlight property anniversaries (150, 100) on Facebook Historic Sites of Decorah and Winneshiek County. There was no update.

6. DHPC, City Council, Planning and Zoning, Board of Adjustment updates. *Mark will monitor city meetings for the month of October.* (Note: Nan monitors in November, Judy in December and Jenny in January.) October meeting dates are: **Wed., Oct. 2,** Board of Adjustment at 5:15 p.m.; **Mon., Oct. 7 and Mon., Oct. 21,** City Council at 5:45 p.m., and **Mon., Oct. 14,** Planning and Zoning at 5:30 p.m.

a. Downtown Economic Development Grant Program. Jenny attended the September city council meeting at which this program was approved. *She volunteered to be liaison between DHPC and the city for the program and will contact City Manager Travis Goedken to let him know her role.*

7. DHPC Design Review expansion/Form Based Code. Mark said he doesn't have any more

information about this. He wants to go back to Travis Goedken to find out if the city is still interested in Form Based Code.

8. Contacts

a. 208 Leif Erickson. Mark reported that the owners of this home sent him a nice email expressing their interest in the house and noting they plan to visit the John Driggs gravesite in Phelps Cemetery to see his gravestone. The stone was carved by Michael Steyer and is featured on DHPC's Steyer Bridge sign.

9. Continuing Education. Kathy described a National Alliance of Preservation Commissions webinar about cemeteries that will be offered on Wednesday, Oct. 9 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern time. *She will forward the webinar information to Jenny. Mark will ask NAPC to add Jenny's name to the organization's contact list.*

10. Commissioner Reports. Mark reported that David Wadsworth purchased the historic home at 512 W. Broadway formerly owned by Janelle Pavlovec. David plans to apply for historic preservation tax credits, use them to rehabilitate the house and then put it back on the market. **Judy** reported she toured Frank Lloyd Wright's home on Cedar Rock near Independence, IA, and that others might enjoy seeing it.

11. Public Comment. There was none.

12. Upcoming meeting: Wednesday, October 30, 2024, 4:30 p.m. Jenny noted that DHPC's November meeting will fall on the evening before Thanksgiving. The meeting may need to be changed or perhaps skipped if there are no C-3 permits to consider. The December meeting date falls on Christmas Day, so commissioners need to discuss both dates in October.

13. Adjournment. Meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Sept. 25, 2024

TO: Decorah Building Officials Greg Swanson and Travis Goedken
FROM: Decorah Historic Preservation Commission <historicpreservation@decorahia.org>
TOPIC: 212 W. Water St. (The Getup) C-3 Site Plan Permit Application

I. The Property

The 212 W. Water St. address incorporates two late nineteenth century brick buildings into a single business. At the ground level, a modern metal awning and storefront runs the width of the two buildings. But these buildings bear little relation to the alley building, which is a large, full-height, full-width concrete-block addition (the two neighboring alley buildings still have their visible nineteenth-century brick exteriors because neither has had a rear addition).

II. The Proposal

The Getup proposes to replace the second-story door with a dark-framed window, and, eventually, to install doors with glass on the ground-story level.

III. DHPC Response

As DHPC noted in a recent review of another alley proposal, the North Alley buildings are a mixed collection of well-preserved nineteenth century elevations with a wide gamut of other treatments and additions. 212-214 W. Water has one of the largest rear additions. The Getup's plan, although not a major renovation, will improve the building's look and will do its part to make the North Alley a more welcoming place.

At its Sept. 25, 2024 meeting, DHPC voted 6-0 to endorse the Getup's new window and doors, noting that this will be a small, but useful step in making North Alley a more attractive environment.

September 25, 2024

TO: Decorah Building Officials Greg Swanson and Travis Goedken
FROM: Decorah Historic Preservation Commission <historicpreservation@decorahia.org>
TOPIC: 201 W. Water St. (JNC LLC) C-3 Design Permit Application

I. The Property

As explained in a March 2024 design permit response for this same building, 201 W. Water St. is a large stuccoed building that incorporates three distinct properties. As the 2017 National Register of Historic Places nomination notes, the building sits at an important corner location at the core of the commercial district, but because of the building's lack of historic integrity, the whole building complex is "non-contributing" in the Decorah Commercial Historic District.

II. The Proposal

Because of an accident involving a car driving into the wall, JNC LLC proposes the addition of three windows on the ground level of the north eastern section of the building. This will presumably include the demolition of the Carl Homstad "historic Decorah" mural, although the application makes no reference to the mural.

III. DHPC Response

DHPC has in the past responded positively to various features of the 201 W. Water St. renovation--it won't be a complete rehabilitation (that would be nearly impossible), but it ought to make the building more attractive and more compatible with the rest of the Commercial Historic District.

But the information provided for this latest renovation is inadequate. The elevation mock-up is confusing: What would seem to be the window area is labeled "aluminum storefront," and the dimensions provided for the area don't seem to match the visual mock-up; the window placement is also very unclear.

At its September 25, 2024 meeting, DHPC voted 6-0 that we feel compelled to abstain from commenting on the proposed changes because of inadequate information. We also strongly encourage the City Zoning officials to not treat these windows as a minor alteration, given their potential to change the building's overall impact. We strongly encourage getting further information from the building owner, in order to give DHPC, P&Z, and the City Council a basis for judgment. We also think it is important for the building owner to be clear about his intentions regarding the preservation of the Homstad mural.