

LISBON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting

November 16, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Chair Rebecca Hess at 4:35 p.m. Present: Rebecca Hess, Amelia Kibbie, Alexandra McKendree, Marc Mohn, and Ann Opatz. Guests: Council Liaison John Bardsley.

Moved by Hess, seconded by Mohn, to approve the agenda. The motion passed on a voice vote of 5-0.

Moved by Kibbie, seconded by McKendree, to approve the minutes of the November 8 meeting. The motion passed on a voice vote of 5-0.

Updates

Dedication of Lincoln Highway Interpretive Sign: Hess reported that a good crowd attended the dedication ceremony on October 6 at Lincoln Square Park. Representatives of LHPC, Mt. Vernon HPC, Linn County HPC, and the Mount Vernon-Lisbon CDG were in attendance, as well as Jeannie Hau from the Prairie Rivers of Iowa Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway and several Lisbon city officials. Commissioner Kibbie served as emcee and also shared a poem she wrote for the occasion. Nathan Countryman of The Sun provided media coverage, and coverage of the event was shared widely on social media.

Historic District Signs for Main Street Historic District: The new signs are ready for installation. Mohn will work with the City to coordinate proper installation. The cost of the four signs was \$500, covered by last year's LHPC budget.

Bite of History Event with History Center of Cedar Rapids: Opatz reported that about 25 people attended the September 26th event at Gwen's Restaurant, many from outside the Lisbon-Mt. Vernon area. Jenny Thielman of the History Center of Cedar Rapids shared the history of the community with a focus on the Main Street Historic District. The event was sponsored by the History Center of Cedar Rapids.

History Center Rehabilitation Project

Time-Lapse Video: Kibbie reported that Maeve Krogmann completed the final edits to the video. The video will be posted on the LHPC website, the LHPC Facebook page and the LHPC YouTube channel, and included in the HRDP final report. Opatz will send a note of appreciation to Krogmann for her work on this project.

Final Report for HRDP Grant: Hess and City Administrator Siggins will work together to complete the report by the end of the year.

On-Site Review of Remaining Work to be Done as Outlined in Preservation Plan: The remaining work to be done on the History Center building was discussed, while considering if items are categorized as preservation work or maintenance work.

Possible preservation work:

1. Repair and paint projecting sign; also inspect and paint mounting hardware

Possible maintenance work:

1. Paint panels and trim at west wall of entry alcove
2. Paint stucco along top of the west wall
3. Paint electric conduit on west wall (not in preservation plan but part of overall project)

Discussion followed regarding getting some of this work done yet this fiscal year, pending the availability of funding and contractors.

Items requiring physical inspection:

1. Repair metal drip edge at building cornice; paint entire metal building cornice
2. Replace door at entrance to second floor stairway.

LHPC will recommend to the History Center and City that the large wall-mounted sign that hung on the west wall not be re-installed to prevent damage to the brick. A possible location for re-installing the sign would be the extension on the back of the building.

Hess reported that the City has received an estimate of approximately \$1,280 for roof work on both the History Center and Library buildings. This expense will be covered by the maintenance budget.

Library Rehabilitation Project

Review of Remaining Work to be Done as Outlined in Preservation Plan: The remaining work to be done on the Library building was discussed, while considering if items are categorized as preservation work or maintenance work.

Preservation work:

1. Sealing the front and west wall of the building since those walls were sandblasted in the 1990s

Maintenance work:

1. LHPC will recommend that the City budget for replacement of an estimated 15 to 20 bricks every year.

Items requiring physical inspection:

1. Interior windows on the upper level
2. Basement to determine if there are humidity issues that are causing efflorescence on the exterior lower west wall

Pleasant Grove Heritage Park

Master Site and Interpretive Plan: The importance of developing a master site plan with interpretive plans was discussed. A public forum will be planned for January to gather input from community members (including Lisbon students) and other organizations (Linn County Conservation Commission, History Center of Cedar Rapids, SSNHA, etc.).

Establishment of Non-Profit: Discussion centered on the establishment of a non-profit organization to promote and fund cultural enrichment in our community. With a broad scope,

this non-profit will provide support for art, music, history, and a variety of projects, including the development of Pleasant Grove Heritage Park.

Opatz reported that the City was awarded a REAP grant for prairie reconstruction in Pleasant Grove Heritage Park in the amount of \$11,900. Work will begin in May of 2024.

Opatz reported that there continue to be issues with the pond at the park. This will be addressed in the master site plan for the park.

Meyers Farmstead Historic District

Report on November 13 City Council Action re Preservation Plans/OPN Contract: Hess reported that the Council approved the Owner/Architect contract with OPN, Inc., pending the following: change signature to Mayor Douglas O'Connor; remove LHPC representative information from page 3, item 2.2; and private donations need to be in place at the time the contract is signed. Work is expected to begin soon and wrap up by February 2024. A press release regarding this project and funding was submitted to The Sun.

Consultation with State Historic Preservation Office re Construction of Walking Paths within the Meyers Farmstead Historic District: This item will be included in discussions relating to the development of a master site plan for the park.

Update on Stabilization Efforts: Opatz reported that Blinks repaired the roof on the corn crib/hog house and secured the large sliding door on the haybarn this week. Hess will speak with City Administrator Siggins and recommend that no further stabilization work be done since OPN will begin their assessment of the structures soon.

Iowa Farm Voices Project: Opatz recently spoke with Bob Neymeyer of the Grout Museum and that a copy of Steve McElmeel's interview will be sent to us for our file and use. Opatz is working with John Meyer's granddaughter Miriam (Butterfield) Johnston on a narrative for her interview, which will likely take place in the spring of 2024.

REAP Assembly

It was reported that Mohn, McKendree, Opatz, and Steve McElmeel attended the REAP Assembly on October 26 in Atkins. Opatz's email summary of the assembly is attached for reference.

Silos & Smokestacks Annual Training/Iowa Museum Association Annual Training

McKendree attended the SSNHA annual training on November 9 in Waterloo, where it was announced that federal funding for SSNHA has been confirmed through 2032. She also attended the Iowa Museum Association annual training in October, and shared information about marketing opportunities using the Iowa Tourism Guide and the Lincoln Highway Association.

Volunteer Hours

Commissioners were asked to submit their hours for the month of October.

Other Business

Opatz shared thank-you notes from Miriam (Butterfield) Johnston and Nancy Donnelly, granddaughters of John Meyers, following their visit to Lisbon in late September.

Opatz reported having phone conversations with Debra Lebeda from Pinnacle Realty as she worked to sell the property at 125 East Main Street, formerly Kyi Kyi’s restaurant.

She also reported that Elizabeth Crawford, the daughter of Don Crawford, has requested a Zoom meeting to discuss her father’s two properties in Lisbon: the Stuckslager property (designated to the National Register of Historic Places) located at 307 North Jackson Street and a property located on West Main Street. Hess and Opatz will visit with Elizabeth in the near future.

After viewing the LHPC Facebook post on the Downtown Reinvestment Grant awards, Shellie Orngard, Project Manager with the Lincoln Highway National Heritage Byway, sent an email to Opatz noting that she is impressed with the City’s grant program and will be pointing to Lisbon as a good example to other communities as she travels the State in the coming months speaking with city councils and historic preservation commissions to encourage historic preservation along the Lincoln Highway.

Hess announced that the Preserve Iowa Summit will be held in Mt. Pleasant in June of 2024.

Hess shared an email communication from the History Center of Cedar Rapids inviting LHPC to collaborate on programs that are mutually beneficial. LHPC has already collaborated with the History Center of Cedar Rapids on a “Bite of History” event, and a virtual and in-person tour of the Main Street Historic District.

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Submitted: Ann Opatz, Secretary

Date Approved: _____

Signed: _____
Rebecca Hess, Chair

From: Ann Opatz <annopatz@yahoo.com>

To: Lisbon Historic Preservation <lisbonhpc@gmail.com>; Drayton Kamberling <lisbonparkandreaddir@gmail.com>; Brandon Siggins <lisboncityadmin@cityoflisbon-ia.gov>; Marc Mohn <moparmoonog57@gmail.com>; Steve McElmeel <stevemcelmeel@gmail.com>; ROBERT Z. <robertzahorik@hotmail.com>; Marianne Zahorik <mariannezahorik@hotmail.com>; Frances Owen <contact.francesowen@gmail.com>; Amelia Kibbie <ameliamk1983@gmail.com>; John Bardsley <jrbardsley@netins.net>; Alexandra McKendree <admckendree@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, October 27, 2023 at 08:08:06 AM CDT

Subject: REAP Assembly Notes

While fresh in my mind, here is a brief summary of the REAP Assembly held in Atkins this past Wednesday afternoon. Steve McElmeel, Marc Mohn, and I attended, as did Alexandra McKendree, who will soon join the LHPC (subject to Council approval).

The assembly, attended by about 50 people, was facilitated by Michelle Wilson, the DNR REAP Coordinator and grants manager for the State. Kristen Vander Molen, who manages grants for historic resource projects, was also in attendance. Good to meet and know these people who are making decisions and providing advice to organizations like ours across the State.

The first part of the assembly dealt with dissemination of information about the REAP program -- its objectives, benefits, grant opportunities, and funding streams. This year the Iowa Legislature allocated \$12.5 million for REAP projects, with the funds to be distributed as follows: county conservation (20%), soil & water enhancement (20%), city parks and open spaces (15%), public land management (9%), historical resource development (5%), roadside vegetation (3%), and State open spaces (28%). REAP is eager to put these funds to good use across the State.

We broke into groups by county for the second part of the assembly, and discussed ways in which REAP could help our communities improve quality of life for our residents, recreation opportunities, conservation education and stewardship, water quality, resource enhancement and protection, and historic protection. All of the information gathered during this session will be combined with information gathered at other REAP assemblies across the State, and used at the State REAP Conference to establish priorities to take to the Iowa Legislature when it convenes in January of 2024.

Steve, Marc, and I were fortunate to be seated at a table with the Director and Deputy Director of the Linn County Conservation Board. They were unaware of the planning and development of Pleasant Grove Heritage Park, and expressed an interest in learning more about the park. If everyone is on board with the idea, I'd like to extend an invitation for them to visit Pleasant Grove and meet the folks who are working hard to develop this park. This board will certainly be able to help us in terms of guidance

and expertise, and perhaps funding, as well. Linn County passed a bond issue that sets aside funding for their work in the county -- they mentioned developing mini-wetlands and also talked about trails and loops (which is what we'll have with our proposed walking path around Pleasant Grove). We should dig deeper into these opportunities.

Frances, you should know that the REAP coordinator was quick to let us know that the grant for prairie reconstruction at Pleasant Grove received the top score for applications for medium-size communities in the State. That is something that reviewers will remember year after year. You have set the bar high.

For followup:

Mohn: work with City to install historic district signs

All: Upload time-lapse video and share to LHPC website, FB page, YouTube channel

Opatz – thank you to Krogmann

Hess: work with Siggins to complete HRDP final report

Hess and Opatz: Talk to the City and History Center about repair and re-installation of large sign

McKendree – contact at Renaissance Restoration

Opatz – contact for contractor who did work for Laura Baxa

Inspect windows at library

Look at basement of the library

Look at cornice and metal drip edge on history center building

Look at outside entrance door to upper-level of history center building

Obtain a bid for sealing the west wall and front of the library – a good project for Linn County HPC grant

Hess and Opatz: Confirm that funds in the budget for the history center and library are available and not earmarked by the City for other uses

Hess and Opatz: Confirm that unspent insurance dollars will remain available for work on the barns

All: Think about possible names for the non-profit: Lisbon Cultural Enrichment Fund? Lisbon Cultural Enhancement Fund? Lisbon Cultural Alliance?

Opatz – invite Linn County Conservation to visit Pleasant Grove

Hess: Ask Siggins if letters of commitment can be used to satisfy the City Attorney's request for funds to be in hand prior to signing the OPN contract

All: Start planning public forum for input for the development of a master site plan for Pleasant Grove Heritage Park; communicate our intention to “reset” with those currently involved; should we reach out to Edwards Creative to let them know our plans for moving forward?

Hess and Opatz: Zoom call with Elizabeth Crawford

Hess or Opatz: respond to the email re collaborative project from the History Center of Cedar Rapids