

Community Development Department

222 Lewis Street
River Falls, WI 54022
715.425.0900
www.rfcity.org



MINUTES HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION JANUARY 11, 2023, at 6:00 pm CITY HALL TRAINING ROOM

HPC Members Present: Heidi Heinze, Jayne Hoffman, Mark Anderson, Julie Huebel, and Pam Friede

HPC Members Absent: Jeff Bjork – Council Rep (excused)

Staff Present: Kendra Ellner – Planner

Others Present:

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting convened at 6:02 p.m.

HPC MEMBER VOLUNTEER HOUR REPORT

Heinze – 45 mins

Hoffman – 5 hours

Huebel – 45 mins

Anderson – 1 hour

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE December 14, 2022, MEETING

Huebel wanted clarification on the language that was written for the Library exhibit item- “Huebel added that HPC should have a portal or mailbox for people to submit”. Huebel hoped it did not sound like a commitment that she or the group had to do. Ellner conveyed that it was not intending to sound like an obligation, it was written to inform and document the idea. The group was in consensus that the language non-committal.

Heinze noted that item #4 Glover School the company for scanning and printing the maps was in the Grain Belt Brewery building not Green. Ellner acknowledged and will make the change.

M/ Friede S/ Hoffman 5-0 motion passes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Non-Agenda Items

Hoffman brought up a discussion, she had with the River Falls Social Club, the gentleman who runs it Mark, invited HPC to do multiple events such as presentations and walking tours for the group. Hoffman said the group does one meeting a month and other social activities around the City. HPC discussed the proposed dates and will double check with Mark. Heinze, Huebel and Mark Anderson offered their availability for the different events to assist Hoffman. The presentations should be between approximately 30-60mins. Heinze mentioned that five events were a lot to commit for HPC and they are happy and willing but would be a lot to do within 3 months. Heinze suggested to Hoffman to share

Mark's contact info with Heinze to confirm activities and commit to only a few days. Hoffman also shared the potential activities, because there is a pamphlet made for the Cemetery which they could use for the walking tour. The Library Exhibit should be available therefore that can be an easy activity. Then they can do a presentation for the First River Falls families; which Hoffman interjected that she learned the Mapes Brothers originally bought the property and sold it to Foster's. HPC agreed those are some good activity ideas. Hoffman said there is between 20-40 people in the group but it's totally voluntary so uncertain the people that will show up to certain topics. HPC will put on Feb agenda to firm up dates, times, topics, and locations. Discussed - April 10th for the library exhibit. July 29th presentation and walking tour. August 16th first families of RF. August 19th the following Saturday walk to Foster Cemetery.

Anderson mentioned the River Falls Public Library as an entity has a 100-year anniversary coming up, and the current location used to be a hospital. Heinze clarified that while the current building has only been around 25 years. Hoffman questioned it should be longer than that. Heinze suggested it should be incorporated into the Library exhibit. Heinze asked if there was there a request, but Anderson said it was more about historic photos of what used to be where the current library stands.

Heinze mentioned the History Advocacy Day email and discussed the details of the event. WI lawmakers will be at the WI capital (in Madison) to chat about local history on March 22nd. Heinze said it's a good way to network with the state historic society and local representatives to garner more support and connections. Ellner confirmed that HPC members can get reimbursed for gas. Heinze asked if the group received the email, but others were not sure. Ellner will share the email and will request to receive confirmation from members to set up the travel reimbursement.

Ellner shared some IT files for the old TV station to be archived with Pierce County Historical Association (PCHA). Heinze asked about the media that was taken and stored with PCHA last year. Huebel said there's so much and many different types of media to go through that there may need to be acid free or special containers. Heinze offered if the budget allows that HPC could purchase some materials for PCHA to help store the items. Huebel stated archival supplies does add up and that would be really helpful. However, there are many items to go through so it hasn't been determined what is exactly needed but Huebel will keep HPC in the loop.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Library Exhibit

Hoffman commented that she went through the ideas they had shared from the December meeting and confirmed the items that were close to completion, but some artifacts may still need to be found.

Huebel suggested to display paintings and HPC could scan them in, it does not have to be the original.

Hoffman found some items on indigenous peoples, such as maps of the paths.

Anderson mentioned a woman named Katy Chaffey that has a connection to a Native American with a bow and spear collection from Prescott. Hoffman said that's a wonderful connection and hope to connect with the resources because it's a big topic, which she wants to be as historically accurate as possible.

Heinze thanked Hoffman for her hard work and said there is not other topics to add besides what was discussed during the December meeting. Heinze also mentioned that for the exhibit there were 55

images purchased from Hub 70. Ellner clarified that the purchase might not have been included in the 2022 budget because it was past the deadline. Heinze recommended since there was a surplus of money last year; HPC should make a short wish list of back burner projects, and if the budget allows at the end of the 2-year cycle, they can have a plan for what to do with the extra money even though it goes back into the General Fund HPC should use it since it's allocated to them.

Heinze and Hoffman discussed additional purchases to keep track of as they work through the Library Exhibit. Heinze said the Library anniversary could be added to the display but need to confirm the exact date. Anderson said that he did a search through the Library of Congress and recalled 1922. Hoffman felt confident that there was an established Library Association before that in River Falls whether it was in a house or small building she wasn't sure but was thinking it was in the late 1800s. Heinze said they can schedule a time to dive into this further.

2. CLG Grant Application Update

Heinze shared that there are not really any new updates. Except that Heinze shared current photos of the two homes to the WI Historic Society (WHS) representative and WHS will be officially scoring all applications and sharing results soon.

Anderson said he hopes the next round HPC can get more support from the eligible churches. Heinze agreed and said that she hopes HPC does get the award and maybe that will spark more support in the neighborhood/community. Heinze acknowledged that Huebel's idea from a previous meeting that highlighting the properties already on the National Register could be beneficial for garnering more support. Huebel suggested that a potential walking tour for the properties in River Falls that are on the National Register could be made to share the history and get more attention. HPC was in consensus and will wait for a response from WHS.

3. Glover Station sign

Heinze mentioned there wasn't really any new information and weren't any new photos submitted. Hoffman suggested reaching out to potential families with a letter. Heinze asked from the last HPC meeting it was discussed that Jeff Bjork mentioned a Betty Johnson. Anderson recalled and said Betty Johnson is her maiden name and she could be found under Betty Merriman. Hoffman said it sounds familiar, but HPC agreed Bjork should reach out to her. Heinze said HPC will still spend time to find more information and pictures in the next few months but if there is nothing by spring then HPC will move on.

Heinze shared she was dismayed about how it's so difficult to find photos especially since many of the people are probably still alive. Huebel talked about how PCHA preserves some photos from historic schools but it's a matter of luck because some families value memory preservation more than others. Heinze suggested HPC should put an article in the paper Pierce County Journal or Star Observer. Anderson mentioned the book Remembering Rural Schools of St. Croix County. Ellner suggested to reach out to St. Croix County maybe they know someone who knows someone. Huebel said if anyone hears about if there are any additional copies of the book it would be nice to have as well. HPC agreed to do more research and hope to come back with a better result.

4. The Glen Sign/ Next design(s) for Interpretive Sign Series

Ellner shared the final proof with the group. HPC praised the design and seemed excited. Heinze said they should do an unveiling in May because it's Historic Preservation Month, which could also be a part of the 125th Anniversary of Glen Park. Hoffman asked if Park Board would be responsible for planning

the anniversary of Glen park. Ellner suggested that HPC do a joint meeting with Park Board in March, HPC was in consensus.

In relation to the next sign series, Ellner shared information about the Vibrant Spaces Grant that the City is pursuing to apply for by end of the month for Inlow Park and how HPC can be involved. Ellner shared details about the project and the letter of support written, a motion was need for confirmation to pursue the grant with HPC support. HPC was in consensus and made a motion (see action item). Anderson mentioned it could be a site-specific sign that shows the changes over the years. However, while the grant is in process Ellner recommended that HPC continue to pursue the next interpretive sign design and wait and see what happens with this grant.

Ellner shared an aerial of the site and Anderson mentioned within the proximity of Inlow Park there is an old train depot on private property that would be amazing for another sign. HPC was intrigued but would have to wait until or unless the property owner allowed public access.

Anderson shared his other ideas for potential signs that are more tangible in the near future. He said another sign could be by Pine St. potentially along the river to share historic bridges. Another sign could be near the fishing pier on Lake George along the Kinnickinnic Pathway and share stories about floods and storms. Heinze questioned how that area may change in the upcoming years with the potential for the dam removal and restoration of the river. Huebel suggested that if HPC pursued a bridge sign there should be markers for where the bridges used to be along the river with pictures. HPC discussed back and forth whether to do floods or bridges, then Heinze asked which one Anderson would like to work on. HPC was in consensus to start working on bridges since they are more of a tangible object. Next steps are to slowly start gathering pictures and pursue the topic of bridges.

ACTION ITEMS

5. 2023 Work Plan

HPC discusses projects on the work plan. There was nothing to add. Therefore a motion was made: M/ Friede, S/ Anderson 5- 0 motion passes

Item #4 - M/ Friede S/ Anderson 5-0 motion passes for the support letter.

Adjourned at 7:18pm