

Community Development Department

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



MINUTES HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION APRIL 14, 2021 at 6:00 pm VIRTUAL – WEBEX

HPC Members Present: Jayne Hoffman, Mark Anderson, Pam Friede, Ben Plunkett
HPC Members Absent: Heidi Heinze, Denton Anderson
Staff Present: Brandy Howe
Others Present: None

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting convened at 6:23 p.m. (late start due to technical difficulties).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 10 AND MARCH 10, 2021

M/Friede, S/M. Anderson – motion carried 4-0

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Howe requested, on behalf of Chair Heinze, that moving forward Heinze would like HPC members to report the number of hours spent research, writing, graphic design, public outreach, and training on their own time. This work should be acknowledged and enumerated in our monthly minutes. It will provide recognition for member efforts and valuable data that may be considered as in-kind contributions for potential grant opportunities.

Hoffman reported that she would like to recognize Ursula Peterson in the next issue of CitySource. She will work with Mary Zimmerman, Communications Manager, on this item.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Power Plant MOU

Howe reported that revisions to the draft MOU are complete. M. Anderson asked for clarifications on the revisions. Howe indicated that the sections 4A and 4B were modified to identify the the manner of notification for Council or HPC actions to. The next steps for this project is to take action to approve the draft to then send to City Administration for their review and direction on next steps with the City Council.

M/Friede, S/M. Anderson – motion carried 4-0

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2. Police Department History

Hoffman reported that she and Heinze did some research to dig up historic resources on the police department for a video to unveil the new police station: [City of River Falls new police station unveiled! - YouTube](#)

3. The Glen interpretive sign

Howe provided a brief update on sign manufactures provided by D. Anderson. There was some discussion on the possibility of bringing in some Native American history to The Glen sign; however, it was suggested that Native American history might be appropriate as a standalone sign. Hoffman has some information and will provide to the HPC at a future meeting.

4. Power plant landmark nomination

Howe reported that as mentioned in previous meetings, staff prepared a draft conditions report on the power plant. Completion of that report was put on hold in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other priority work. This project is not currently a high priority for the City or Community Development Department work plans at this time as there is much research, outreach and decisions to make prior to a reuse of the powerplant moving forward. The MOU on the HPC workplan will ensure that City Administration is in tune to the HPC as the research, outreach, and decisions related to power plant reuse. Staff recommends that the HPC pause work to landmark the power plant at this time.

The HPC objected to this request. M. Anderson indicated that the HPC has been pursuing landmark designation of the power plant for 8-10 years and now they are being asked to step it out even farther. He struggles to see the benefit in that and does not see any harm in pursuing the landmark designation at this point. Friede added that she agrees with M. Anderson and does not feel the need to wait. M. Anderson added that landmarking the property is in line with the powers and duties of the HPC. He also noted that even with the MOU, the City could potentially put a significant amount of work into a project at the power plant site before being made aware. If it is landmarked, then the HPC could be part of the discussion at the beginning of a project. M. Anderson asked that this item be placed on the next agenda as a discussion item. Plunkett noted that he thinks the City Administrator's perspective is not necessarily the same as that of HPC. He added that he would like to see this item back on an agenda for discussion. M. Anderson added at the end of the discussion that he would ultimately like to see the oldest parts of the building be reused, if possible. If the building were ever to be demolished, he noted that the site should be preserved in a natural state for its historic significance. He added that he would be more than happy to give anyone a tour of the property or the interior of the building for those officials who have not yet seen it to describe the history of that area and how important it is. Plunkett expressed interest in a tour.

5. WHS CLG grant

Howe reminded the HPC of grant funding through Wisconsin Historical Society. In the fall of 2019, had held a homeowner workshop on National Register of Historic Places designations. At that time three homeowners were interested in moving forward and the HPC had intended to apply for WHS funds to hire a consultant to prepare the NR designation application. Howe indicated that the application deadline for WHS grants is unknown at this time, but it anticipated that it will be either December 2021 or January 2022. Per WHS, if the HPC is still interested in pursuing this opportunity, public engagement over the summer is encouraged. Jason Tish, the new SHPO who has replaced Joe

DeRose after his retirement, has offered to attend such a meeting. It was suggested that the HPC reach back out to homeowners that showed an interest in having their property designated; Howe will follow-up with Heidi on whether or not she has had an opportunity to do that. Friede suggested that the HPC should consider whether or not to fund the cost of a plaque if the properties make it on the NR.

CALENDAR

Next Historic Preservation Commission meeting May 12, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

Hoffman called for adjournment at 7:03.