

## Community Development Department

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### MINUTES HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION September 21, 2022, at 6:00 pm Glen Park Pavilion

**HPC Members Present:** Heidi Heinze (Chair), Jayne Hoffman, Mark Anderson, and Jeff Bjork (Council Rep)

**Staff Present:** Sterling Hackney – It Specialist

**Others Present:** Jason Tish – WHS representative

**Owners in attendance:**

1. Barbara Kolpin – Individually eligible
2. Casie Radford / Aron Thomas – East district
3. Valerie & Tim Wood – West district
4. Bryan Mulrooney – East district
5. Valerie Ryan – East district
6. Paul & Debbie Cudd – East district

#### DISCUSSION ITEMS

##### 1. HPC Introduction

Heinze introduced herself and acknowledged a few of the commissioners present, Jeff Bjork, Mark Anderson, and Jayne Hoffman. Heinze commented that HPC is part of the Certified Local Government (CLG), not a non-profit. Heinze reviewed the HPC presentation of what HPC has been doing and other activities HPC does, such as plaques, the new Glen sign, National Register application, trainings and more. Heinze explained the process of being on HPC and someone asked how they could possibly serve on the commission. Heinze advised them to send a letter to Mayor, Dan Toland, requesting to be a part of HPC or another advisory board because there may be openings or expiring terms. Heinze then introduced Jason Tish, the Certified Local Government and Historic Preservation Education Coordinator, he works for the state historical society and travelled all the way from Madison, WI. Lastly, Heinze promoted some of their posters and postcards that attendees could take on their way out of the meeting later.

##### 2. WHS Presentation

Jason began with complimenting River Falls' thriving downtown and mentioned he has not visited before. Tish's presentation provided some context to what he does and how the state historical society works. He then described the purpose and process of the National Register.

- **Local Designation Vs. National Register**

Tish described the National Register (NRHP) as an honorary program as it means that a structure meets federal standards of historical significance. Owners of “Contributing” properties are eligible for tax credit programs. Communities with historic districts use them to cultivate a local identity and sense of place, attract visitors, businesses, residents. Places that are listed have no rules or regulations on what owners can do with their properties. Owners are not required to maintain their property to strict historic standards or rebuild them if they are destroyed by flood, fire, other natural disaster. Owners are not required to allow visitors into their buildings.

The NRHP program is voluntary, and incentive based. The incentives are tax credits to maintaining historic character, but no rules or mandates. It doesn’t matter or effect the value of a property and does not increase property taxes.

- **Current historic properties in River Falls**

Tish described five buildings that have the current NR designation: North and South Hall, Glen Park Swimming Pool, Swinging Bridge, Freeman House (220 N Third St.). There was discussion about the image on the presentation as it showed the incorrect house but was the correct address. Tish noted that there are thousands of properties in their database so sometimes items need to be updated.

- **Surveyed properties, potentially eligible properties, and listed properties**

Tish acknowledged two surveys that have been completed in River Falls, one in 1991 and another in 2015 that identified many potentially eligible historic buildings and districts. However, the 22 residential properties that were identified in 1991 went down to 11 in 2015 because of alterations and or there was significant damage such as a fire. There are currently 5 listed and 45 eligible commercial and residential.

- **Tax credit and economic development benefits**

Tish mentioned that being on the NR can be an economic development tool. In addition to some tax credits that may be used by owners of residential properties (single-family homes). They are returns of up to 25% of costs on qualifying expenses: roofing, exterior paint, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, exterior repairs. There is a WI Commercial Tax Credit Program with returns up to **20%** of costs on qualifying expenses and Federal Commercial Rehab Tax Credit program with returns up to **20%** of costs on qualifying expenses. However, if redeemed all work must meet standards for historic rehabilitation. Tish showed some project examples from all over WI.

- **Process to apply for designation**

Tish mentioned that there are 76 CLG’s in WI. River Falls is currently considering nominating these two addresses: 220 S. 4<sup>th</sup> St. and 108 S. 6<sup>th</sup> St. there is still time to add more properties to the application (no limit), as it is not due until December. Tish reiterated this is voluntary, and there is a process to allow the property owner to object before being officially acknowledged. Heinze asked the difference between individual, and district registers as some properties are eligible differently and what % of properties in a historic district need to be nominated to designate it. Tish responded 51% of homes that are identified in a district need to agree to be registered for the district designation, there cannot be individual homes on the NR if they are part of a district. Homes identified in the survey outside of districts are individually acknowledged. There was a

discussion about the district boundaries and pursuing the register. The map was pulled on the screen for clarification.

Tish also clarified the difference between local designation and national. Heinze mentioned that none of the properties invited are for local designation. Tish agreed and stated because River Falls is a CLG it's required to have an ordinance for local designation. Which is separate from national, and the City has more local control over permits and historic exterior design through the local program. Reiterating the national register is an honorary designation for tax credits.

Heinze mentioned that there is no other work for the property owners to do besides consent to having their property listed in the application. HPC will be doing the full application and hope to get a grant to hire a consultant to do the work for the official designation. The timeline will likely be next year. Heinze shared that the WHS website has a lot of resources if people wanted to do more research. Someone asked if the East district was national or local and Heinze reiterated that there are very few locally designated properties and that program is a completely different process, this meeting is specifically for the national register.

### **3. Questions and discussion**

Someone asked the difference between individual and district designation. If a property owner in a district wants to designate their property, are they allowed to? Heinze responded that properties identified in the district would not qualify for individual it would be district of houses identified. Heinze asked Tish if there's a possibility to re-reach out to those properties owners to see if they would be interested in support of applying. Tish encouraged it. Someone asked if HPC could work on getting more support for the district. Heinze suggested writing another letter. Bjork suggested to get neighbors to talk and get support.

Heinze said that a property is on the register there is no restrictions or reasons you would get kicked off unless the property was completely removed/demoed. Tish interjected and said the only reason for delisting is if it's requested by the City or someone notifies WHS.

Heinze reiterated next steps – to get confirmation from the property owners who would really like to apply and then HPC would apply for the grant to get a consultant to apply the potentially eligible properties on their behalf and once confirmed they meet the standards they will be listed on the National Register.