

Muscatine County Historic Preservation Commission Minutes of Meeting on Tuesday, April 19, 2018

The Muscatine County Historic Preservation Commission (MCHPC) met at 12:00 p.m. on April 19 with commissioners, Lynn Pruitt, Jim Nepple, Tom Furlong, Bill Koellner, Bette Schneider and Brian Wright present. Becky Allgood, Lisa Wertzbaugher, Mary Beveridge were excused. Also present were Sherry Seright and Jane Daufeldt.

Lynn Pruitt called the meeting to order and minutes of the March meeting were approved as submitted. Treasurer Tom Furlong reported the financial report was unchanged from the previous month.

The National Preservation Caucus is being held in Des Moines July 18-22. Mary and Becky had previously indicated their intention of attending. Lynn had indicated he would attend previously but that is now doubtful.

Reporting on the status of the Historic Jail, Tom reported that the Board of Supervisors had accepted the low bid of approximately \$79,000 for Phase 1 work. Sherry reported the contractor is currently at work on the facility. She also stated that the County has hired Michael Nolan to prepare a County-wide building master plan and this will consider the viability of continuing to use the rear portion of the Old Jail as a maintenance facility. That study will be completed in November 2018. Bette reported that she, Mary and Lynn were working with Paul Carroll to put together a fund raising program through the new Friends group. A kick-off meeting for the Friends group will likely be scheduled at the new Library. Significant funds will have to be committed before proceeding beyond Phase 1. Discussion was held on incorporating the historic stone located west of the Old Jail.

Reporting on the Fairgrounds, Lynn had attended a recent meeting of the Fair Building Committee where it was decided to delay the replacement of Heritage Hall until after this year's Fair. Bill reported the grant request to Ryan Trust for approximately \$100,000 to cover the cost of this new building will be decided next week. Additional related costs of about \$50,000 will be covered by in-kind labor/equipment and donated historic machinery. Jim informed us that the tax exempt status for the Fairgrounds (501-C5), which allows the Fair to be tax deductible, has still not been approved by the State. Jim further explained that this designation does not provide for tax deductibility for charity donations, but donations to the Fairgrounds made through the Muscatine Community Foundation are tax deductible. The Community Foundation has a bank account in West Liberty so that should satisfy the local requirements of the Ryan Trust. Jim also reported the financial audit is nearly complete. Assuming this audit will be acceptable, Bill and Lisa will be working to help the Fairgrounds retire their debt.

The Wilton Façade Restoration project seems to be going well. Becky was not able to attend today's meeting due to delivery of the Muscatine County Freedom Rock which will be positioned near their Historic Depot.

Reporting on the status of the Old Barn, Lynn said that Jennifer Price's draft submittal nominating the Old Barn as a Historic Site is delayed until mid-May. The County Conservation Commission is

progressing to install new restrooms, electricity and road/parking improvements to the site adjacent to the Old Barn. Sherry confirmed that the old Friends Group no longer has control of the Old Barn but they can schedule events through Conservation. Our Commission has provided for the potential of a new Friends Group but it currently remains inactive. Jim suggested the need to develop an endowment fund to perpetuate the operation and maintenance of the Old Barn.

Reporting on the Nichols Commercial Historic District project, Lynn said Jennifer Price has been assisted him with preparation of an HRDP grant application to partially fund the NRHP nomination, which is priced at \$7,485. Lynn will request approval from the Board of Supervisors on April 23 to submit this grant application, which is due April 25. The local cash cost is approximately \$2,000. Lynn asked Jim to establish a Friends of Historic Nichols group so we can raise funds for this and related projects in Nichols.

Reporting on the status of the Downtown West Liberty project, Bill reported that 14 building owners have committed to the project. Total project budget is \$964,566.36. Fundraising to date is \$274,566.36 for the grant budget. Additional funds were raised for earmarked purposes including for marketing downtown events and architect and grant writing fees.

As a follow up to our Planning for Preservation project of last year, Jim confirmed that our first initiative is to document Country Schools, Country Churches and possibly Country Cemeteries. Lynn reminded the group that at our last meeting we agreed to pursue a CLG grant this fall to fund this project. We have some time but need to finalize a scope of work and determine interest and budgets from qualified consultants. Lynn reported that Eric Furnas with the County has offered use of their hand-held GPS unit to determine coordinates for past and/or present schools, churches and cemeteries in the county. We may also need to work with Mark Werner who maintains the County's GIS network through Muscatine P&W.

Following the meeting the Commissions present proceeded to the Old Jail for a photo shoot which was requested by Paula Mohr for the National Conference this July.

Our next meeting will be **Thursday, May 17 at 12 p.m. at the County Administration building in Muscatine.**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Pruitt

Muscatine County Historic Preservation Commission