

Charles City

Historic Preservation Commission Minutes

Tuesday, March 9, 2021, 4:00 pm, via videoconference call

Members Present: Chair Jeff Sisson, Carol Frye, Jennifer Lessin, Michael Barrigan, Laura Wallace, MaryAnn Townsend, Phoebe Pittman and Director Mark Wicks. Mike Bauer was also in attendance.

Meeting called to order by Chairman Jeff Sisson at 4:00 p.m. ***Motion by Townsend and second by Frye to approve the agenda. All approved.*** Approval of the **Minutes from the January 26, 2021**, Commission meeting was ***motioned by Frye and seconded by Townsend. All approved.***

Public comment period: Bauer lamented the loss of the residential structure at 806 North Grand Ave. that the City tore down as a nuisance property. He thought it could have been saved and “revitalized into a beautiful home with some creative sweat equity.”

CLG Report Update

Charles City’s annual **Certified Local Government (CLG) Report** was submitted to the State by the March 1st deadline. A copy of that final report is available upon request. A presentation to the City Council has been scheduled for the **March 22nd Council Workshop at 6 p.m.** and Wicks encouraged any Commission member able to attend and show support to please do so.

Board Re-Appointments

The terms of Sisson, Wallace and Frye expired on January 1. **Wallace and Frye agreed to be re-appointed for another three years**, but Sisson declined and will be stepping down off the Commission. It is up to the **Mayor to make the Commission appointments** and Wicks gave him the names of Bauer and Floyd County Historical Museum Director Jennifer Thiele to consider. The Commission was asked if it had any other names of potential candidates, and members were good with those two.

Railroad Depot Update

According to Wicks the **Save the Depot effort** is in its final stretch trying to beat the March 31st deadline imposed by the railroad company to raise enough money to get the depot relocated. If not, the railroad company will demolish it. Wicks said approximately \$220,000 has been raised to date out of the \$350,000 goal. That is enough to get the depot raised and moved off of its current site, but short of funding a new foundation to set it on.

Student Advisory Board Update

Sisson reported talks with the eighth grade teachers and said everything is in place except for the **student screening process** for the new Student Advisory Board to the Commission. He said it is hard to get traction on this effort with Zoom in terms of the student interview process. He asked for Commission input on whether we should carry on with interviews this spring using Zoom, or wait until next fall when they can be done in person? Pittman said there was room in the school conference room to safely space out and conduct interviews. She and Wicks encouraged trying to **get something done yet this fall if possible**. Sisson would like to see three people help conduct the interviews and anticipated 10-12 students taking part who have been identified by their teachers. He thought the interviews could be as brief as 5 minutes each. Pittman said if it is nice out the interviews could even be done on the school patio or elsewhere outside. ***Frye offered to be a part of the interview team with Sisson and one other Commission member.*** Wicks is also willing to help if necessary.

Ideas for Historic Preservation Awareness Month

The Commission discussed different things that could be done to help promote National Historic Preservation Month in May. In addition to a **mayoral proclamation**, ideas included **“Where Am I?” old photos** running each week in the Charles City Press as a sort of historic photo scavenger hunt as well as publicly unveiling the **new HPC Website**. ***Wicks said there were still some things that needed to be done with the site, but he could talk to Christopher Anthony about that.*** Frye noted that we could use multiple platforms to get the photo scavenger hunt out there, including the Historical Society newsletter and social media like Facebook. ***Townsend, Sisson and Pittman agreed to work on a task force to fine tune those ideas and report back at the next Commission meeting.***

Other Business

- The City has approved **\$750 for the Historic Preservation Commission** to utilize in the 2021-22 Budget
- The Commission was reminded that the **Preserve Iowa Summit** is scheduled for June 3-5 in Council Bluffs. In order to maintain our Certified Local Government status Charles City needs to have a representative at the Summit all three days – but it doesn’t have to be the same person all three days. Commission members and Wicks have tag-teamed in the past and were encouraged to consider attending at least one day again this year.

The **next meeting** was set for March 30, 2021, at 4 p.m.

Being no further business, the ***meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m. following a motion by Frye and second by Townsend. All Approved.***

- *Minutes respectfully submitted by Mark Wicks*