



Charles City

Historic Preservation Commission Minutes

Wednesday, September 28, 2021, 5:30 pm, 401 North Main St.



Members Present: Jennifer Lessin, Jennifer Thiele, MaryAnn Townsend, Christopher Anthony, Student Advisor Xander Graeser, City representative Phoebe Pittman (ex-officio) and Director Mark Wicks. Also in attendance Mike Bauer. Not present: Chair Carol Frye, Laura Wallace and Michael Barrigan.

Meeting called to order by Vice-Chair Anthony at 5:55 p.m. ***Motion by Townsend and second by Lessin to approve the agenda. All approved.*** Approval of the **Minutes from the June 16, 2021**, Commission meeting was ***motioned by Lessin and seconded by Townsend. All approved.***

Public comment period: There were no public comments submitted

State Revolving Loan Fund Letter

The Commission received a letter from the State Revolving Loan Fund about a planned infrastructure upgrade project to the City of Charles City's water system. The City applied for financial assistance to build a new 1 million gallon clear well on property the City acquired at the corner of Indiana Avenue and 19th Street. Pittman said the City has acquired the tiny house at 1701 Indiana Ave. for the project and the Commission was asked to determine if it is the site of any known importance historically or architecturally? If any remains are unexpectedly discovered during construction we will be contacted immediately. The letter was received on September 20th and we have 30 days to respond with any comments.

Wicks said he found noting in our records indicating any historical significance. **Commission members were asked to go look at the site and let him know within a week if they had any concerns.**

Commission Website

Anthony said he has been developing a new Charles City Historical preservation Commission website on WIX and that he will **send out a link again for the Commission to look over and provide ideas for.** Wicks noted this project has been in development for some time and asked if anyone besides himself was interested in working with Anthony on it? No one volunteered. "We need your input and feedback," said Anthony.

Commission Logo

Anthony said he got the idea to come up with a Commission Logo from an online summit he attended. The group agreed we should have one and asked **Wicks to try and find examples of other Historic Preservation Commission logos.** Pittman added she saw a Ted Talk video on logos and was told they should not be too busy ... keep it simple.

Strategic Planning: Commission Goals

Commission members were asked to brainstorm ideas for HPC goals and priorities for the coming 1-3 years. Goals included:

- Finishing up work on the new HPC **website** and **logo**
- Continuing to fill out the **Student Advisory** group
- Contact the **Charles Theatre** again about possibly applying for National Register listing now that they have new Board members and possibly assisting them in looking for grant money to assist with that

- Provide **Walking Tours of the Historic District**, similar to the old C.I.T.Y. tours to showcase community's history and architecture. It was suggested possibly offering them every Saturday in May for National Historic Preservation Awareness Month, meeting at the Farmers Market.
- We could provide a **tour of the National Register of Historic Places** ... possibly utilizing the transit bus, especially for those who can't walk far.
- **Update the Historic Homes Walking Tour to digital format**, possibly with an audio link on the website. Jeff Sisson would be a good narrator for that. Map out the district so you don't backtrack. Anthony also mentioned using QR Codes to provide the history of the homes or businesses.
- Graeser was asked what he thought the **middle school and high school students might like** to see and said some activity like the Riverside Cemetery Chapel restoration **project that they could be hands-on with**. He also mentioned weird and quirky history is interesting to a lot of people and we could possibly find and put together a **wild and quirky history of Charles City**.

Everyone was asked to think on these goals and any others they might want, and to be ready to prioritize them at the next Commission meeting.

Other Business

- Bauer provided an update on the **Save the Depot** effort. The Phase I goal of raising \$350,000 has been met and the Depot is scheduled to be moved to its new location in October. The Canadian Pacific Railroad has said it would tear the historic structure down unless it was relocated. Planning for Phase II fundraising to renovate and put the building back into productive use is under way.
- Wicks reported there was nothing new to report on the status of the **Wildwood Clubhouse**, which has been found to have severe structural issues. Pittman added the City isn't planning on doing anything with it right now due to other priority issues, but she wants to try and maintain its National Register of Historic Places listing if possible. She asked the Commission to provide the City with some guidance in that regard in moving forward. She asked what all is involved in the Register listing, whether it is just the clubhouse or the entire park? **Wicks said he would check with the State Historic Preservation Office.**
- With the Annual Community Volunteer Recognition Event coming up on November 5th, it was suggested that the Charles City Historic Preservation Commission **honor recently retired Commission member and past chair Jeff Sisson** for all of his work and support of the HPC over the years. **Wicks will work on some history and obtaining a photo of Sisson. Anthony will look at possibly having a plaque with that photo engraved on it to present Sission.**

The **next meeting** was set for November 16, 2021, at 5:30 p.m.

Being no further business, the **meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m. following a motion by Lessin and second by Townsend. All Approved.**

- *Minutes respectfully submitted by Mark Wicks*