

Charles City

Historic Preservation Commission Minutes

Tuesday, April 27, 2021, 4:00 pm, via videoconference call

Members Present: Chair Carol Frye, Jennifer Lessin, Jennifer Thiele, Laura Wallace, MaryAnn Townsend, Christopher Anthony, Phoebe Pittman and Director Mark Wicks. Mike Bauer and James Grob from the Charles City Press were also in attendance.

Meeting called to order by Chairman Frye at 4:00 p.m. ***Motion by Townsend and second by Wallace to approve the agenda. All approved.*** Approval of the **Minutes from the March 30, 2021**, Commission meeting ***with one correction – missing an “f” in Jennifer Thiele’s name.*** was ***motioned by Lessin and seconded by Townsend. All approved.***

Public comment period:

Bauer wanted to raise awareness and seek input on the fate of the auditorium at 500 North Grand after reading in the newspaper that the school district was looking at the possibility of building a new auditorium. He said he would “hate to see the old auditorium not used and go away,” and was hopeful that a partnership could happen enabling it to be refurbished and used by the Stony Point Players and other groups. Bauer was concerned that all the decisions are being made by the developer and the school district, without any say by the public. Frye asked if he had brought his concerns to the school district? Bauer replied he had a meeting with the Superintendent later that week.

Commission Vice-Chair

We still need to replace the Commission Vice-Chair after Frye moved up to the Chair position. Wicks said we are required to have one listed on our annual Certified Local Government Report. The Vice-Chair would run the Commission meetings in the event the Chair was unavailable. There were no nominations at this time. Both Wicks and Frye urged Commission members to please consider it and we will re-visit.

Historic Preservation Awareness Month

Townsend reported that a task force consisting of herself, Jeff Sisson and Pittman have come up with some historic photos of Lions Field and are working with Grob from the Press to do a **series of articles for Historic Preservation Awareness Month in May** as this is the Lions Club’s 100th anniversary. Wicks is also arranging for a **Mayoral Proclamation** on either May 3rd or May 17th, and asked Commission members to join that City Council Zoom call if possible in support. He will let everyone know the date once the City sets it. The meeting will be virtual and start at 6 pm., with the proclamation likely to take place within the first 10 minutes.

In addition, Wicks and Anthony are working on finishing up the new **Charles City Historic Preservation Website** and hope to unveil it as well in May.

Student Advisory Board Update

Sisson has been working with Ryan Rahmiller at the Middle School to set up the framework and interview process for **appointing a freshman, sophomore, junior and senior to a new Student Advisory Board** to work hand-in-hand with the Historic Preservation Commission – similar to the Junior Ambassador program the Chamber of Commerce has now. Wicks relayed a report from Sisson that he and Rahmiller “have some real reservations about appointing four students at once” for this new initiative. Instead they are proposing to interview graduating 8th graders and **select one who will start working with the Commission, then select another next year and so on** until we reach the desired four students from all four grades. In the meantime, the first student can be mentored and coached by Sisson and the Commission, then help recruit additional

students the following years. Sisson said the Commission will probably need a transition period as well to figure out how to best work with the students. "This gives everyone a little time to ease into this," he said. The Commission member agreed with this approach.

Canadian Pacific Train Towers Letter

Canadian Pacific (CP) informed the Commission that as part of ongoing maintenance and upgrades to its Positive Train Control (PTC) system, the railroad company has **installed two (2) 40-foot monopoles** within Charles City, Floyd County, Iowa. These towers were previously screened; however, they have been moved to a new location as shown in the attached packet. As set forth in the PTC Program Comment issued by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) there is a 30-day review period for these antenna poles and the Commission's input is welcome. In addition, as required by the National Historic Preservation Act, CP will be publishing a Public Notice in the Charles City Press inviting the members of the community to submit comments on how these PTC poles may adversely affect historic properties.

Wicks commented that the towers are located within CP's existing right-of-way and that in reviewing the material he **did not see any historic property impact. The Commission agreed.**

Wildwood Clubhouse Update

Wicks said there was nothing new to report as the City is still waiting on a structural expert to look over the **historic clubhouse** and see if it can be repaired or not. Park Director Tyler Mitchell has said that the City planned on repairing and improving the building, but discovered the foundation was badly cracked and the building in worse shape than thought. The fear is it may be cost prohibitive to repair. The current social hall is also not climate controlled, which is something the City would like to change. Once the structural analysis is done, the City and Commission can discuss the next step. Frye asked if there is something the Commission can do moving forward to try and prevent historic buildings from reaching this point? Wicks replied the City has communicated well with him and the Commission, and that this particular case surprised everyone in its severity.

Other Business

- Wicks and Bauer reported that the **Save the Depot** effort is nearing its fundraising goal of \$350,000, which means the historic railroad depot will be able to be moved and relocated, thus saving it from the wrecking ball. The railroad company has said the depot needed to be moved or demolished. Bauer said the fundraising goal was to cover the cost of raising the depot off its current location and moving it about two blocks to property owned by the American Passenger Train Museum LLC. A new foundation will be poured in June, allowed to set a month and the depot relocated in late August or early September. He added the group would like to raise at least another \$20,000 to cover unexpected costs. Once relocated onto a new foundation, Phase 2 will be to renovate and remodel the building for re-use by the museum, as public meeting space and as a new northside trailhead for the community recreational trail.

Bauer also remarked that Janiece Bergland has created a **painting of the depot** and made prints for anyone who donates \$1,000 or more to the project.

- The **Preserve Iowa Summit** will be virtual again this year June 3-5 and Wicks asked **anyone interested in registering for any of the sessions to let him know by May 7th** so he can register and pay for everyone at one time. The Commission will cover the cost of registration. He will email out a copy of the schedule. Lessin, Frye, Townsend, Anthony and Thiele all indicated they were interested in participating.

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

Being no further business, the **meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m. following a motion by Townsend and second by Anthony. All Approved.**

- Minutes respectfully submitted by Mark Wicks