

**Historic Preservation Commission
Town of Westport**

Minutes of the regular monthly meeting of the Commission of June 6, 2013

Members present: Ron Bowen, Ray Mejia, Nancy Schlimgen, Martin Timmins, and Dave O'Malley

Members absent: None

Others present: Rebecca Bernstein, Peter Block, Janet Hermanson

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

April 4, Minutes (Note the May mtg was cancelled)

Ray took the April minutes and did not get a chance to complete them.

Old Business

Historic Trees- No future proposals for evaluation at this time. Rebecca mentioned she has not identified any new areas but we should continue to explore what might be out there. Ron will continue to followup on possibilities. Nancy mentioned some of the woodlots in the Bishops Bay development may contain some historic trees. That led to a discussion regarding the Emerald Ash Borer and the threats to Ash trees in our area. It was noted we should determine if there are significant Ash trees in the Township that should be identified and possibly protected if feasible. Apparently some Ash trees can be treated to protect them against the Ash Borer. It was suggested we consider creating an inventory of the significant Ash trees. We agreed to explore possible grant funding for this through DNR's Urban Forestry Grant Program. Nancy and Ron will followup on this and meet with Debra.

Historic Resources Consultant- Rebecca Bernstein was present to review the Wilcox site with us and we had a good discussion regarding possible interpretive opportunities on this site. We discussed ideas for a conceptual plan including outlining a stone foundation for the old home site and routing a trail with an overlook with some interpretive information as appropriate. There were still questions regarding what size parcel overall that we are working with. We are figuring on a 40 to 80 acre parcel and need to work with Dane County on our plans. It was also noted we need to know what MATC is proposing for buildings and where those buildings will be located on the adjacent property may affect where we propose to locate a trail, overlook, etc. Will those buildings be visible from the Wilcox site?

We discussed the Salkin survey and the need to get Williamson surveying out to mark the former homesite and buildings on the ground so we can see what we are working with. Also discussed interpretive possibilities similar to what is used at the Westport Drumlin site. Interpretive markers could be used in about three locations across the site, it was suggested we could use poetry, especially poems that refer to fields and grasses which would be very appropriate for this site. Rebecca agreed to do a literature search also including contemporary writings to see what is out there. A question was raised as

to how much the town can financially support interpretive displays at this site? Also noted was at what point should we involve Dane County Historical Society? Ron asked if Rebecca could do a sketch/concept plan for the Wilcox site which can be brought to the Plan Commission and the Town Board for their review and action. This could include a page or two with bullet points and a good map. Following these actions we could involve the County. Rebecca agreed to work with Williamson Surveying and Ron will set up a meeting with the surveyor (Noah), Debra and Rebecca to get this going.

Informal Interviews- We discussed Judy Borke's proposal and what should happen next. Judy needs more guidance/details from the committee so we need to get comments to Judy before or at the July meeting to discuss what the final document should look like. It was also suggested that we could possibly include Rebecca's work on the Historical surveys with the interview summary document. We agreed to use Rebecca's work and she agreed it was o.k. with her to use whatever we needed. Ray noted it will be important to include photos and graphics along with good maps in Judy's summary. Including contemporary photos also will help to create a sense of place.

We also discussed new candidates to possibly interview including Bill Kennedy, Marianne Schlect, Mrs. Jackson, Jim Stephenson, Jane Coatta, Fran Schlimgen, Mr. Wiedenfeldt (Hansen's Tavern), and Pat Vilbrandt. Next steps will be to continue to try and contact these interesting folks.

Old Military Road Survey- Dave reported he has not heard back from Bob Birmingham.

New Business

None

Miscellaneous Business

None

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Commission was scheduled for July ? at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Administration Building.

Adjournment

There being no further business brought before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm. Then we proceeded out to the Wilcox site to walk the property and discuss concepts on site. We walked the site to the top of the hill and all were impressed with the beautiful views of the rural pastoral area from the top of the hill. We all felt there could be some great interpretive opportunities from both a historical and natural perspective. It was apparent that we need to know where the adjacent MATC buildings will be located before we can finalize a concept plan. If those buildings are visible from the southern Wilcox property edge that may detract from our vistas and we may need to move downhill (north) to get below the brow of the hill which would remove any adjacent buildings from the sight line of any interpretive trail or vista.

Respectfully submitted,
Dave O'Malley