

TOWN OF WESTPORT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Kennedy Administration Building
Community Meeting Room
5387 Mary Lake Road
Waunakee, WI 53597

MINUTES – November 5, 2015 at 6:00p.m.

Members present: Ron Bowen, Nancy Schlingen, Ray Mejia, Janette Hermanson
and Joe Pichette

Members absent: None

Public attendance: Rebecca Bernstein, Consulting

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the September 3, 2015 meeting were approved. There was a lack of quorum at the October 8, 2015 meeting, therefore the minutes from that meeting were for reference only and did not need to be approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Ella Wheeler Wilcox Site Plans:

The HPC is interested in knowing the scale of the EWW Dane County “DRAFT” site plan proposed. Rebecca was checking with Jeremy Balousek, Dane County Water Engineer, whose staff helped develop this plan. As Ron explained it: *The HPC takes exception to the plan in wishing for meandering paths in a larger green space for signage with the potential to walk up to the top of the hill.* Rebecca reminded the HPC of the premier elements of the presented site plan, incorporating prairie-wetland restoration to create wildlife habitat for waterfowl and grassland birds for example, attract both bird-watchers and hunters. HPC members while conceding on meandering paths from parking lot to the foundation or interpretive area seemed reasonable to incorporate in the County Plan, still expressed interest in the waterways and green buffers shown that could be mowed seasonally when areas were dry enough either by the County or the Town and they seem to point to portions of them being used as a logical path around the site. Joe suggested a loop mowed path to inspire more use and others thought it would offer a contemplative landscape view so as to blend more readily with interpreting EWW’s poetry. Also the width of the trail could be just a mower width, reduced from our original descriptions, since the site would be all part of the restoration and not just a trail amidst the corn field.

Other design features include half circle seating areas of limestone facing interpretive signage, with one of the areas being simply for wildlife viewing, being sure to take in this

wetland vista from all areas. This seating and signage could be repeated on the hillside if permitted and at the foundation shelter site. The shelter would be consistent with that of the times in the Arts and Crafts style with attention to proportion and detail, with a display to extend the length of the roadside facing wall if rectangular. Rebecca as mentioned previously will research some designs to consider.

Ron sketched on tracing paper overlaid on the proposed plan to give the County a concept of what the HPC envisions while still in the planning stages. Joe will share this HPC version of the plan with Tom Wilson. Tom had met with Commission Members: Nancy and Ron, and our Consultant, Rebecca earlier this week and, at that time, Tom offered to meet with Dane County Staff to see to what extent these features can be part of their evolving plan to jointly better interpret the cultural and natural heritage of EWW.

Silo Survey

Silo Packets developed by Rebecca were received by commission members prior to the meeting with background information and a survey designed to standardize our silo inventory approach in the field. Remarking that Silos revolutionized what Dairy Farmers were able to do (to maintain their herds and milk production throughout the winter).

Informal silo observations were shared by HPC members. Additions to the survey would include photographs, features such as shafts or if the farm is still operational to get at the landscape context of our local silos still standing.

Joe wondered once compiled what are we going to do with this info? Ray mentioned that so far the HPC had been inventory only, without receiving any designations thus far. Rebecca mentioned public information can inform decisions e. g. The HPC may be able to offer Certificates of Appropriateness for Regulation of Construction and Reconstruction. After reviewing our Town Historic Preservation Ordinance, which Joe brought to the meeting, we do have. Also, Rebecca offered to check further any connections with the WI Historical Preservation: Cultural Resource Management Plan.

Ray wondered what are the next steps in the inventory process: identify some property owners with silos and site visits with permission from land owners? Rebecca offered prior to these steps, to solicit interest by writing an article for the Waunakee Tribune, where property owners could contact the HPC and self-identify that they have a silo on their property. Then a follow-up letter to those people could request a site visit. Commission will review article before it is published and let that percolate before revisiting this topic, then the HPC will create a letter for potential land owners with silos. (Terry Enge's map may also be consulted).

Signage at Jackson's Landing as a Peter Bloch Memorial

Rebecca and Nancy visited Jackson's Landing, to better understand the need for signage at Jackson's Landing as a possible Memorial for Peter Bloch. And, to reflect on the shelter design at the wetland edge as an interpretative idea for the EWW site.

Initial thoughts of entry way signage at the trail across from the Town Hall were concerned with: How to cross Hwy M safely? If parking or hiking started from that point,

other options seemed preferable until such development of a parking, bike or hiking path connected or there was a light at that intersection that would allow for safe access.

Two other options were considered:

At the entrance off the Willows parking area, it was noted that the sign only indicates that this is Jackson's Landing Parking, without indicating it as Town of Westport Conservancy Parkland or without indicating a map or other interpretative information. Note, there are other entry access points through Westshire, where only one of the three entry areas permitted on street parking and then only for a couple of cars.

The overlook nearest to the shelter in question for EWW site, seemed to be a prime location for interpretation, and while other signage has been more recently updated at this site, this sign has not and would benefit from a redesign. An Interpretative approach could show how the Yahara River water depth changed with the addition of Tenney Locks, how this affected the Jackson Family Land and other property owners. e. g. how fire and water levels have played a part in the change of the landscape including the Wright designed Rocky Roost that was at the site of the Rock Island that remains. Joe mentioned that he has pictures of Rocky Roost, which could be researched to see if they can be used in this project. Wildlife interpretation or graphics could be woven in as desired and space permits being mindful not to overlap with signage already on site. This could be attributed as a Memorial to Peter Bloch noting the proximity to his home and his participation on the HPC. It was thought that Rebecca would be willing to create a mock-up to share with the HPC and the Grassroots Organization of Waunakee ideally after review of the Town's Park Committee.

The smaller shelter at this site seemed to fit with the dimensions thought to be effective for interpreting the EWW site. However, tweaking the design to be more of an Arts and Crafts design of that period is what Rebecca would like to research without increasing the costs substantially, and include an interpretative panel for display.

Informational Interviews

These were being conducted at Schumacher Farm according to Janette.

Koltes Homestead on Bong Road

Janette offered to talk with Jim Koltes, our contact person, to determine the status of the property. This will help us evaluate our next steps and whether to be involved in preserving the history of the remaining structure, which according to Jim Koltes is the oldest remaining house in Westport

A Community Gathering

A gathering or open house hosted by the HPC is tentatively slated for spring. It is a way for the HPC to provide interactive outreach and engage the community in the projects we are currently working on and share in their interests in our cultural heritage.

NEW BUSINESS

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Joe mentioned the *City of the 4 Lakes* is still worth exploring further, as to how different the State Capitol could have been if located in Westport on or near the Old Military Trail.

Joe reflected on preserving areas of land that have the feel, fabric or character of Westport is in keeping with our bigger picture view of our HPC mission and role

NEXT MEETING

The HPC meets regularly on the first Thursday of the month.

Next month's meeting will be Thursday, December 3, 2015 at 6:00 pm

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:25 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Nancy Schlingen