

**TOWN OF WESTPORT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING**

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

MINUTES February 4, 2016 at 6:00p.m.

Members present: Ron Bowen, Nancy Schlimgen, Ray Mejia, Janette Hermanson and Joe Pichette
Members absent: None
Board Member present: Terry Enge
Public attendance: Rebecca Bernstein, Consulting

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:04 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Janette moved to approve minutes from the December 3, 2015 meeting. Ray seconded the motion and a voice vote of approval was given by all members.

OLD BUSINESS

Ella Wheeler Wilcox Site Plans:

Update was given by Rebecca of the Town's constructive contact with Dane County on the EWW site plans, based on Tom Wilson's December conversations with County staff and confirmed by way of his e-mail to Darren Marsh, County Park's Director and copied to Rebecca and Ron. Tom Wilson clearly presented our concepts for interpreting the EWW site with County input and cooperation. The County was willing to allow mowed "somewhat rugged" walking paths "throughout the site as may be practical" with seating and signage or plaques removable or able to withstand prairie burns. A site visit is planned this spring to give both the Town and the County a better look at the site, given these plans to clarify and map out each other's role in the described development and maintenance of the site to be followed up by a memorandum of understanding between us on this County owned property.

Ron brought our EWW interpretative concepts and site plans to the plan commission. Given their positive response, he thought, indicates that we can move forward with these plans.

Rebecca prefers interpreting the life of EWW going forward using more of an "active voice." For example, the phases of her life from youth to adulthood could be presented as if a day or a piece of her life. She acknowledges that this strategy may take more time. Ray agreed that it keeps her story more compelling rather than simply stating dates, but re-emphasized the need for her accurate portrayal. Rebecca mentioned the retelling of Ella would in part come from her and her brother's autobiography, incorporating more of Westport's history by the shelter.

Ron presented a sketch of a shelter integrated with walking through the openings on either end, with a step or seated area where you could look out onto the whole site. Ron would like to be involved with

Rebecca in choosing the shelter structure, concurrent with Ella's era and concurrent with the farm house picture on display at the Town Hall reflective of the 1870's to 1910 period, possibly of a (romantic) *Arts and Crafts* style gazebo or garden structure.

Signage at Jackson's Landing as a Peter Bloch Memorial

Rocky Roost was not visible from Jackson's landing as revealed by Rebecca's references and reviewed by Joe, Nancy and others. Therefore it is not a viable option for Jackson's Landing signage. Rebecca will contact Jim Stephenson later in March to review his archive of historical materials on the Jackson Family exploring that avenue as a possible alternative.

Concerning the location of the Peter Bloch Memorial Signage, Ray suggests walking through the site again in spring, to review the 2 or 3 possible spots and then making a decision.

Koltes Homestead on Bong Road

The Koltes property was purchased with (federal) funds that require an historic study of the farm buildings on the site according to Jim Welsh of the Natural Heritage Land Trust (NHLT) upon further inquiry from Rebecca. She thought this study will give us "another eye on the property." Rebecca offered to email Jim to ask him to keep us informed of their findings.

Silo Survey

To obtain responses for the up-coming silo survey the Town's reception email will be used as suggested by Michelle to the HPC and reported by Rebecca.

A Community Gathering

A gathering deemed a "Meet and Greet" by Rebecca and enthusiastically embraced by HPC members will be held in the Town Hall as reserved, from 10 am to noon, the morning of April 16th. In addition, Rebecca is available to assist the day of the event, even with snacks, as is Ray. (According to Rebecca, Tom Wilson is not available that day). See press release of the invitation drawn up by Rebecca. It was suggested that she add an invite to lifelong residents describing that we seek potential candidates for future informal interviews and encourage people to bring old photographs or maps of our area that they would be willing to share.

Rebecca offered a detailed outline of the scope of possibilities to showcase at the event featuring tables of discussion areas and incorporating displays of our current projects.

Silo history pamphlets could be distributed and our silo survey could be promoted. Terry Enge, is mentioned as an invitee for inspiring HPC to delve into the history of silos in Westport, and was coincidentally present, stating that he plans on attending the *Meet and Greet*.

Display EWW historic markers as camera ready and the County's draft map of the EWW site. Rebecca will let County know of our event, invite them and check to see if they have any other plans or maps that we can put on display. Also Phil Salkin, the Archaeologist for the EWW homestead site dig, last

spring prefers, according to Rebecca, turning over the artifacts discovered that day to the Town, which then enables those artifacts to be available for display.

Ray suggested perhaps with the suggestion box area to include a formal request asking for interest in participating or volunteering for activities, such as serving on the HPC in the future or helping with informal interviews. Rebecca offered to draft this volunteer interest survey.

Marty Timmons, former HPC member and Jimmy Koltes (with his EWW vest) were mentioned as possibly persons to invite. Nancy suggested inviting Jim Welsh from NHLT to display information, if available by that time, on the progress with their Koltes Farm study.

Informational Interviews

Terry Enge questioned what we do with documenting our oral histories? Joe thought this was an important question. He thought a digital format posted on a website or digital archiving would be most accessible. Rebecca mentioned that her binders of oral histories (and presumed those transcribed by earlier board members like Marty Timmons, Judy Borke and others) could be scanned as a student intern project. Ray reiterated that working with this digital format our oral histories would be easier to categorize and inventory. Joe reaffirmed he would like to see our Town history date back to pre-settlers, when there was a hub of activity in this local area.

NEW BUSINESS

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Joe let Rebecca know of the pre-eminent demolishing of the Welsh house, which was on the corner of County Hwy M and Oncken Road, just in time for both Joe and Rebecca to take pictures of the exterior only of the house. Rebecca passed around her pictures which she was commended for taking so promptly, since the house was quickly raised after that point in time.

NEXT MEETING

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

Next month's meeting will be Thursday, March 3, 2016 at 6:00 pm

ADJOURNMENT

Ron motioned to adjourn; Janette seconded it, with all in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Nancy Schlimgen