

**TOWN OF WESTPORT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Ella Wheeler Wilcox (EWW) Site
Easy Street, Waunakee, WI 53597

MINUTES July 7, 2016

Members present: Nancy Schlimgen, Ray Mejia, Janette Hermanson
Joe Pichette, Mimi Bloch

Members absent: Ron Bowen

Public attendance: Rebecca Bernstein, Consulting

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

HPC members approved minutes of June 2nd by a voice vote held by Ray with the amended spelling and title of (the first item: 2nd point) *Darren Marsh, Director* of Dane County Parks reports. . .noted for correction.

OLD BUSINESS

Ella Wheeler Wilcox Home Site HPC Inspection and Interpretive Plans Revisited

The site was informally surveyed by HPC members, especially those new to the actual site, to gain a perspective on the size of this 40 acre parcel and its boundaries, and the adjacent 40 acres (scheduled in the next 2 years for clay removal). The location of the EWW homesite was estimated by walking along the roadway (~300') from the parking pad and future lot and (~100') out from the roadway, as Joe paced out his steps finding a portion of the uneven ground of the previous foundation dig.

Visible along the roadside and throughout the site were growing invasive thistles, sweet clover, wild parsnip and Queen Anne's Lace. Mowing before their flower's set seed would reduce the future impact of these weed seeds in the soil as the proposed prairie is soon to be established. Nancy wondered to what extent, if any, the County or Town is considering this management strategy: *to mow now* in anticipation of their restoration efforts? (The plumeless thistles may need spot herbicide treatment).

Hunting will be permitted within this future park's site, managed to restore wildlife habitat as described within the County Park's Plan, as asked by one member and answered by another.

At the last HPC meeting it was suggested to try and meet on site with Dane County Parks Director, Darren Marsh. At this time, Ray was unable to set that up for this evening. He was hoping to figure out more closely the time-line for EWW County Park site development.

Rebecca however continues this discussion with HPC members based on her continuing conversations or emails with county staff and refers to these possible phases:

Phase 1. Path to shelter

Phase 2. See how clay removal on next 40 acres goes.

Joe countered with wanting Dane County to commit to a timeframe for these three projects followed by additional HPC comments:

1. Move sign

Rebecca recalls that the sign would be moved to the edge of the parking pad entrance or closer to the foundation when edge of pad is finished off after using pad again for clay removal on the next 40 acres. The role of the Town vs. the County in moving this sign could be verified.

2. Create path to homestead

Ray points also to the goal of a walkway to the foundation area filling in or using marker stones to show where the foundation stones exist and a path to the shelter.

3. Display (2) interpretative signs

Future signs may also interpret the natural history of wildlife on site, besides the cultural history displays. Mimi offered to check with a wildlife (bird) photographer to see if they were interested in taking pictures on site for possible inclusion in such future wildlife displays.

The Future of the Koltjes Farmstead at the Natural Heritage Land Trust (NHLT) Westport Drumlin Preserve (Community Input Meeting on July 12, 6:30-7:30pm)

Jim Welsh, NHLT Executive Director is considering possible joint use of this house with this commission according to Rebecca. Noting that NHLT would likely keep the tobacco barn as it was in good shape but were uncertain of the shape of the other buildings.

Joe mentioned that the HPC is looking for a place to display artifacts, mentioning that *preserving the character of Westport* serves as our standard.

Nancy described the importance of preserving the biological integrity of the site. Improving the trails before inviting increased access to the site is key in preserving the rare prairie and oak savanna plant communities on the drumlin. Rebecca described it as a *natural artifact*.

Members offered to support this viewpoint as presented by those that were attending on behalf of the HPC. Janette and Nancy were interested in attending this meeting, as well as Rebecca.

Jackson's Landing Signage Update

Looking for a response from the Town's Park's Commission, after Ron confers with their members, like former member Dave O'Malley, whom would be familiar with this project.

Miscellaneous Business

Website Update for HPC Presence Proposed

Joe is proposing more "live" access (like word press) in building our HPC presence on our town's website to better manage and display HPC information. Ideally, inventory, pick pictures, and add documentation with a link and template from the Town of Westport's website. This may mean refreshing the Town's website platform to host HPC related archives/news more effectively. Joe can check with and learn from Tom where we are at in this process.

DNR parcels for Sale in Westport

Mimi shared with us the news that DNR parcels were up for sale near where she lives, in proximity of Westport parklands. One parcel being across the road from the Willows includes wetlands and prairie. She inquired at a town meeting about the sale of the land. Members suggested to further directly convey this information to the Park's Commission.

NEXT MEETING

The HPC meets regularly on the first Thursday of the month. However, due to the anticipated absence of two members on that date, the meeting was rescheduled to accommodate all.

Next month's meeting will be Thursday, August 11, 2016 at 6:00 pm

ADJOURNMENT

Ray moved to adjourn; everyone seconded that at around 7pm in unanimous agreement.

Minutes taken afield as submitted by Nancy Schlimgen