

**TOWN OF WESTPORT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING**

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

MINUTES – February 2, 2017

Members present: Mimi Bloch, Ron Bowen, Ray Mejia, Joe Pichette and Nancy Schlimgen

Members absent: Janette Hermanson

Public present: Rebecca Bernstein, Historic Preservation Consultant

CALL TO ORDER

Ray called the meeting to order at approximately 6 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

October minutes still remain for review. November and December minutes were approved tweaking Peter Bloch's Memorial signage:

*In memory of and in recognition of Peter C. Bloch's (June 8, 1944 –May 27, 2015)
Work on the Military Trail near Jackson's Landing as a member of the
Historic Preservation Commission in the Town of Westport, Wisconsin.*

Ron motioned to recommend to the Town of Westport to fund and implement Peter Bloch's memorial sign as amended, seconded by Mimi, all others were in favor of this proposal. For Peter's family, the preferred timeline for display and installation of this sign (if this spring), is coinciding with the anniversary of his passing near Memorial Day. Mimi would like to be present and invite family (perhaps others) in appreciation at the time of the installation.

OLD BUSINESS

Ella Wheeler Wilcox (EWW) Historical Homesite Park

Rebecca reported on the County progress on the EWW home site as notified in an e-mail. Last fall the County was not able to pull the clay off site, but rather they stockpiled it due to wet weather. They hope to remove the clay by mid-June. Work on site reclamation as wildlife habitat and historical commemorative site will begin thereafter.

The first 3 signs have been sent to the graphic designer and the final 2 signs will follow next in the series. Ray suggested that as a goal, the signs could be on display at our Spring Open House.

Rebecca expressed gratitude to the County site workers who called it to her attention additional “finds” as they were excavating, for her to check out along with another such bag of items collected on the site. Even if the connection is not exactly clear as to their timeline, she as does the HPC, appreciated how careful the County was in preserving any such historical remnants discovered.

Ron together with Tom Wilson, have had a conversation with Jim Stephenson tentatively agreeing to construct the EWW shelter. Ron relayed architectural features similar to the smaller shelter at Jackson’s Landing closer to the water, but creating a *residential scale to the building by using non-glazed window patterns with possibly a stone wall snaking between columns and a stone floor*. Ron is developing the shelter design with input welcome. Ray and Joe liked the concept of the windows even without panes to give the structure a farmstead feel.

Westport Silo Inventory Update

Rebecca recalls the letter to send out to those known to have silos on their land identified with Roger Bindl’s research and aerial photos. It was thought in discussion that all 37 silos documented could be sent such a letter to request further on site inventory participation. Given the response, those sites then could be prioritized for future efforts and involvement in this project.

Ray recommended adding the open house date to the letter as soon as it is determined, prior to sending it out to Westport residents and landowners.

Spring HPC Open House and Date Selection

Rebecca offered to check on Earth Day weekend dates as our first and second choice in April on Saturday the 23 in the morning or the afternoon of the 24th or our third choice being the morning of April 8th in order to reserve the Town Center for our Spring HPC Open House.

Topics for display may include status of our projects such as EWW Park and our Silo Inventory. In addition Rebecca thought the Natural Heritage Land Trust (NHLT) may like to share their Empire Prairie-formerly Koltes Farmstead site progress. Also Schumacher Farm may have interest in a display or other Westport Parks, for example Jackson’s Landing with promoting the trails, (also, members noting other signage would be helpful at key entrances to that trail system).

Empire Prairie (formerly Koltes Farmstead) NHLT Property Update

The barn and house have been taken down this winter as reported by Nancy. No word on any salvageable portions, once proposed, to use on the EWW shelter according to Ron or Rebecca.

Comprehensive Park and Open Space Plans and HPC Role in Documentation vs. Preservation

As reviewed by Joe and others, commented on language in this Waunakee and Westport long range plan that preserved historic features in the landscape such as the silos and sites that maintain the feel of Westport. This may allow for the HPC to weigh in on these sites in the future (and that description maybe came across when those planners met with the HPC). Joe laments that all too often such structures are easily sacrificed.

Discussion of the potential for long range plans to foster preservation continued. Ray credits our HPC educational efforts in raising community awareness, thus improving the hopes for preservation, although, we have never really exercised that authority.

Mimi exclaims, (for example, referring to the barn off of M on Holy Wisdom Monastery land), that instead of just identifying and documenting such significant structures, we could preserve it! Rebecca will look once again at the Jeffers Foundation to refresh her information for such funding. In addition, she mentions the value of maintaining view sheds.

To Joe, historic Westport is the land itself and means long-term agricultural preservation. To him, a model for preserving view sheds can be found by looking from atop the Bolz Conservancy.

Ray adds that our HPC did submit Bong Road for rustic road status, but it failed to receive such state designation.

Website Display for HPC

Joe researched approaches to website development and presented his findings in a handout. Ray made a motion to forward this web information to the town, by way of Tom Wilson. Mimi seconded the motion with all in favor by voice vote to move forward on this initiative.

Display Galleries: Potential at Schumacher Farm and the Town Center

Schumacher Farm County Park may offer potential for our Silo Inventory display at some future point as it is in keeping with their Rural Heritage Center. As progress toward completion continues, more information may be conveyed as to what they might have available for exhibit space.

Meanwhile, contemplating more displays in the Town Center may be feasible as need arises as HPC with Rebecca's research or others has progress to share with the community. These could be rotating or thematic displays.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Oral Histories and Interviews of Westport Residents Revisited

Mimi reminded the Commissioners of *Westport's Sport's History* in part with mention of the Olympic Hockey Player *Bobby Sutter* whose parents still reside in town as possible candidates to interview among other names. Ray thought a sports theme for Westport may help focus and concentrate interview questions. Ray also noted that HPC members have compiled such oral histories in the past, even when they are not related to any of our major initiatives at this time. He is willing to bring examples from past interview questions for HPC to review as a rotating item on the agenda. Mimi offered to initiate how to contact Sutters as a starting point.

NEXT MEETING

The Historic Preservation Commission meets the first Thursday of each month, unless otherwise stated at 6pm in the Community Meeting Room of the Town Center.

The next meeting is on March 2nd, 2017.

ADJOURNMENT

Joe motioned to adjourn with all others present in agreement at 7:05pm.