

WHITEWATER LANDMARKS COMMISSION

March 4, 2009

Chair, Mariann Scott called to order the monthly meeting of the Whitewater Landmarks Commission at 5:05 P.M. in the City Manager's Conference Room of the Whitewater Municipal Building. Members present were Roy Nosek, Kimberly Krebs, Kathleen Haas Lashley, Rick Daniels, and Carol Christ. Linda Loomer arrived at 5:40. Guest – city attorney Wallace McDonell.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

To accommodate our guest, it was recommended that agenda item number VII (Review of Landmark's Ordinance and discussion of possible changes) be moved up to number V on the agenda. The rearrangement of the agenda and the February 7 minutes were approved on a motion by Roy Nosek and a second by Kimberly Krebs.

Review of Landmark's Ordinance

Mariann Scott introduced city attorney, Wallace McDonell. Mr. McDonell began by stating that "Yes", it is in the Landmarks Commission's spectrum of authority to designate, preserve and protect historically significant city-owned property, and "Yes", the Landmarks Commission can propose an amendment of the current municipal code to the city council.

Mr. McDonell presented a first draft of the proposed amendment to Title 17 of the Whitewater Municipal Code, by adding: "The Landmarks Commission may designate property as city-owned historically significant personal property if it found by the Landmarks Commission to have special historic, archaeological or aesthetic character. "City owned historically significant personal property' means personal property owned by the City of Whitewater that is deemed by the Commission to have special historical, archaeological or aesthetic character such that it is in the City of Whitewater's best interest to preserve, protect and safeguard it."

The way the proposed amendment is written, the city council will have overview after the Landmarks Commission's recommendation: "Once personal property has been designated historically significant personal property by the Landmark's Commission, it shall not be altered or disposed of by the city without permission by the Landmarks Commission or, in the alternative, by action of the City Council. Prior to authorizing the disposition or alteration of the historically significant personal property, the City Council shall receive and consider the recommendation of the Landmarks Commission. The Landmarks Commission shall issue a recommendation within 30 days of a written request. If the Landmarks Commission fails to issue a recommendation within (30) days, the Council may act on the request without considering the Landmarks Commission's recommendation."

After reviewing the proposed amendment the committee discussed the possibility of having a public hearing but decided that this was unnecessary as the amendment will first be read at a council meeting and then will not be acted upon until the next council meeting.

The biggest concern was how to notify employees that an object was under the auspices of the Landmarks Commission. It was recommended that there be a list that catalogues historically significant city-owned objects and that this list needs to be posted and kept up to date. It was suggested that the city clerk who is the archivist for the city be in charge of maintaining this list. There also needs to be some sort of demarcation on the items. It was suggested that the Director of Neighborhood Services be in charge of informing city employees of the items on the list and encouraging them to contact the Landmarks Commission if and when they come in contact with city property that might be deemed historically significant. Mr. McDonell will work on adding the above items to the amendment.

Discussion also resulted in a motion by Linda Loomer and second by Roy Nosek, changing the 30 day recommendation to 60 days. Motion approved. Mr. McDonell will be in contact with the committee regarding the proposed changes.

Oath of Office

The Landmarks Commission was presented with the Oath of Office. There was some discussion as to the reason for people who are appointed rather than elected to take such an oath. Some of the items in question were "freedom of speech" and the reference to God in the oath. The committee is looking for clarification before taking such an oath.

Next Landmarks Commission Meeting

The next meeting date is set for April 1 at 5 PM.

Whitewater Historical Survey

Kathleen Haas Lashley and Rick Daniels proofread the corrected survey and felt it was ready for print. Mariann Scott questioned what to do with the first copies. Until we have the final copy, the approval needs to be postponed.

Landmarks Commission Records

Kathleen Haas Lashley continues to review the past records.

Postponed Items

City-owned personal property will remain on the postponed items list until the municipal code has been amended giving the Landmarks Commission authority to designate, preserve and protect such property.

Future Agenda Items

Mariann Scott suggested a future agenda item --- How to promote public education, interest and support for preservation. She also distributed copies of the spring workshops offered by the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Wisconsin Federation of Museums.

Adjournment

Linda Loomer moved for adjournment with a second by Roy Nosek. The meeting was adjourned at 6:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Christ
Secretary