

SPECIAL MEETING
City of Whitewater Landmarks Commission
SATURDAY, AUGUST 29, 2009

The purpose of the Special meeting of the Landmarks Commission is to gather information that will help members evaluate suggested changes to Whitewater's archeological park

The following members were present for the tour: Mariann Scott, Kimberly Krebs, Linda Loomer, Rick Daniels and Carol Christ. Guests were David and Bev Stone. The members departed City Hall at 9:10 and returned at 12:00.

The following places were visited:

Hoard Museum - the commission members were welcomed to the museum by director Kori Oberle. They viewed the video and looked at the displays. Ms. Oberle shared the following information regarding mounds in Wisconsin.

- Wisconsin was the heart of effigy mound building in North America. At one time there were over 20,000 mounds in Wisconsin. Closely grouped mounds representing animals and birds are unique to Wisconsin.
- The first inhabitants of Lake Koshkonong and the Rock River were the Paleo-Indians – 12,000 years ago.
- The Archaic period lasted from 8500 BC until 1000 BC. Like the Paleo Indians, the Archaic people were hunters and gatherers.
- The Woodland Period followed the Archaic and lasted at least 2300 years. The effigy mounds were believed to have been built in the Late Woodland Period, from 300 AD to 1300 AD. These people built mounds in the shape of birds, turtles, deer, bears and panthers. They also built linear and conical mounds.
- One of the largest mounds is at Mendota in the shape of a bird – 624 feet.
- Early settlers found more than 500 mounds on the shores of Lake Koshkonong.
- Mounds are usually located along rivers and lakes. These were important gathering spots.
- Conical mounds were usually burial mounds. If burials were made in effigy mounds, the body was usually placed at the heart or head of the animal.
- In 1849 –50 Increase Latham surveyed mounds in and around Lake Koshkonong and the Rock River valley.
- Aztalan has temple mounds and is believed to be the northern most outpost of the Middle Mississippian Indian culture (Cahokian Indian city near East St. Louis, IL). These are not effigy mounds.
- Study of the mounds usually generates more questions than answers.
- In 1985, the state of Wisconsin enacted a Burial Sites preservation law.

Recommended Reading:

The Mounds of Koshkonong and Rock River by Hugh Highsmith, 1997

The Antiquities of Wisconsin as Surveyed and Described by Increase Latham Smithsonian Institution, 1885

The Archaeology of the Lake Koshkonong Region by A.B. Stout and H. L. Skavlem "The Wisconsin Archaeologist" 1908

When Lightning Strikes – Secret and Ceremonial Places by Peter Nabokov

More information can be found at www.hoardmuseum.org

Panther Intaglio – on Riverside Drive in Fort Atkinson. Viewed intaglio and Wisconsin State Historical marker. Intaglios are dug into the ground to create a depressed outline. Originally there were 11 intaglios reported in Wisconsin. This is the only surviving intaglio. It originally was 108 feet long and 2.5- 3 feet deep. A driveway and lawn shortened it.

General Atkinson Mound Group at the Jefferson County Indian Mounds and Trail Park. Walked the trails and viewed signage for individual mounds as well as large Ho-Chunk sign at the entrance. Noted that some of the mounds are on the Koshkonong Mounds golf course. Took a video of this mound group.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Christ
Secretary