



Whitewater Landmarks Commission

MINUTES

Thursday, May 5, 2022 – 6:00 PM

Municipal Building, Cravath Lakefront Room
312 W Whitewater St, Whitewater, WI 53190

Note: Although there was a virtual meeting option listed on the agenda, due to some technical difficulty that was unable to happen as planned. Thus, this meeting occurred in-person only.

Call to Order and Roll Call

- Chairperson Blackmer called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Present: Patricia Blackmer, Ben Adamitus, Karen Coburn, Ken Kienbaum, Dan Richardson, Lukas Schreiber

Absent: None

Staff present: Olivia Pratt

Others: Richard Helmick, Kori Oborn, Rich Coburn

Approval of Agenda

- Schreiber made a motion to approve the Agenda for this meeting, seconded by Coburn.

Ayes: Adamitus, Blackmer, Coburn, Kienbaum, Richardson, Schreiber

Noes: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Schreiber made a motion to approve the minutes from April 7, 2022 with a second by Coburn.

Ayes: Adamitus, Blackmer, Coburn, Kienbaum, Richardson, Schreiber

Noes: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Hear Citizen Comments: No formal Landmarks Commission Action will be taken during this meeting although issues raised may become a part of a future agenda. Participants are allotted a three-minute speaking period. Specific items listed on the agenda may not be discussed at this time; however, citizens are invited to speak to those specific issues at the time the Commission discusses that particular item.

Set date of next meeting – June 2, 2022 at 6 p.m.

Reports

- Update on Birge Fountain, Landmarks Commission Oversight

Chairperson Blackmer reported that the fountain is not yet opened for the year. Since the fountain is in the Commission's purview but maintenance is done by the City, the Commission recommends talking about specifics so that there is clear communication about scheduled maintenance and all other aspects of the fountain.

- Update on City Manager's Plan for the Effigy Mounds Preserve and future work

Chairperson Blackmer reported that Parks & Recreation Coordinator Eric Boettcher gave a presentation on the work completed at Effigy Mounds at the Common Council meeting on May 3. A meeting between Commission members and Boettcher is set to occur on May 9 at Effigy Mounds to assess the state of the preserve and discuss the possibility of a new trail. While old state regulations required a 5-foot buffer between the mounds and trails, it now mandates a 15-foot buffer, so the old trail paths will no longer work. There is also plenty of natural ground debris that still needs to be cleared before the preserve can be mowed so that pathing can be planned out.

- Walton Oaks Park, Midwest Prairie work completed to date and resolve to encroachment issue

Chairperson Blackmer reported that Boettcher also presented about Walton Oaks Park at the Common Council meeting on May 3. The encroachment issue was addressed and turned over to the City Attorney, who will be sending a letter to land owners to remove their personal property from the public land. Minimal fencing may also be put up so no further encroachment can occur. The next step by Midwest Prairie is spot removal of invasive species with herbicide, and they indicated that the overall health of Walton Oaks Park is very good.

Unfinished Business

- Thank You Letters to Owners of Local Landmarks (May: Historic Preservation Month)

Letters are sent on behalf of the Commission to thank landmark owners for their continued maintenance and upkeep of the buildings.

- Library Display Case for May (Birge Fountain Preview)

Blackmer and Adamitus put up the display of iterations of the Birge Fountain. It shows pictures from 1907, 1911, 1914, when the fountain was painted white, restoration in 2003, and the teepee that used to cover the fountain. It will continue to be on display at the library for the month of May.

- Wisconsin Association of Historic Preservation Commissions Conference: April 29, 2022

Blackmer and Richardson were in attendance of the virtual conference. They reported learning about changes in CLG funding, online resources, and new ideas for the Commission. An example is learning history in the City from the standpoint of underrepresented groups such as women and the Hispanic population.

- Heritage Day Tour (planning for 2023 Birge Fountain 120th Anniversary)

Planning is in process. It has been decided that the tour component will be a driving tour rather than a walking tour inside the buildings. The theme is Whitewater in 1903, which is the year the Birge Fountain arrived in the city.

- Premier Bank as a possible Landmark

Chairperson Blackmer has been in contact and forwarding information about local landmarks to Rochelle Mitchell, who is the Vice President and Marketing Director at Premier Bank in Fort Atkinson. It has to go before Premier Bank's Board of Directors for approval. Blackmer has also reached out to the son of the architect of the building.

New Business

- Replacement of Garage Door at Bassett House and Possible Action

The Whitewater Federation of Women's Clubs are the owners of the Bassett House and are asking for permission to replace the garage door. The garage is currently a wood structure with no electricity with a wooden garage door. They would like a modern garage door in the same color with both vertical and horizontal bars. The new material isn't wood but looks similar. Chairperson Blackmer is also President of the Whitewater Federation of Women's Clubs and thus recused herself from discussion and voting on this matter. Commission members discussed the ordinance, the location of the garage, the materials of the current and possible future doors, and appearance.

Schreiber called for a motion to replace the garage door as presented, seconded by Richardson.

Ayes: Kienbaum, Richardson, Schreiber

Noes: Adamitus, Coburn

Abstained: Blackmer

Absent: None

The motion passed by 3 vote.

- Starin Park Water Tower Tuckpointing Update

Chairperson Blackmer reported that the Commission should have been notified of tuckpointing before it occurred because the water tower is a local landmark. While the restoration effort is well done by a reputable company, the Landmarks Commission should not have been left out of the loop. There should be a record kept of tuckpointing and shared with the Commission.

- Webinar: National Alliance of Preservation Commissions: Preservation Justice, May 20, 1:00-2:30 p.m. EST

This virtual seminar about equitability in local Historic Preservation programs is free for all to attend. An email containing the registration link was sent to all Commission members.

- Sign at First English Lutheran Church

Chairperson Blackmer reported that her personal dilemma with the sign is that it is in an area designated as a Main Street Historic District, which is a national designation, and believes that the sign is deteriorating the integrity of the area. Church members described the sign as looking like a casino. Pastor Rich Collier was in attendance and told Commission members that they are still adjusting the way the sign is displayed, it's just so busy right now because the sign

company wanted to show off all of the capabilities. Multiple Commission members spoke of a personal disinterest in the sign because it stands out so much against the architecture of the church as well as the neighboring properties. Commission member Adamitus clarified that since First English Lutheran Church is not a local landmark, the Commission cannot take any action and has no authority over the district. Other commission members and concerned citizens recommended a meeting between the Landmarks Commission, Neighborhood Services, City Manager, and Plan Board Commission chairperson so set up a system that will clarify better communication going forward.

- Landmarks Commission Annual Report to Common Council

Chairperson Blackmer sends a written report to the Common Council as a thorough review of what's transpired in the Landmarks Commission throughout the year. This year's report is not yet completed.

- Historic City Owned Property: Engrebretsen/Dorr Replica House (possible relocation)

The replica of Victoria on Main, which is on the corner of Main Street and Prairie Street, and the family donated it to the City. The replica house is now in the basement of the armory building. The Walworth County Historical Society approached the City to ask for the replica to display. It has now become a convoluted legal matter that is in the process of being figured out.

Future Agenda Items

- Update on City Manager's Plan, Birge Fountain Committee, and Walton Oaks Park
- White Elephant
- Landmarks Awards
- Landmark Hotel
- Heritage Day Tour
- Premier Bank as Possible Landmark
- Webinar: NAD
- Landmarks Commission Annual Report
- Engrebretsen/Dorr Replica House

Adjournment

- Blackmer adjourned the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Olivia Pratt, Staff Representative