

KENDALL COUNTY
Historic Preservation Commission
HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORGANIZATION MEETING
109 W. Ridge Street – Kendall County Historic Courthouse East Wing Conference Room
Hybrid Meeting
Yorkville, IL 60560
February 10, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jeff Wehrli called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Eric Bernacki (Secretary), Elizabeth Flowers (Vice Chairwoman) Kristine Heiman (Attended Remotely), and Jeff Wehrli (Chairman)

Absent: None

Also present: Matt Asselmeier, Senior Planner

In the Audience: Jon Pressley (Attended Remotely), Lisa Wolancevich, Pete McKnight, David Schmidt (Attended Remotely), Sarah Skilton (Attended Remotely), Lisa DiChiera (Attended Remotely), Jessica Gal (Attended Remotely), Mike Bortel (Attended Remotely), Tina Beaird (Attended Remotely), Scott Koeppel (Attended Remotely), Scott Gengler (Attended Remotely), Valerie Burd (Attended Remotely), Joan Hardekopf (Attended Remotely), Anne Sears, and Johanne Byram

WELCOMING REMARKS

Chairman Wehrli thanked everybody for attending. Chairman Wehrli noted that this was the fourth annual meeting and explained the purpose of the meeting. He noted that the County is close to becoming a Certified Local Government. The application has been sent to the National Park Service and provided a history of the historic preservation organizations in Kendall County. He also recognized the work of Stephenie Todd. Chairman Wehrli thanked the County Board for their efforts to make appropriate changes to the Historic Preservation Ordinance in order to become a Certified Local Government.

PRESENTATION BY ILLINOIS HISTORIC PRESERVATION AGENCY

Jon Pressley, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, provided an update on the National Park Service's review of the application. The County can apply for Certified Local Government Grants. The application window closes on February 15th; the County can apply in 2022. The County will also have access to tax freezes.

Mr. Asselmeier noted that the County started working on a Preservation Plan and the County previously did some property surveys. Mr. Asselmeier asked which project the County should undertake first. Mr. Pressley advised the County to the Plan before the surveys. Both of these projects were eligible for Certified Local Government Grants. The typical match is seventy percent (70%) from the State and thirty percent (30%) from the local government. In-kind work can be used as a portion of the grant.

Lisa DiChiera, Landmarks Illinois, noted that the tax freeze does not automatically occur. The County Board Chair has to write a letter requesting participation. Mr. Asselmeier requested a template letter, if required. Ms. DiChiera posted the following message in the chat:

“As of July 2019, the following municipalities and counties have preservation ordinances that have been approved for the assessment freeze program: Aurora, Belleville, Belvidere, Berwyn, Bloomington, Blue Island, Carbondale, Centralia, Champaign, Charleston, Chicago Heights, Chicago, Crystal Lake, DeKalb, Downers Grove, Edwardsville, Elgin, Elmhurst, Evanston, Galesburg, Geneva, Glen Ellyn, Glencoe, Glenview, Highland Park, Hinsdale, Jacksonville, Joliet, Kane County, Kankakee County, Lake Bluff, Lake Forest, Lemont,

Lockport, Lombard, Macomb, Marengo, Maywood, McHenry County, Moline, Morrison, Mount Carroll, Murphysboro, Normal, Oak Park, O'Fallon, Orland Park, Oswego, Park Ridge, Peoria, Plainfield, Quincy, River Forest, Rock Island, Rockford, Rockton, Springfield, St. Charles, Urbana, Washington, West Chicago, Will County, Wilmette, Winnetka, and Woodstock.”

Mr. Pressley asked about posting meeting minutes. Mr. Asselmeier explained where the minutes were posted on the County's website. The Commission follows the Illinois Opens Meetings Act.

Mr. Pressley asked about the criteria “suitable for restoration.” This phrase could be problematic for a tax credit. The property may not be a contributing factor to the district eligible for landmark.

Mr. Asselmeier asked about the training requirements. Mr. Pressley responded that trainings have not occurred due to COVID. Ms. DiChiera noted Landmark Illinois' training. She provided the following link for terra cotta: https://imiweb-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ON4OaOakS7eC5HiccU1cpg. She also noted that Landmarks Illinois was exploring a training on historic preservation and solar panels. The training would count towards the training requirement. The Kendall County Historic Preservation Agency will be notified of future trainings.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Mike Bortel and David Schmidt provided an update from Plainfield. Mr. Bortel congratulated Ms. DiChiera on twenty (20) years. Mr. Bortel noted that they were in the process of landmarking in Plainfield, including a property in downtown. They were working on three (3) landmark applications. In 2020, Plainfield held a conference with representatives from several local commissions on building codes as they relate to preservation. Mr. Bortel was exploring doing a camp in 2022.

Member Heiman asked how Plainfield was staying in contact with everyone. Mr. Bortel said all of the meetings have been Zoom meetings and explained his research on families that owned historic properties in Plainfield.

Joan Hardekopf noted that DeKalb County does not have a meeting like Kendall County and she was interested in everyone's activities.

Lisa DiChiera reported that Landmarks Illinois awarded a matching preservation grant of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500) to the Kendall County Historical Society to fund the replacement of a roof on the Union School Building at Lyon Farm. The post stated the following:

“The Kendall County Historical Society will use the grant to help pay for a roof replacement on the Union School building, a one-story, one-room schoolhouse built in 1847. The school is now located at Lyon Family Farm, operated by the Kendall County Historical Society.

In 1974, Frances Lyon donated 40 acres of the Lyon Family Farm to establish a home for the historical society and its artifacts. The original farm buildings at Lyon Farm were restored with funds from a large bequest and members' support. Other historic buildings and structures in the county were moved to the farm, including: The Oswego-Fox House, Plano Depot, C. B. & Q. Caboose, Union School, Seward Town Hall and the Yorkville City Hall and Fire Station. In 2012, the Herman Hanouw Museum building was built to house the society's research library, offices and provide event space. In addition to the historic buildings, in cooperation with the Kendall County Forest Preserve, in 1988, 18 acres of farmland was restored to a natural prairie.

The Union School was moved to the Lyon Farm Village in 1976 from its original location on Wheeler Road in Na-Au-Say Township in Kendall County. The building was in use as a school until 1937 and was later used as a basketball court for many years. It is currently situated near Lyon Forest Preserve, and the roof receives little

sunlight. The dark, wet conditions have led to extensive moss growth, which has accelerated the deterioration of the wood shake roof.”

Ms. DiChiera reported on her work with the flood mitigation efforts at the Farnsworth House. She also noted Landmarks Illinois’ quarterly grant program. The next deadline is April 15th. The application is on www.landmarks.org. The Donnelly Grant is for preservation planning and the next deadline is April 15th. A grant was also given to Village of Plainfield in April 2020. Governments can apply, but they prefer awarding grants to non-profits.

Chairman Wehrli asked if the Certified Local Government status changes the relationship between the County and Landmarks Illinois. Ms. DiChiera responded no.

Pete McKnight provided an update on the work at the Save the Historic Jail. The funds will help finish the exterior of the older building. Lisa Wolancevich also discussed the work at the Historic Jail, including windows and a new patio. The exterior has been painted and tuck-pointed. The building had been on the endangered list.

Member Flowers asked if they were able to save original cells. The cells were intact and the system to open the cells at once were still intact.

Valerie Burd reported that she was following the work of Lisa Wolancevich, Johanne Byram, and the Historic Jail. She requested that the work of Howard Manthei and Stephenie Todd be honored in some way. Chairman Wehrli said that those individuals could be honored when the Commission does its annual report to the County Board.

Anne Sears provided a report from Beverly Popp. The Chapel on the Green re-opened February 4th and are welcoming back Scout Troop 40, meeting on Monday night, and Scout Troup 50, meeting on Thursday night; both groups meeting in the Foxes Lair/Lower Level, while the Kalico Quilters are meeting upstairs on Wednesday. All who enter are required to wear masks and practice social distancing. Groups are limited to a maximum of twenty-five (25) persons in attendance. Those wishing to schedule a tour, with the possibility of scheduling an event are invited to contact abryanna@dessaeventplanning.com or (630)296-4244. We have available from Jeff Farren (630)553-7327 the book he coauthored with Howard Manthei entitled, “The Chapel on the Green *Through the Ages*”. Telling the history of the oldest church building in Kendall County dating back to 1855. Cost is Twenty Dollar (\$20). Our mission is to preserve the original Congregational church building constructed in 1855. We strive to restore, renovate, and maintain the Chapel on the Green building, host weddings and other ceremonies, hold meetings, create exhibits, sponsor programs and run special events for the education and enjoyment of our members and the general public.

Ms. Sears also reported that plans exist to construct a memorial bench for Howard and Marion Manthei.

Ms. Sears also reported that Dickson-Murst Farm did not have any summer events; they are still reviewing options for 2021.

Ms. Sears said that the Plano Historical Society activities were on hold. They were hoping to rent a building starting in March 2020 and that deal has not materialized. They would like the building to be in downtown Plano.

Ms. Wolancevich reported that the Yorkville Historic Preservation has been focusing on research. They were also writing a book about local houses and they are also researching other commercial structures in town.

Ms. Wolancevich also reported Kendall County Historic Society has been closed for one (1) year. They will be opening soon.

Johanne Byram reported that the University of Illinois has a digital website collection of newspapers, idnc.library.illinois.edu. Anything printed pre-1924 in the Kendall County Record could be digitized without royalties owed to Shaw Media. The Kendall County Historic Society was also digitizing photographs.

Tina Beaird posted the following comment in the chat:

“I’m representing 4 groups: Plainfield Library, we just relaunched a website with historic info dating back to 1836: <http://wcpfh.org>. For the Plainfield Historical Society, we plan to reopen this spring. Little White School in Oswego we just received 2 awards from the Illinois Association of Museums for the virtual cemetery walk we did as well as our Toys in the Attic program. Lastly the Northern Illinois Historic League, we are relaunching our directory of HPC and Historic groups.”

The digitizing grant was from the Illinois State Archives and the federal government.

The Illinois Historic Records Advisory Board has a grant available with a due date of March 15th. The link is www.cyberdriveillinois.com choose departments then Archives then ISHRAB. You can download the application there.

Chairman Wehrli discussed cemeteries and trying to find out which ones were still being maintained.

DISCUSSION OF FUTURE MEETING(S)

Chairman Wehrli said that he would like to keep it an annual event, unless a major project arises.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Wolancevich would like to do a collage of all of the municipalities and townships in Kendall County at Lyon Farm.

Member Bernacki discussed his project at Ashby Farm, Joseph Platt Brown, and Centennial Farm Program.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

Member Flowers made a motion, seconded by Member Bernacki, to adjourn.

The votes were as follows:

Yeas (4): Bernacki, Flowers, Heiman, and Wehrli

Nays (0): None

Absent (0): None

Abstain (0): None

The motion carried.

The Historic Preservation Commission adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Matthew H. Asselmeier, AICP, CFM
Senior Planner

Enc.

**KENDALL COUNTY
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 10, 2021**

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE CONTACTED ON FUTURE MEETINGS REGARDING THIS TOPIC, PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR ADDRESS OR EMAIL ADDRESS

NAME	ADDRESS (OPTIONAL)	EMAIL ADDRESS (OPTIONAL)
<i>Anne Sears</i>		
<i>Pete McKnight</i>		
<i>Johanne Byram</i>		