

KENDALL COUNTY
Historic Preservation Commission
Kendall County Office Building
Rooms 209 & 210
111 W. Fox Street, Yorkville, Illinois
6:30 p.m.
March 18, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Kristine Heiman called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Elizabeth Flowers, Kristine Heiman, and Jeff Wehrli

Absent: Sarah Herbik and Melissa Maye

Also present: Matt Asselmeier, Senior Planner, and Ruth Ann Sikes, Part-Time Office Assistant (Zoning)

In the Audience: John Brodemus

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Member Wehrli made a motion, seconded by Member Flowers, to approve the agenda as presented. With a voice vote of three (3) ayes, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Flowers made a motion, seconded by Member Wehrli, to approve the minutes from the November 19, 2018, meeting, the December 18, 2018, gathering, and the February 13, 2019 gathering. With a voice vote of three (3) ayes, the motion carried unanimously.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Heiman read an email from Thomas Milschewski who attended the meeting at LaSalle Manor, See attachment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of Renting Booth Space at 2019 PrairieFest

The Commission reviewed the flyer and discussed if it was worth attending again because of the number of people that stopped by the tent last year.

Member Wehrli asked about other events to get the Commission's name publicized

Member Flowers said that perhaps we could partner with someone else to get our name out there.

Mr. John Brodemus, Oswego, mentioned that Oswego Historic Commission is having a house tour in June. He had no objection to the Commission putting a table in his driveway for that event.

Approval of a Proclamation Declaring May Historic Preservation Month

Member Wehrli made a motion, seconded by Member Flowers, to approve and send the Proclamation to the Board. With a voice vote of three (3) ayes, the motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion of February 13, 2019, Meeting with Other Historic Preservation Organizations-Approval of Invoices in the Amount of \$48.75 for Food and Beverage at Event; Related Invoices Paid from Historic Preservation Commission Line Item (010-2-002-6383)

Member Wehrli mentioned that it seemed like everyone enjoyed the event.

Chairwoman Heiman said it was great to hear from the other groups that came to the event and it was just a beautiful place, and she was happy with the attendance.

It was discussed about having the same event at another venue next year.

Member Wehrli made a motion, seconded by Member Flowers, to approve invoices. With a voice vote of three (3) ayes, the motion carried unanimously.

Review of a Letter of Support for the Save the Historic Kendall County Jail

Chairwoman Heiman reviewed the letter. Member Flowers made a motion, seconded by Member Wehrli, to approve the letter. With a voice vote of three (3) ayes, the motion passed unanimously.

Review and Recommendation on Article II-The Historic Preservation Commission Section of the Historic Preservation Ordinance

Commissioners reviewed the article.

The consensus of the Commission was to move to Article III of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Follow-Up on Review of Historical Documents

Member Wehrli stated it was very interesting to look at all the original books from the first couple months that Kendall County existed.

Chairwoman Heiman said it was interesting to see how people paid for things (i.e., cows and horses).

Mr. Brodemus of Oswego made a suggestion of having the documents put on microfilm to preserve them.

Review of Historic Preservation Awards

Mr. Asselmeier presented a nomination for Chapel on the Green in Yorkville.

The award would be under the Commercial Category. The award presentation would be at the County Board Meeting on the third Tuesday of May at which time they would receive a Certificate and a sign would be placed in the yard.

It was discussed by the Commission to put a plaque up also. Mr. Asselmeier will research the type of plaque and the cost.

The consensus of the Commission was to grant the award to Chapel on the Green.

Discussion of Social Media Campaign

The Committee decided to keep this on the Agenda for our meeting next month.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Asselmeier noted that the next meeting was April 15, 2019.

John Brodemus stated that the Commission should keep working and increase advertising.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Wehrli made a motion, seconded by Member Flowers, to adjourn. With a voice vote of three (3) ayes, the motion carried. The Historic Preservation Commission adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ruth Ann Sikes
Part-Time Office Assistant (Zoning)

Enc.

Good Afternoon Kendall County Residents and Officials,

My name is Thomas Milschewski and I have been a resident of Heustis Street in Yorkville for 21 years. My mother, Jacquelyn Milschewski, currently serves as Ward II Alderman and previously served the community as City Clerk for 10 years. While we have been involved in many efforts promoting historic preservation in Kendall County, my most recent interest has been in the old Kendall County Jail and Sheriff's residence.

Several years ago, I started a project called "Yorkville Then and Now," which has gained popularity through Facebook and Instagram sites engaging people of all generations into conversation about photos which I post of our community and its residents in days gone by. My efforts, along with the amazing responses from people across the country, have caught the interest of the Kendall County Record, the Kendall Chronicle, Glancer Magazine, as well as WGN and ABC News. This project has revived interest in Yorkville's past in a fresh way, connecting many generations through the generous contributions of hundreds of photos, and the sharing of countless memories and personal stories, previously undocumented, which have brought new life to the phrase "Then and Now."

I am dedicated to further expanding the concept of "Yorkville Then and Now" by compiling this treasured information into book form and am also interested in starting a Yorkville historical committee. In the same vein, I have been an enthusiastic participant in activities which support the preservation of the old Jail, and am also hoping to qualify my historic home at 401 Heustis Street to National Landmark Status. My passion for preserving history began nearly ten years ago with interest in my own home's past, and I have spent countless hours in online research, pouring over history books, and speaking to longtime residents and descendants of many of Yorkville's early settlers and families. It is my hope that this renewed interest in historic preservation will motivate other members of the community to join the efforts to keep our local history alive.

Recently I created a list of landmark/historic structures which the City of Yorkville has lost since 1990, most being a result of the rapid population growth and development along Routes 47 and 34. Included on this list are more than twenty-five downtown buildings, homes, farms, and other businesses along these roads. Thirteen of these buildings have disappeared in the last six years alone. Three of the six original homes located around Courthouse Square, which includes the Muellner building, previously located at the southwest corner of W. Van Emmon and Bridge Streets, built in 1887 are now gone. Having slipped away, one by one, I believe many residents would be shocked to see a comprehensive listing of these lost structures. Unfortunately, Yorkville is not alone in demolishing historical structures for the sake of progress. Other county communities such as Oswego have sacrificed landmark buildings for similar reasons.

Currently, the probability of demolition for the old County Jail and Sheriff's Residence (111 W. Madison St.), as well as the old Larson's Funeral Home (107 W. Madison St.), both adjacent to the Historic Courthouse, is strong. This will further detract from, and diminish the original design of Courthouse Square, leaving the residence located at 108 W. Ridge Street as the last surviving structure. This house serves as a storage facility, and is overflowing with the original, irreplaceable county records, yet there has already been discussion of razing this building to further expand county office space. Where will these documents go?

It has been proven in other communities that the irreversible consequences of these actions are detrimental to communities- historic structures give towns like Yorkville a unique sense of character and remind us of the strong heritage that is still present with lifelong residents today, some of them actual descendants of original settlers. Future generations will miss the opportunity to enjoy these reminder of the early years and early residents of the community that they call "home." If the old jail is torn down, it is unlikely that a new structure will be built in its place which will enhance our downtown. The chances are slim that new development in that area would fit into the aesthetics of the Courthouse square or match the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

While I have invested myself in the efforts to save the old Jail, I have come to realize that some City officials who have not lived here all of their lives just do not share my passion to preserve the history that has helped to shaped this community and its government and standards. Not only in Yorkville, but throughout the county, farm homesteads, outbuildings, and cherished historic landmarks are being replaced with tract housing, strip malls, and other types of modern development. As a young adult, I now realize that growing up in this town of 5,000-6,000 residents with all of the old buildings and history around me was a unique experience that shaped me and contributed to my own sense of identity. I have learned that expecting others to appreciate the meaningful nature of these things, and also expecting that they would care for these aging structures with intention and a vision for the future is never a sure thing.

My passion for learning more about ways to ensure historic preservation led me to learn about organizations such as Landmarks Illinois, and I have also become more familiar with the ways that local government acts to save or destroy such structures as the old Jail. In 2003, when the Jail was owned by the County, it was included on Landmarks Illinois Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois along with the now internationally visited place, the Farnsworth House in Plano, IL. It not only brought public attention to the fight to save it, but also validated the idea that this was a building deserving of restoration.

An option which could contribute positively to the restoration of the old Jail would be TIF assistance from the City of Yorkville, as well as establishing the eligibility of the old Jail to be included on the National Register of Historic Places, which resulted in the opportunity to use the 20% Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit as part of a redevelopment project.

In 2008, the Illinois EPA determined on the regulation of lead-based paint removal from the building. Pursuant of 35 Ill Adm. Code Section 721.104(b) (1), the Kendall County Jail and Sheriff's Residence from the structure is exempt from regulations as a hazardous waste under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). However, this does not mean that all waste generated during the removal of lead-based paint must be containerized so as not to allow exposure of waste removal/hauling personnel to the lead-based paint. This proves that this historic structure has not reached its final days and that with the right efforts and individuals involved, this project can succeed.

While there has been conversation about the possibility of moving the building to Lyon Farm, this would not only be unacceptable to preservationists, taxpayers, and people supporting its preservation in its original location. As well, it would require the agreement of the KCHS to accept the building, and would then require funds to prepare a new site and move the structure.

Granting a preservation easement to Landmarks Illinois and selling the building would resolve the questions of what to do with the building. The building would then be protected against demolition,

improper rehabilitation, removal, etc. and would satisfy preservationists, voters, and legislators who support saving the building. It would insure that an inappropriate structure would not be erected in the historic Court House environment.

To say the least, we now find ourselves at a moment in history where our choices will directly impact the community for years to come. We can dedicate ourselves to protecting and strengthening the “roots” of this 186 year old town, or disregarding that which has come before us, which will surely dishearten the many people who truly care for the preservation of these unique, incomparable structures.

I believe that, when responsible people realize something is wrong, they must be compelled to fix and rectify it. Perhaps if more residents share this conviction, we wouldn't have lost so many historic and meaningful structures already.

My mom always says, “If you start something, see it through and finish it.” For me, the history of this community has become my passion- driving me, pushing me, sharpening my character and integrity, and consuming hours and hours of time and effort that I wouldn't dedicate to anything else. I believe that it's our job now, as residents, to reestablish that sense of tradition and dignity that comes alive with historic preservation. I am committed, as I hope each of you are, to finding the necessary solutions to these pressing issues of preserving and protecting the few remaining buildings of historical significance right here in Yorkville, and especially, the old Jail and Sheriff's Residence.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you. I look forward to your feedback soon.

Best Wishes,

Thomas Milschewski

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Yorkville Then and Now

Yorkvillehistory1836@gmail.com

**KENDALL COUNTY
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MARCH 18, 2019**

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)
John J Rodemus	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]