

**KENDALL COUNTY
Historic Preservation Commission
Historic Preservation Organization Meeting
Pickerill Estate House
Pickerill-Pigot Forest Preserve
6350A Minkler Road
Yorkville, IL 60560
6:00 p.m.
July 15, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jeff Wehrli called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Eric Bernacki (Vice Chair), (Left at 6:58 p.m.), Kristine Heiman (Secretary), Marty Shanahan, and Jeff Wehrli (Chairman)

Absent: Elizabeth Flowers

Also Present: Matt Asselmeier, Wanda A. Rolf, Jacquie Purcell, Levi Gotte, Roger Matile, Ted Clauser, Jr, Anne Sears, Ken Donart, Kelvin Johnson, Sarah Skili, Ben Moe, Kathy Kelso, Ron Kelso, Jane Burke, Tina Beaird, Susan Kritzberg, Johanna Byram, Lisa Wolancivich, and Sharon Lowy

WELCOMING REMARKS

Jeff Wehrli, Kendall County Historic Preservation Commission Chairman, welcomed the attendees and asked each guest to speak about themselves and which historical organization they represented. Each attendee introduced themselves and briefly spoke about their historic organization.

Chairman Wehrli spoke about scenic roads and asked the attendees to think about the definition of a scenic road or scenic view; this would be discussed later in the meeting.

PRESENTATION ON THE CORNER'S OFFICE REGARDING THE BRISTOL BURYING GROUND AND THE PROCEDURE IF A CEMETERY IS FOUND ON A FARM

Jacquie Purcell, Kendall County Coroner, and Levi Gotte, Chief Deputy Coroner, spoke about the Bristol Burial Grounds and what they have found. There was a construction crew at The Hiding Spot Park, replacing a water main, and the construction crew came across bones. They immediately called the police. The police looked at the bones and called the Coroners' Office. Levi Gotte went to the scene and identified them as human bones. Mr. Gotte called Forensic Anthropologist Dr. Anne Grauer from Loyola University.

Coroner Purcell was out of town at the time but received a phone call from Mr. Gotte regarding the bones that were found. Coroner Purcell called the Mayor of Yorkville and it wasn't long before they knew the bones were from a burial ground that was moved to Elmwood. The people who moved the burial ground moved all the headstones but not all the bodies. This made it difficult to identify the remains. Some of the people in the area knew about the burial ground. There were many different agencies investigating the scene.

Coroner Purcell returned to Yorkville and started an investigation. Coroner Purcell provided slides of the bones they found. Each bone found was labeled. Coroner Purcell identified the bones as the skull, spines, tibias, mandibles, ribs, and other bone fragments. They also found leather, nails, and hinges that were probably from the casket.

By analyzing the remains and known burials at the cemetery, the forensic anthropologist matched the remains to Lucy Crater born December 5, 1828, and died September 13, 1848.

Levi Gotte did a tremendous amount of research on Lucy Crater's family tree, that determined she was the child of Abraham Crater and Margaret Crater. The County did not require people to keep birth and death records at the time, but they did keep marriage records. They were one (1) of the first few families that settled in the area. Unfortunately, many young people died from diseases such as Scarlet Fever and were buried locally. Many people moved away to different parts of Illinois and Iowa. Through historic records, Mr. Gotte was able to find Katherine Crater, sister of Lucy Crater. Katherine Crater married into the Beecher family; they had twelve (12) children.

They were able to find one hundred ninety-four (194) individuals from the Beecher family.

In the 1920s some bodies were moved unidentified to Elmwood.

Most living decedents did not want to speak about it or informed the County to do whatever they wanted with the remains.

There is a possibility of finding more burials but residents do not want their properties to be dug up. Future sales of homes may have to disclose the burial ground.

Chairman Wehrli asked how long it took before they knew this was a burial site and not a crime scene. Coroner Purcell stated the Forensic Pathologist was able to identify it was a burial site quickly.

Levi Gotte stated that Elmwood Cemetery is donating a plot for Lucy Crater and she will be interred there with her family.

Coroner Purcell thanked the Kendall County Historical Society for their work on the project.

Chairman Wehrli thanked Coroner Purcell and Levi Gotte for attending the meeting and explaining how the process works when someone finds a cemetery.

DISCUSSION OF CEMETERIES

Chairman Wehrli spoke about the fact that many farm families had dedicated burial plots for members of their family. However, if the farm was sold, there would be no record of the people that were supposed to be buried there, or who was buried there previously. Chairman Wehrli would like to have a list of homes that have a notation on them identifying them as burial grounds.

Chairman Wehrli asked Coroner Purcell if she would have to be involved in a historical dig if human bones were found. She said that only if the bodies were inadvertently disturbed. If the authorities were moving people from one (1) cemetery to another she would not be involved. Chairman Wehrli stated, and Lisa Wolancevich, Kendall County Historical Society, agreed that the Bristol Burial Ground should be memorialized.

Roger Matile said that he would provide the Commission with his list of cemeteries.

PRESENTATION ON THE HISTORY OF PICKERILL-PIGOT FOREST PRESERVE

Jeff Wehrli spoke about the history of the Pickerill-Pigott house. The process of opening the Pickerill-Pigott Forest Preserve and estate house in Yorkville has been years in the making. The home can be reserved as an event venue or meeting space. The Pickerill-Pigott house is open for weddings, parties, reunions or meetings.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Sarah Skilton, with Oswego Heritage Foundation, spoke about The Plainfield Public Library and stated that they have put a tremendous amount of information available online. This included newspapers, books, and maps. The library contracted with Crowley Digitizing. The library shipped eighteen (18) years of yearbook information. All four (4) of the Plainfield High Schools love the way the yearbooks were formatted. Tina Beaird with The Plainfield Historical Society stated that The Plainfield Library is preparing to celebrate its fiftieth (50th) anniversary this year.

Currently there is a pedestrian bridge where people can access Waubonsie Creek. There is also an outdoor theater.

Ted Clauser, with the Oswegoland Heritage Association, stated they were working on ways they were going to celebrate the seventy fifth (75th) anniversary of the Wagon Train. Mr. Clauser is currently researching this with Roger Matile.

Anne Sears, with The Plano Historical Society, stated they are working on restoring the 1886 Plano Reaper and would like to have it ready for the Homecoming Parade 2024.

Member Bernacki left at this time (6:58 p.m.).

Roger Matile, Director of the Little White Museum, spoke about the celebration of the one hundred seventy-fifth (175th) birthday of The Little White School Museum, first a Methodist church, then an elementary school, and now Little White School Museum. Initially, it was thought that the church was completed in 1854. Mr. Matile stated it was not known when the exact year the church was completed until a letter came across from a woman related to the Walker family who wrote a letter to her family in Belcher County, Massachusetts, that the Methodist Church was completed and they would have services. The letter was dated 1850. In those days a church was not dedicated until it was completely debt free. Mr. Matile also spoke about the seventy fifth (75th) anniversary of the Park District, which was established in 1950. Mr. Matile stated, that at the time of restoration on the Little White School Museum, they found out it had been moved. The museum was completely taken apart and put back together. It is believed that it came from the Plainfield area.

Susan Kritzberg, President of Chapel on the Green, thanked Kendall County for awarding her a plaque on her research of the underground railroad and historic preservation. Ms. Kritzberg explained that Chapel on the Green was used as a safe haven for freedom seekers as part of the underground railroad. Ms. Kritzberg spoke about the wonderful wedding coordinator at the chapel. People from all over Northern Illinois are coming to the Chapel to get married. Ms. Kritzberg also mentioned that they are in the process of applying for an Illinois State Historic Marker which will be a great opportunity to bring attention to the community on the State level as well as providing information regarding the underground railroad.

Jane Burke, Naperville Preservation Society, spoke about applying for landmark status for Biedelman Furniture Store in Downtown Naperville. It has been there for five (5) generations and Beidelman Furniture is the oldest business in DuPage County, and the oldest furniture business in Illinois. Ms. Burke spoke about a tour of several mid-century modern houses in the next month.

Lisa Wolancevich, Kendall County Historical Society, assisted with identifying the recent Bristol Burial Ground that was found by construction workers. Ms. Wolancevich spoke about restoring Seward Town Hall. They are accepting donations for the restoration. Johanna Byram and Lisa Wolancevich did a presentation on Juneteenth with the help of Roger Matile, who informed them that Nathan Hughes, fellow Oswegoan, was at the first Juneteenth in Texas, proclaiming that all slaves are free. Ms. Wolancevich also thanked the County for awarding her a plaque for her work with the historical society.

DISCUSSION OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Chairman Wehrli spoke about future meetings. He spoke about meeting at different historic places. Chairman Wehrli stated that another group meeting probably would occur in February of 2025. He asked the attendees if they had any ideas for future meetings.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Wehrli mentioned that in the beginning of the meeting he asked the attendees what defined a scenic road or historic road. Mr. Matile answered that he wrote newspaper columns in the past regarding scenic roads in autumn and will share the information with Chairman Wehrli. Mr. Matile mentioned Route 25 in Oswego by the river, Fox Road in Yorkville, and Van Emmon Road is always spectacular. Chairman Wehrli spoke about Reservation Road being very scenic.

Lisa Wolancevich, with Kendall County Historic Preservation spoke about Silver Springs State Park having been a Tribune Farm back in the 1930's.

Chairman Wehrli spoke about driving on the roads and finding the historic or scenic roads.

Susan Kritzberg mentioned the National Scenic Byway program's website that talks about the criteria to be designated as a National Scenic Byway. A byway must meet the criteria for at least one (1) of six (6) "intrinsic qualities" archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic. The features contributing to the distinctive characteristics of the corridor's intrinsic quality are recognized throughout the region and are considered regionally significant.

Mr. Matile asked, once the County has the scenic routes resolved, would it be possible to put an overlay on the County highway map. Chairman Wehrli stated yes. They had an overlay of scenic roads on the County highway map in 2000.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT


Member Shanahan made a motion, seconded by Member Heiman, to adjourn. With a voice vote of four (4) ayes, the motion carried. The Historic Preservation Commission adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Wanda A. Rolf
Administrative Assistant

Enc.

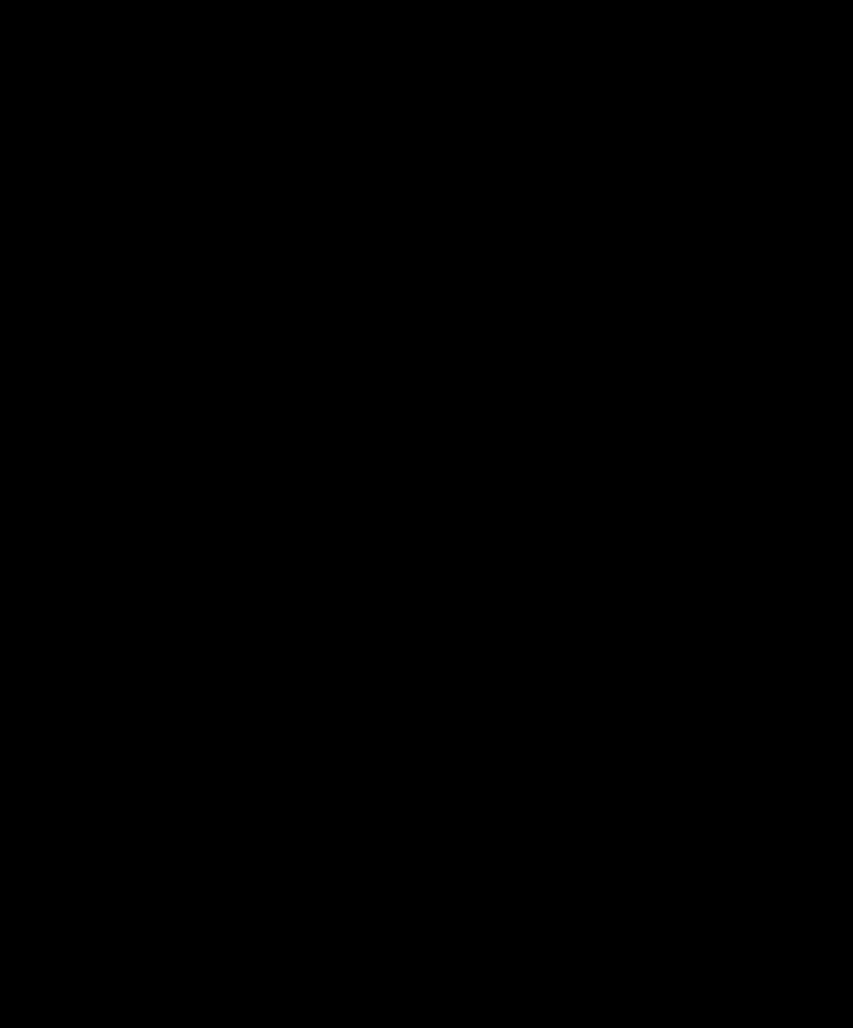
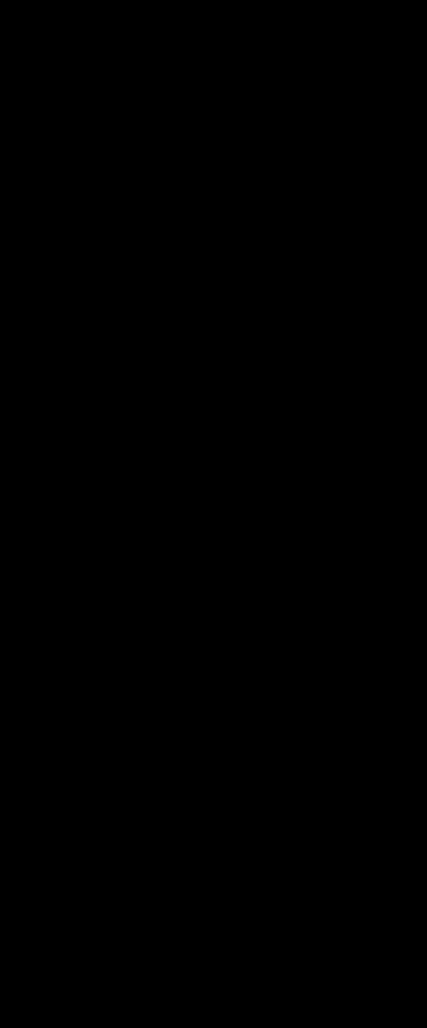
**KENDALL COUNTY
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
JULY 15, 2024**

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)
✓ Ron A. Mafie		
✓ Ted Clauser, Jr.		
✓ Anne Deas		
✓ Ken Donart		
✓ Kelvin Johnson		
✓ SARAH Skici		
✓ Ben Moe		
✓ Kathy Kelso Ron Kelso		

**KENDALL COUNTY
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
JULY 15, 2024**

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)
✓ Jane Burke		
✓ Jacquie Purcell		
✓ Tina Beard		
✓ Susan Kitzberg		
✓ Johanna Byram		
✓ <i>[Signature]</i>		
✓ Sharon Lowry		