

## **VILLAGE OF GRAFTON**

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

**MARCH 17, 2009**

The Historic Preservation Commission meeting was called to order at 6:37 p.m. by Chair Ralph Zaun.

Commission members present: Trustee Jim Grant, Sheldon Sepstead, Norb Studelska, Sr., Ralph Zaun

Absent: Trustee David Liss, Matt Zipter, Judy Baer

Staff/Officials present: Mary Kay Buratto, AICP

Others present: Melissa Schmitz (111 W. Bridge Street)

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the February 25, 2009 were not available for consideration.

#### **HEAR PERSONS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD**

There were none.

#### **UPDATE ON TEMPORARY HISTORY MUSEUM**

Chair Ralph Zaun distributed three aerial photographs of the Tecumseh Products site that were several years old. He wanted to establish that there were in fact several public buildings, including the Department of Public Works site and the Municipal Pool within a few blocks. He expressed his concern, and fear, that without redevelopment the site would become vacant and would be a problem for the neighborhood and community with the possibility of vandalism and lack of upkeep. He referred to the Tecumseh site as a future multi-purpose site that could be designated as The Hub. Chair Zaun described the many public and private uses that could coexist on the site.

Trustee Grant stated that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) needs to find a donor to donate the building for a museum and artifact storage facility and then other uses could be explored. He believes that the land may be more valuable than the building and the HPC should work with Grafton's economic development group, EDGE, to find a buyer for the building. Trustee Grant also suggested that while the front of the site and the building could be used for a museum, the remainder of the building and/or site could be ideal for elderly housing.

Chair Zaun stated that the cost to tear down the building could be substantial. He also listed several uses for the building in addition to the museum and suggested that this building, The Hub, could become Grafton's version of Dearborn Village in Michigan. He further suggested that the HPC could collaborate with the County Historical Society to loan artifacts to each other and that historic farm implements could be displayed in front of the museum portion of the building. He believes that the Tecumseh Products Building

is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and he thought that public works dollars could help support a museum at the site.

Trustee Grant expressed his belief that a fundraising committee needs to be formed, as was done for the U.S.S Liberty Memorial Public Library, to get this idea for a museum moving forward. He reiterated that the Village does not have public dollars to put toward this use, at this time, and likely would not have funding for the foreseeable future. He offered the following suggestions to the members: 1) set up a corporation for donations, 2) establish giving levels, 3) identify local people who are passionate about the idea and are willing to donate the time to serve and, 4) hire a professional fund raiser and, 5) hire a professional to do a feasibility study of the building in light of the potential uses for it and for the site.

Commissioners then created the following “to-do” list for tasks to be done immediately: 1) Form a private corporation for the museum, 2) assemble a core group of people representative of all who might use the facility for purposes in addition to a history museum, 3) appoint a liaison from the HPC to the private corporation, 4) create the 501c3 and, 5) hire a professional fund raiser. Melissa Schmitz offered to begin working on item number 2. Trustee Grant suggested contacting David Eberhardt to measure his interest in possibly spearheading the efforts.

Commissioners agreed that this approach raises the museum idea to the level it deserves and removes from the equation, at least on a temporary basis, the need for public dollars as seed money. This approach also leaves the HPC to solicit artifacts and engage in the other goals and objectives of their adopted plan.

### **501- c3 STATUS**

Planner Mary Kay Buratto informed Commissioners that in her role as staff liaison to the Commission, she would not be able to work on preparing the 501c3 documentation. She suggested that the members consider forming a subcommittee to work on the documentation or to find a local attorney who would be willing to donate the time to put the application together.

Commissioners agreed that the first step is to form a not-for-profit organization and to then begin filing for the 501c3. Commissioners also wondered if the Historic Preservation Commission itself could be incorporated. Planner Buratto was directed to research the question and to contact local attorneys to find one who might be willing to prepare both the incorporation documents and the 501c3 filing.

### **DISCUSS PLANS FOR 2009 WALK OF FAME CEREMONY**

Planner Buratto distributed a copy of the list of nominees prepared by Angela Mack from the committee established to form recommendations. The top two names were The Mississippi Sheiks and Ida Mae Cox. The election of these performers will be placed on the agenda for the April 15, 2009, HPC meeting.

## **REVIEW LIST OF CANDIDATE PROPERTIES FOR HISTORIC DESIGNATION**

Moved by Commissioner Sepstead, seconded by Commissioner Studelska, to table this item until the April 15, 2009 meeting. Approved unanimously.

## **DISCUSSION OF PROMOTING THE GREEN BAY TRAIL**

Commissioner Sheldon Sepstead stated that better signage is needed downtown to identify the route of the Green Bay Ethnic Trail. Many of the buildings along the route in Downtown Grafton are also historic buildings. The trail is marked as you enter the Village at the north and south ends, but because the trail shifts from Wisconsin Avenue to 12th Avenue for about two blocks with no notification as it does, that bikers will go the wrong way unaware of their mistake. Commissioner Sepstead also believes that somewhere in the Paramount Plaza there should be a sign or plaque identifying that the Green Bay Ethnic Trail traverses the Plaza and is as important a part of Grafton History as the New York Recording Laboratories and other sites.

After a brief discussion, Commissioners decided that identification and a short history of the Trail could be included in the Paramount Plaza Kiosk and in the Walking Tour Brochures. Chair Zaun directed Planner Buratto to check with the State Historical Society to determine which agency or group maintains the Trail and promotes it. He further suggested that Commissioners research the importance of the Trail and that consideration should be given to budgeting money for 2010 to promote the Trail's connection in Grafton. Members also directed Planner Buratto to speak with Angela Mack about preparing a brief statement about the importance of the Green Bay Trail for review at the next HPC meeting.

## **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **SET DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 2009 at 6:30 p.m., in the upper level Committee Room.

## **ADJOURN**

Motion by Commissioner Sepstead, seconded by Trustee Grant to adjourn at 7:49 p.m. Approved unanimously.