

VILLAGE OF GRAFTON

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 20, 2012

The Historic Preservation Commission meeting was called to order by Chair David Liss at 5:07 p.m.

HPC Members present: Trustee David Liss, Sue Hass, Bill Hass, Norbert Studelska, Sr., Matt Zipter, Sheldon Sepstead, and Trustee David Antoine (arriving at 5:25 p.m.)

Absent: Commissioner Ted Warwick

Staff/Officials present: Michael A. Rambousek, Director of Planning and Development

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Sepstead, seconded by Commissioner Zipter, to approve the minutes of the April 21, 2011 Historic Preservation Commission as submitted. Approved unanimously.

HEAR PERSONS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD

None

UPDATE ON THE WALK OF FAME CEREMONY AND INDUCTEES THAT WAS HELD FOR 2012

Chair Liss provided a summary of the Paramount Plaza Walk of Fame ceremony that was held on September 8, 2012 at the Paramount Blues Festival. He stated that approximately 30 people were in attendance for the presentation regarding the two inductees: Jelly Roll Morton and Fletcher Henderson. He stated that Sue Hass gave the presentation for Jelly Roll Morton and Bill Hass gave the presentation for Fletcher Henderson. Chair Liss added that everything went very well regarding the presentations except that the sound engineer/operator at the festival would not play the compact disc that included songs from each artist. Chair Liss did not know why this individual was unwilling to play the music.

Director Rambousek asked what could be done so the situation does not occur next year.

Chair Liss replied that the compact disc/music will have to get in the hands of the one of the two lead festival operators, Peter or Chris Raymond, a few days prior to the ceremony. He indicated that he could not find one of the lead operators on Saturday morning.

Matt Zipter asked how the inductees are selected each year for the walk of fame.

Chair Liss indicated that a list with the order of selection for the inductees was created by Alex Vander Tuuk and Angie Mack and was approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. Two inductees are provided for each year.

A brief discussion then ensued regarding the number of famous artists that recorded in Grafton in the 1920's for Paramount Records.

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE GRAFTON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE

Director Rambousek stated that the Historic Preservation Commission needs to discuss its purpose, future goals and objectives, and structure over the span of the next few meetings. He stated that first and foremost the Commission needs to agree on the amount of meetings held annually whether it is two, three, or four meetings. He mentioned that the plan to consolidate this Commission with the Public Arts Board is no longer on the table.

Chair Liss stated that the Public Arts Board did not understand how Historic Preservation fit within the context of what they wanted to do as a committee.

Director Rambousek continued to state that because consolidation is no longer on the table, this Commission needs to establish its purpose. If this Commission want to meet on a reactionary basis when historic preservation applications are submitted to the Village that is fine, but if this Commission wants to do something beyond that then the Commission needs to continue to have this item as a discussion point on the agenda.

Sheldon Sepstead mentioned that his experience over the years with the Historic Preservation Commission has helped him to understand that the most significant issue is the reluctance by homeowners and building owners to participate in the local historic designation program. He believes that this lack of participation is due to the restrictions that the historic designation triggers, which causes more bureaucracy and red tape. If someone wants to simply replace their windows or doors to upgrade the appearance of their home, they no longer have control of how it is going to look. That bothers a lot of people and as a result they do not participate.

Sue Hass suggested that the historic preservation provisions in the Village of Grafton Municipal Code be looked at to see if the restrictions could be lessened to help the issue that Commissioner Sepstead has brought up.

Norbert Studelska agreed that this is a major issue that limits participation, but some standards regarding historic preservation still need to be upheld.

Bill Hass indicated that it would be acceptable for the Historic Preservation Commission to meet once every 6 months and if an issue or historic designation application is submitted, the Commission could meet on call for those immediate matters.

Director Rambousek indicated that he agreed with Commissioner Hass' suggestion about meeting once every 6 months for a scheduled meeting and then on call for immediate issues.

Trustee David Antoine arrived at the meeting at this time.

The members of the Historic Preservation Commission agreed by acclamation to meet for a scheduled meeting once every 6 months and on call for immediate issues such as a pending application for historic designation of a building or structure.

Sue Hass then asked about the previous discussions about finding a museum for historical artifacts and information associated with the Village of Grafton.

Chair Liss stated that is the very reason the idea of this Commission separating from the Village of Grafton (government) was developed. The separation of the Historic Preservation Commission as a separate non-for-profit entity would allow the Commission to seek donations. It would create a more acceptable mechanism for donations from the general public because most people will not donate money to a governmental body because they feel the taxes they pay are enough.

Sue Hass indicated that she believes the Village is required by State of Wisconsin Statute to have a Historic Preservation Commission.

Director Rambousek stated that he would look at that statutory requirement again. He believed that Commissioner Haas is correct, but he believes the statutes do not specifically state whether or not this historic preservation entity needs to be a public or private entity. He believes it is possible that the Village of Grafton could designate a public or private entity as the official historic preservation caretaker for the Village.

Chair Liss stated that he also believed that to be correct. He mentioned the biggest issue is to find money for a museum and curator because the Village is already losing valuable historic items such as Tecumseh engines that were manufactured in Grafton.

Bill Hass mentioned that Port Washington has a Historic Preservation Commission that has been raising significant amounts of money.

Chair Liss stated that they received a substantial donation from one donor and that is really all you need to get started. Some of it is just luck.

Chair Liss stated that there are still other projects that the Commission could work on possibly with students or interviews with older residents.

Norbert Studelska mentioned some of the interviews he has done over the years.

Sue Hass mentioned she would like to do that and maybe some chats could be held at the library with older residents about historic issues.

Chair Liss indicated that the library displayed the portraits from the restoration project the two female students did last year and now the portraits need a permanent home. He would like to display them permanently in the library or Village Hall for the general public to see. The two students have given him all of these portraits on a compact disc. They simply asked that their names be displayed in a very small way if these portraits are every displayed.

Director Rambousek stated that he would check into the viability of a public location for the portraits. He added that maybe these portraits could be placed on the Village website as well as a separate page so see if people can identify any one.

The Historic Preservation Commission agreed to meet twice next year to continue these discussions further.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

None

ADJOURN

Motion by Trustee Antoine, seconded by Commissioner Zipter, to adjourn at 6:22 p.m. Approved unanimously.