

VILLAGE OF GRAFTON

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 21, 2009

The Historic Preservation Commission meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Zaun.

Commission members present: Trustee Jim Grant, Trustee David Liss, Sheldon Shepstead, Norb Studelska, Sr., Ralph Zaun, Matt Zipter and Judy Baer

Staff/Officials present: Mary Kay Buratto, AICP

Others present: Melissa Schmitz (111 W. Bridge Street), David Eberhardt, 1826 17th Avenue, John Arentz (Grafton Fire Department)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Members asked that the reference to WWI on page 3 of the minutes be changed to WWII.

Motion by Commissioner Sepstead, Seconded by Trustee Liss to approve the minutes of the July 30, 2008 Historic Preservation Commission as corrected. Approved unanimously.

HEAR PERSONS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD

None.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE CONSIDERATION OF A TEMPORARY HISTORY MUSEUM AND ARTIFACT STORAGE FACILITY

Chair Zaun presented Commissioners with a possible location for a museum and storage facility for artifacts. He has researched the Tecumseh Products building, located at 900 North Street and believes that it has great potential for these as well as for other uses that would fill existing community needs.

Mr. Eberhardt, former operations manager of Tecumseh Products, described the building and provided specific information on the different types and sizes of space both inside and outside the building. The building is located on 30 acres of land, including the drainage pond, and incorporates 345,000 feet of floor space. Included is 30,000 to 40,000 square feet of office space at the front of the building. The office space is flexible and uses temporary partitions that change to meet whatever current space needs might be.

Chair Zaun commented that the Village has many needs that could be satisfied by a building such as this and there is a tremendous amount of Grafton history that could be housed in a museum. The museum would only take up a portion of the total space, but the remaining space could be used to provide needed space for Village departments, the School District and performance space for the various local music venues, such as

the Grafton Blues Association and GALA. Chair Zaun is currently in discussion with a manufacturing firm in the Waukesha area that is interested in using a portion of the Tecumseh Products building on a temporary basis until they can find a permanent location. He has also spoken with the Grafton School District and they have shown great interest in part of the space for a stand-alone kindergarten. Chair Zaun has learned from Fire Chief Harvey that he is looking for space to store and display his antique fire engine and is also interested in the possibilities that the Tecumseh Products site offers.

Mr. Eberhardt stated that Tecumseh is holding off on any decision regarding the disposition of the building until they hear if the Commission or the Village is interested in the facility. They will remain in the plant until June, to offer after-market service to customers.

Trustee Grant suggested that the first step is to create a not-for-profit corporation to study various locations for a museum and storage facility, including the Tecumseh Products building.

Planner Buratto suggested that Chair Zaun meet with Director of Planning and Development Rambousek to discuss what could be done to help the Waukesha firm open a facility in Grafton. She also suggested that the HPC form a 501c3 corporation and conduct a feasibility study on the Tecumseh site.

Dave Eberhardt asked “where do we go next?” to move this idea forward.

Commissioner Baer strongly suggested that the Commission contact existing museums in Wisconsin to research the struggles they went through getting started and their struggles maintaining their facilities and drawing visitors. She also commented that a building that holds only historic industrial equipment will not on its own attract visitors. The artifacts and programs in a museum must be of the type that would draw great interest and bring in visitors from all over the region and beyond.

Trustee Grant suggested incorporating music and possibly performance space for North Shore Academy of the Arts.

Commissioners also reminded themselves of the new powers and duties of the HPC which were adopted as changes to the municipal ordinance by the Village Board last year. By virtue of those changes, and in keeping with the adopted HPC plan, the Commission is obligated to move forward on collecting, displaying and housing historic artifacts from Grafton’s history and to educating the public on the history of Grafton.

DISCUSSION OF PLANS FOR THE GRAFTON HOTEL

Commissioner Zipter stated that he requested that this item be placed on the agenda for discussion. He would like to know what plans are in place for the Grafton Hotel building and whether or not the HPC should be involved, due to the historic nature of the building and the site. Commissioner Zipter stated that he drives by the building every day and wonders if it is on the list of historic sites identified for inclusion on the list of

Historic properties. He wondered if the Hotel has gone by the wayside relative to its status.

Trustee Grant informed Commissioners that the property is under active discussion by the Village Board and the Community Development Authority (CDA) and that the Village is actively working on the future of the site.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

The members requested that the following items be placed on the next agenda:

- 1) Museum Update;
- 2) 501c3 status;
- 3) Planning the 2009 Induction Ceremony; and,
- 4) Promoting the Green Bay Ethnic Trail.

The Commissioners asked Planner Buratto to prepare a list of tasks that need to be completed to get to a museum opening.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

None

SET DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 18, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

Motion by Trustee Grant, seconded by Commissioner Baer to adjourn at 8:35 p.m. Approved unanimously.