

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Time and Date: Wednesday, September 27, 2017, at 4:00 p.m. in the Board Room of Wausau City Hall

Members Present: Gary Gisselman (C), Mary Forer, Kevin Crooks, David Burke, David Oberbeck, Patty Grimm, Linda Tryczak,

Others Present: Mayor Robert Mielke, Brad Lenz, Brad Sippel, Christine Martens, Joe DeRose, Traci Schnell, Deb Ryan.

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the *Wausau Daily Herald* in the proper manner.

Chairperson Gisselman called the meeting to order at approximately 4:00 p.m. stating that a quorum was present.

Public Informational Meeting for Historical and Architectural Resources Resurvey

Gisselman noted that there was a news release for this informational meeting. Everyone present introduced themselves.

Lenz reminded the commission that the City received a grant through the State to update the survey, and that this meeting was part of the process. He said the process started by sending out an RFP and finding a historic consultant.

DeRose, from the Wisconsin Historical Society, introduced himself and the role of his office. He said that Wausau is a Certified Local Government and explained what that means. He talked about the upcoming annual conference.

DeRose talked about the grant and the survey process. He said the grant money comes from the National Park Service so they are the ones driving the project. He said the survey is done to identify properties that are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. DeRose said properties need to be at least 50 years old and reasonably intact, and they have to be significant. He said the consultant will look at properties that are least 40 years old, or up until the late 1970's.

DeRose gave background information on the Historical Society and its building in Madison. He said the archives contain large map and newspaper collections. He said they work closely with many schools and local historic societies.

DeRose discussed the current survey of Wausau from 1984. He said the consultant will not look at things that are already listed on the National Register. He said they will look at different types of buildings including commercial, religious, educational, industrial, and governmental. He said the tax credits will be changing next year and suggested new projects should come into their office before July.

DeRose continued by discussing the survey process that will be undertaken by the consultant, including researching old maps, building permits, and city directories. He said this information will go into the State's database, which he then previewed. The survey can be used as a planning tool, in addition to identifying properties eligible for the National Register. He said photos will be taken and maps can be generated showing locations. He said historic resources can be adapted to local plans, such as street projects, development areas, or cell towers.

DeRose said the National Register is not a regulatory program. He said it is largely honorific for homeowners. Wisconsin has economic incentives for properties that are listed, or eligible, for the National Register. He gave a brief explanation of the tax credit programs, including the federal program for income-producing properties.

DeRose said that next summer, after the survey work is done, another meeting will be held to present the results. He said the City can contact properties owners to invite to the meeting to hear about tax credits. He said grants are available for nominations to the register.

Schnell, from Heritage Research, introduced herself and said she will be taking pictures of the city. She said she will take pictures of already-listed properties that are missing pictures in the State database, but otherwise will focus on properties that are not listed. She encouraged anyone to ask questions about properties or to correct errors in the previous survey or database. She said the primary themes to be updated from the last survey will be architects and architecture. New themes to be added may be Defense Housing, pre-fab housing, or other things that may be found.

Oberbeck asked about larger commercial developments and curtain wall construction done in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Schnell said that she will be looking at it. Oberbeck said there is a manufactured home on the southeast side on Ethel Street.

Gisselman asked if the whole city will be surveyed. Schnell yes said. Oberbeck asked if it is just within city limits, which Schnell also confirmed.

Martens suggested social media sites to announce that the consultant will be walking around; it could also lead people to share historic information.

Schnell said that she will stay on the street or sidewalk, and will not go down private driveways, so people should let her know about historic things that are not visible from the street.

Ryan said she informed online groups about this survey. She said within her west side neighborhood, there are homeowners with original plans of their historic homes. Schnell said that this would be useful especially if the property is survey-able, either architecturally or historically. Discussion followed on historic blueprints that may be available, particularly for houses by Eschweiler.

Gisselman said that the commission is looking forward to the work being done because there is a lot of history to highlight and preserve. DeRose said that it may be surprising what's changed in the 30 years since the last survey.

Ryan asked if new siding or similar alterations can affect whether a property is historic. Schnell said that if a property is significant because of its history, alterations are not as important. DeRose said that something is historic because of an event, a person, or an architectural style. If something is significant because of architectural style, then it shouldn't have replacement siding, and be pretty pristine. For historic events and people, the building should still be recognizable. Schnell added she may still survey some properties that are unique even after some updates.

Gisselman thanked Schnell and DeRose for attending. Gisselman updated the committee on upcoming historic tours.

Adjournment.

Grimm motioned to adjourn. Tryczak seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m.