

EAU CLAIRE LANDMARKS COMMISSION

Meeting of June 2, 2014

Members Present: Katrinka Bourne, Carrie Ronnander, Ken Ziehr, Dave Strobel, Jim Seymour

Members Absent: Jane Seymour Kunick, Patrick Kurtenbach

Minutes. The minutes of the May 5, 2014, meeting were approved as written.

The meeting was chaired by Katrinka Bourne and called to order at 4:30 p.m.

- 1. Discussion and Comment of High Bridge Rails to Trails Project.** The Commission reviewed a report prepared by Mead and Hunt relating to the proposed rails to trails project proposed for the former Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway Bridge (the high bridge) for pedestrian and bicycle use. The bridge is located to the north of the Madison Street Bridge. The City received a grant to deck the bridge, install railings, install three observation platforms, and install lighting. Because federal funding is involved, an environmental review is required. One of the areas considered is the historic significance of the bridge and if deemed significant, the effect of the proposed work must be evaluated.

The research completed by Mead and Hunt concluded that the bridge is eligible for the National Register. Based on this finding, Mead and Hunt then reviewed the proposed project and they are recommending a finding that the rails to trails project will not have an adverse effect on the bridge. Mead and Hunt noted that the S-shaped bridge over the Eau Claire River was also determined to be eligible for the National Register and was converted into a pedestrian/bicycle bridge using very similar designs for the decking, railings, and lighting.

The Commission noted that the report prepared by Mead and Hunt was well done.

ACTION TAKEN: Carrie Ronnander moved that the Commission agree with the finding of Mead and Hunt that the proposed rails to trails project for the high bridge would have no adverse effect on the historic qualities of the bridge. Dave Strobel seconded the motion. All votes were in favor. Motion carried.

- 2. Overview of Historic Surveys being completed by UWEC Students.** Pat Ivory provided an overview of the research completed by UWEC Public History students. The students are required to research the history of one house as part of their coursework for their Public History class. The areas studied have focused in the Randall Park Neighborhood to the northeast of Lake Street and Fifth Avenue and to the southwest of West Grand Avenue and Fifth Avenue. Both of these areas are located outside of the existing National Register District and local Landmark District. Pat noted that the historical information obtained from the research work has been very good.

The Commission discussed the research work and questioned if this information could be made more readily available to the property owners and general public. Pat indicated that he would discuss this further with Dr. John Mann.

3. Update on Landmark Activities and Properties.

- A. Report from the Historic Preservation Foundation.** Pat Kurtenbach was not present at the meeting to present a report.
- B. Status of Future Local Landmark Designations.** The Commission discussed the status of considering future local landmark designations of the properties listed on the National Register. At previous meetings, the Commission discussed recent contacts with the owners of 1819 Lyndale Avenue, 1129 Bellevue Avenue, 319 South Barstow Street, 302-10 West Grand Avenue, and 1615 State Street.

The Commission also discussed the State Theatre building located at 312 Eau Claire Street, which is located within the Confluence National Register District. The Commission indicated that they should compile the historical information on the building from the National Register nomination (and any information from the Minnesota Archives) and review this information at the next meeting to make a preliminary decision as to whether they wish to consider local landmark designation in the future. Based on this decision, then consider arranging a meeting with the building owners to discuss the local designation and answer questions. The Commission felt that it would be beneficial to have a staff person from the State Historical Society attend this meeting to answer questions regarding the State and federal tax credit program. They discussed the possibility of scheduling this meeting in September.

- C. Update on Preservation Month Activities.** Pat Ivory updated the Commission on the Commission's Preservation Month activities that were held in May which included: a presentation from Jen Davel, Preservation Architect for the Wisconsin Historical Society, regarding the rehabilitation tax credit program (approximately 35 people attended), the landmark designation of 212 McKinley Avenue, and a City Council Preservation Month proclamation. (Carrie Ronnander left the meeting.)
- D. Comprehensive Plan Update.** Pat Ivory provided an overview of the process planned to update the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. Pat noted that the citizen's advisory committee would be created and their first meeting will be in September. A representative from the Landmarks Commission will be needed to serve on the committee.
- E. Future Agenda Items.** The Commission discussed topics for future meetings including: a review of the report to the City Manager regarding the Third Ward opt-out properties, and getting rehabilitation tax credit information to the people owning National Register properties.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Submitted by,

Patrick Kurtenbach, Secretary