



Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board
A Certified Local Government (CLG)
Program representing four governing bodies:

City of Billings
City of Laurel

Yellowstone County
Crow Tribe

MEETING MINUTES

November 17, 2020

Via Zoom

2825 3rd Avenue North

Members Present – Zachary Garhart, Becky Jeter, Keith Edgerton, and Kevin Nelson

Members Absent – Blain Fandrich, Evan Bruce, and Sue Mueller

Staff Present –Lora Mattox, Lauren Hunley and Cecelia Gravinsky

Others Present –

Minutes – Keith motioned, seconded by Becky to approve the minutes of the August meeting. Motion approved.

Public Comment – No public comment.

Old Business:

MRM-Granny’s Attic Housing Tax Credit Project Update: MRM was invited to submit a full application for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program and was successful in receiving \$6.4 million in funds. The next steps for MRM is to raise the local match for these funds, the match is \$6.4 million of which \$1 million has been raised. If they are successful and they move forward with the demolition of the Yegen Block, they will be required to work with the board to determine an appropriate mitigation for the loss of this contributing building in the middle of the Old Town Historic District. A suggestion was forwarded to MRM to look at retaining the corner section of the building to act as an interpretive location for historic district and Yegen buildings. This could include historic photos, public art, etc. The board will wait and see how the project progresses.

New Business:

National Register Nomination Review – Pioneer Park: Lora provided background on this project and how it was developed. When AT&T proposed a cell tower for the top of the Electric Building (Brew Pub/Hooligans), the State Historic Preservation Office recommended that some mitigation was provided for to offset the impact of the tower on the historic building. The board was asked to forward potential projects and the board forwarded: Documentation and GPS location of pictographs/historic art along a section of the Rimrocks or the development of a nomination for one of the 3 oldest large (regional) parks (North, South, Pioneer). The board’s number one project was documenting the Rimrocks, however, AT&T wouldn’t accept that one, they choose Pioneer Park. This was at least 5-years ago due to many roadblocks and delays.

Today however, the board as received the draft nomination for review. Blain had some concerns for the nomination and asked the board to meet to discuss. Unfortunately, he could not attend the meeting but did send an email outlining his concerns. Some of those included:

- Period of Significance should be extended to 1972 when a master plan was completed;
- Many landscape design aspects are gone;
- Design plans by Dorothy Grey are lost or little to no influence of her design left;
- Resources have been updated/altered; and
- If the park is listed on the National Register, it will severely limit the city's ability to make future changes and improvements.

In Blain's opinion, the park nomination lacks merits to be listed. In addition to Blain's comments, the Western Heritage Center had the following comments:

- Should reference that this park was developed with Olmsted ideals (recreation areas);
- Nomination references that Pioneer Park was the first Olmsted style park, not true, South Park was;
- Only had a conversation with Elisabeth DeGrenier in 2017, but no contact since; and
- Agree with Blain about original design vs changes.

Lora states that the board can continue to provide comments on the nomination until December 4th when Lora will send all to John Boughton at the state. Lora stated that parks are always changing and updating, trees and landscaping die, amenities get old and have to be replaced. As far as limiting the city on making changes/updates in the park if listed to the National Register, she disagrees unless the city uses federal funds, the city can make necessary repairs/equipment replacement with public funds.

Keith asks who is responsible for re-working some items in the nomination? It would be the responsibility of the nomination writers with edits/review by John Boughton at SHPO.

Other Business:

Consultant Report:

Cecilia shared the following from the Western Heritage Center:

- Past Roundtable award winner pictures were added to Facebook;
- A&E and Lynelle from Ethnoscience will be contacted to deliver their awards for 2020 and photos taken;
- Editing the oral stories gathered from Bill Dutcher and Virginia Smith;
- Kevin is making photo edits to the McKinley nomination;
- Starting to organize to start the Riverside Park nomination; and
- Continue to answer research requests.

Historic Preservation Officer Report:

Lora reported the following:

- Lora will send out the latest draft of the McKinley nomination to the board; and
- Processed the semi-annual report to SHPO and received reimbursement.

Board Roundtable:

- Kevin Nelson reported the work on Romney Hall at MSU is progressing;
- Keith told the board that MSU-B was going to make it through the semester without having to resort to remote teaching! Also, have hired a new Chancellor;

- Zachary Garhart states that things are slow at the Yellowstone Museum but taking an opportunity to change out the windows in the cabin to energy efficient windows; and
- Lauren states that the WHC will be closing on December 30th to work on changing out exhibits.

Future Agenda Items:

Next YHPB Meeting: TBD

Pioneer Park National Register Nomination (if needed)

MRM Housing Project (if needed)

Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board (YHPB)

Western Heritage Center (WHC) Consultant Report

Cecelia Gavinsky, Kevin Kooistra, and Lauren Hunley– June 30, 2020

Various Projects

- ✓ Kooistra working on the McKinley National Register application as the July deadline approaches. First draft sent out in early July to Lora Mattox and Kate Hampton and John Boughton at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office.
- ✓ Kevin and Cecelia interviewed Bill Dutcher, manager and events coordinator at Metra Park. He spoke about the future demolition of the Horse Track and its history. His positive outlooks and original family ties to Billings made for a great oral history. His oral history is being transcribed.

Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board (YHPB)

Western Heritage Center (WHC) Consultant Report for July 2020

Cecelia Gavinsky and Kevin Kooistra

Historic Preservation

Gavinsky reached out to the Montana Men's Rescue Mission in order to photograph and document the inside of the Granny's attic building (Yegen block). This has been the fourth attempt to reach out to them.

McKinley School nomination was sent out for first draft review.

Metra Park horse barn research continues

Gavinsky working with Laurel to explore the Riverside Park prisoners of War sign, placed by Joyce Jensen and the Yellowstone Historical Society. Joyce is recovering from hip surgery.

Lauren looked at domain names for YHPB. walkhistoricbillings.com

Research Requests

Topics include:

- Alkali Creek and naming of the creek
- Billings Banner and Lumber Company on First Avenue South.
- Several residential historic homes, including 129 Clark.
- Worked with H. Rafael Chacón and Jim McDonald in Missoula, who are working at created a list of private homes influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright. Sent materials from North Elevation research and contact names.