

Historic Preservation Commission

Regular Meeting

August 8, 2024, 4:30pm

City of Mankato

Present: Justin Vossen, Mary Murray, Jessica Potter, Tim Pulis, Mike Lagerquist, John Zehnder

Staff: Bennett Hanson, Sydney DePrenger, Mark Konz, Molly Westman

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:30pm.

Approval of Agenda

Mary Murray moved to approve the agenda, Mike Lagerquist second with all in favor.

Approval of Minutes

April 11, 2024 Minutes

Mary Murray identified multiple misspellings of "Brochure" in the minutes. She asked that they be corrected.

Mary Murray moved to approve the minutes from April 11th, 2024 with the correction. John Zehnder second with all in favor.

Misspelling of "Brochures" in multiple areas of the document. Correct these to say "brochures" rather than "broachers".

Old Business

Jessica Potter states that because of flooding there is nothing for the HPC to discuss at this time regarding the Kern Bridge.

Heritage Plaques

Jessica asked Molly Westman if she contacted Sewah Studios regarding the Heritage Plaques. Molly Westman stated that she spoke with them and they were still behind. She then explained that we are now outside of the grant window for the plaques, so the HPC would need to reapply in order to have funds for the plaques again. She believes that the HPC could reach out to Sewah Studios again once the next round of grants begins and hopefully they would no longer be behind schedule.

Mary Murray asked about the grant window expiring even-though they had put in an order for the plaques. Molly Westman explained that they received the grant and ordered from Sewah Studios, but they couldn't fulfill the order, so they ended up having to return the grant. The plaques are on hold until they get caught up and HPC can reapply for the grant. Jessica Potter stated that their initial application got approved so they should be able to submit it again once the grant reopens.

Sinclair Lewis Plaque & Tour

Tim Pulis asked about the roadside plaque at the Sinclair Lewis property and how it came to be there. Jessica Potter stated that she did not know whose it was nor where it came from. She stated that it wasn't the City's plaque and nor was it done by the historical society. Jessica Potter stated that she can research the plaque and find who put the plaque up. Staff showed the location of the plaque on Google Maps at 315 S. Broad St. Mark Konz read the contents of the plaque for the HPC. Members of the HPC observed that there were two plaques at the Sinclair Lewis House, one along the road and one near the door.

Agenda Changes

Mary Murray asked why the two items of Old Business that were discussed had been removed from the Agenda. Jessica Potter stated that it was an internal change. Molly Westman explained that they could keep them on the agenda in the future if that is wanted.

Jessica Potter stated that they should have announced that Sydney DePrenger would be taking over Molly Westman's HPC liaison position. Molly Westman explained the change.

Broad Street Walking Tour

Jessica Potter informs the HPC of a Broad St walking tour that the Historical Society is hosting. She explained that it would be from the Hubbard House to the Old Mankato Clinic Building (Ridgley Building) at the corner of Broad & Main St and would cover what Broad St would've looked like during the Summer (1919) when Sinclair Lewis stayed in Mankato. She stated that it will be in the end of September and be paired with a community read about Sinclair's book "Main Street".

Preservation Month Tours – Review

Jessica Potter recaps the preservation month bus tours that occurred in May. She stated that they had good attendance with the tours and HPC members confirmed her statement.

Justin Vossen stated that he believed the buses were full for each tour.

Jessica Potter asked for feedback to help improve tours in the future.

Molly Westman stated that she wanted to know people's feelings about the Saturday tour. Mike Lagerquist and Justin Vossen stated that they thought it worked well. Mary Murray asked whether there were any children on the tour? Mike Lagerquist, Justin Vossen, and Sydney DePrenger stated that they saw children on the tours. Mike Lagerquist stated that he enjoyed the variety of people's experiences with Mankato; both long time residents and new comers took the tour. Mary Murray and Jessica Potter stated that they did not remember any kids on the tours they attended.

Mary Murray stated that she did not think advertisements for the tours were adequate. Jessica Potter noted the need for more marketing. Mary Murray explained that she often poles her family and neighbors and that no one had heard about the tours. Sydney DePrenger stated that she heard advertisements for the tours on the radio a number of times. Jessica Potter explained that she believes they may have had too many people try to sign up for a limited number of bus

spaces if they advertised more than they did, as they could only fit a maximum of 38-people per bus. Justin Vossen and Tim Pulis stated that 38-people would be a stretch for how many can realistically fit in the bus at a time. Mike Lagerquist stated that they had a tour with an individual needing accessible seating, which took up additional spaces.

Jessica Potter explained that they are not planning another tour at this time, but that she would like feedback on the idea of more narrated bus tours in Mankato next year. Multiple members of the HPC said yes to the idea of more tours.

Mary Murray inquired whether they could vary the route from year to year, as residents on the tours had inquired about specific locations. Jessica Potter explained that pre-Covid they would rotate different routes and themes between years based on the context study. She explained that this year's route corresponded well to the historic places' brochure and the heritage plaques. Mark Konz stated that we had done Old Town, Front Street, Parks, and had talked about doing schools in the past.

Jessica Potter stated that she will put together a list of the past tours and what research exists already for them.

Mike Lagerquist stated that he believes incorporating costuming for the tour guides would be fun. He also stated that if they could pair up with another organization and finish the tour by sending the riders along to an event hosted by the other organization, that it could enhance the historical experience.

New Business

2024 HPC Conference (PreserveMN)

Sydney DePrenger provided an overview of the conference to the HPC. She stated that the 2024 PreserveMN Conference is in Red Wing from September 18th to the 20th. She explained that they are looking for scholarships for HPC members and Staff and that they will need to narrow down who will be coming and using a scholarship. She specified that they are allotted five scholarships per group, one of which will be Staff (Sydney DePrenger herself). She asked who would like to fill the remaining four spots. Tim Pulis had already signed up, and Jessica Potter wasn't sure if she would be able to attend yet.

John Zehnder stated that he would like to attend with scholarship.

Molly Westman clarified that the scholarship pays for registration, as well as room and board. She explained that attendees would pay the costs up-front and be reimbursed for the costs at a later date using the grant.

Mike Lagerquist stated that he would be interested in attending with scholarship.

Justin Vossen stated that he would not be able to attend.

Jessica Potter recapped the attendees, listing: Tim, John, Mike, Sydney, and herself (tentatively).

Mike Lagerquist stated that he believed they had a schedule posted online for the conference. Sydney DePrenger confirmed that registration has been open for a couple weeks and that they have interesting tours on Friday. The schedule and tours were listed on the website.

Miscellaneous

Broad Street Walking Tour

Jessica Potter returned to discussion regarding the Broad St walking tour that the Historical Society is hosting with a Sinclair Lewis focus. She stated that the tour will be on Thursday, September 26th at 6:00pm, and that information can be found on the BECHS' website and Facebook Page.

Jessica Potter states that the Historical Society is helping with walking tours of Old Town for the 400-700 Block of N. Riverfront Drive. She explained that the Old Town Association has a special public-focused art project that they are working on and that they had asked the BECHS to do a walking tour at the same time. She stated that the event will be held Saturday, September 28th from 1:00pm-4:00pm.

Historical Society Brochures

Jessica Potter discussed the historical brochures from the BECHS. She stated that they order 500 originally and have already reordered more due to their popularity. She explained that they have been well received and therefore they may want to think about doing more in the future, possibly more than one in a season. She added the caveat that if the HPC does not wish to organize it, the Historical Society can always work on it separately if needed.

Tim Pulis asked whether he could have some copies of the brochures for his tours of Minneopa that he hosts on Saturdays, as people always ask what to do in Mankato. Jessica Potter stated that he could and that they have a box of them at the History Center.

Mary Murray asked if the history center was where most brochures were distributed. Jessica Potter stated that they are all over Mankato, at hotels and shops, specifically any of the kiosks that Visit Mankato operates.

Jessica Potter states that if anyone has something coming up and would like a stack of the brochures to reach out to her and she will provide them.

Next Meeting

Jessica Potter stated that there will not be a meeting in September due to the Conference, therefore **the next HPC meeting will be held in October.**

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00pm.