

**MINUTES OF THE CITY OF PELLA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MARCH 9, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairperson Kermode called the Historic Preservation Commission to order in the City Hall Conference Room at 5:30 p.m. Members present were: Don André, Bruce Boertje, Rhonda Kermode, Chris Meyers, and Lila Turnbull. Staff present: Finance Director Corey Goodenow. No members of the public were present.

APPROVAL OF TENTATIVE AGENDA

Motion by Boertje, second by D. André to approve the tentative agenda. Motion carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by D. André, second by Boertje to approve the minutes from the February 10, 2020 meeting. Motion carried 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS/WORK SESSION

Discuss the Status of the Collegiate Neighborhood Historic District Designation Application

At the Historic Preservation Commission's meeting on January 13, 2020, the Commission indicated that they would reach out to the owners of the four properties (906 Independence Street, 704 and 706 Independence Street, and 503 Main Street) that were part of the Collegiate Neighborhood Historic District national historic district, but not included in the historic district overlay zone. After a determination has been made by the Commission whether to include the properties in the historic district overlay zone, staff will send a letter to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) explaining the Commission's reasoning so that SHPO can complete its review of the Collegiate Neighborhood Historic District local historic district application.

At the February 10, 2020 meeting, the Commission discussed two amendments to the boundary of the historic district referenced above. The first proposed boundary change is to exclude the three properties owned by RDP Holdings LLC (704 and 706 Independence Street and 503 Main Street) because these lots are now vacant. The second proposed change was to include the property located at 906 Independence Street owned Central College. Additionally, since the

last meeting, two more property owners within the proposed district have signed the designation application in support of the district. Therefore, with these changes, the following has occurred:

- The inclusion of the Central College property will add approximately 475 feet of street frontage to the proposed Collegiate Neighborhood Historic District.
- The number of properties within the proposed district will increase by one (from 34 to 35).
- The number of properties in support of the proposed district will increase by two (from 19 to 21).

These changes are important to note because of the 51% rule as required in the zoning code for a local historic district to be established. With the addition of the Central College property and additional owners signing in support, staff has determined that doing so would not cause the application to fall below the 51% threshold requirement.

D. André mentioned that he will contact Tom Johnson with Central College. Kermode said she spoke with Public Historian Will Page, who recalled that Central College President Mark Putnam welcomed the concept of the historic district and was aware that Central College owned a house that would be included in the historic district. She further stated that Page indicated that the local and national historic district boundaries should be the same to prevent confusion.

Kermode said she is working on getting additional signatures from property owners to support the historic district designation application. She stated that Page recommended the inclusion of the Central College property, 906 Independence Street, within the proposed local Collegiate Neighborhood Historic District. The Commission was in favor of revising the historic district application to include the additional signatures on the petition, as well as the inclusion of 906 Independence Street. Kermode asked that staff look into whether the inclusion of 704 and 706 Independence Street, and 503 Main Street in the historic district application, without the property owner's signature on the petition, would still meet the 51% threshold requirement. If so, Kermode asked that they be included in the application.

Finance Director Corey Goodenow summarized that staff will recalculate the percentage of the historic district based on the inclusion of the four previously mentioned properties and the additional signatures.

Updates from the Commission on Research About the Certified Local Government and Main Street Programs

On February 4, 2020, Paula Mohr and Sara André from the State Historic Preservation Office gave a presentation to the Pella City Council to discuss the program, process, and benefits of becoming a Certified Local Government (CLG). At the February 10, 2020 Commission meeting, the Commission sought more information about the CLG program. Specifically, the Commission was interested in grant money to maintain historic properties and the overall benefits of becoming a CLG program. The purpose of this agenda item is to further discuss the Commission's findings.

Turnbull reached out to her CLG contact in Winterset, Iowa, but has not yet heard back. Kermode is waiting to hear back from a CLG contact in Ames, Iowa. She also spoke with a CLG contact with the City of Oskaloosa, Iowa, who stated that being a CLG has not been a hindrance and that they provide funding for training to send members of their Historic Preservation Commission to the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs and SHPO's Preserve Iowa Summit annually. Kermode also spoke with the chairperson of the City of Decorah's Historic Preservation Commission who had positive things to say about being part of a CLG. Turnbull asked whether only CLGs are eligible for Historical Resource Development Program grants. Kermode said no.

Meyers reported that grants are available to CLGs by the State of Iowa for cities that host the Preserve Iowa Summit. He also shared that, in his research, he was unable to find a downside to becoming a CLG.

Meyers also shared that the hose tower for the old fire station was discussed during recent City Council budget work sessions and the repairs to the tower are projected to cost \$60,000. He said that Councilmember Lynn Branderhorst suggested that the City of Pella become a CLG in order to access funding to help with the tower's repairs and upkeep. However, there are concerns with finding a contractor to do the specialized work that would be involved in the repairs. Meyers said he would be willing to speak to the City Council to encourage the City to become a CLG.

Kermode shared she had no new information regarding Main Street Programs.

Update from Staff on the Commission's Annual Budget to Discuss Potential Educational Opportunities and Trainings for Owners of Historic Properties

At the February 10, 2020 Commission meeting, the Commission discussed potential funding for educational opportunities and training for owners of historic properties. In past years, the City has offered to fund the Commission's participation in the annual Preserve Iowa Summit. The City's Finance Director will provide more insight regarding the City's budget and financial options.

Goodenow reported there is a training budget that could encompass training opportunities for the Commission. He said if Commissioners are interested in attending the annual Preserve Iowa Summit, that is something the City will pay for. Kermode stated that the Preserve Iowa Summit is scheduled for June 4 through June 6 this year in Dubuque, Iowa, which she is interested in attending.

Adjourned at 6:44 p.m.