

CITY OF WILDWOOD
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

MEETING OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WILDWOOD CITY HALL (HOSTED)
16860 MAIN STREET
WILDWOOD, MISSOURI 63040
July 29, 2022

I. Welcome and Roll Call

Meeting: Friday, July 29, 2022, hosted at Wildwood City Hall, in City Council Chambers, and via Zoom, at 8:00 a.m.

Attending: Commissioners Rowton and Hrubes, Secretary Bachert, Vice-Chair Scott, Commission Liaison Broyles, Council Liaisons Rambaud and Nyhan, and Chair Stevens

Absent: Alternates Adams and Quarternik and Commissioners Hammond and Hensic

Staff: Planner Robyn Keefe, Assistant Director Melanie Rippetoe, and Director Joe Vujnich

II. Opening Remarks

Chair Stevens invited everyone to partake in the treats she had brought in to celebrate the in-person meeting. Planner Keefe reminded Commissioners to speak into their microphones, so they could be heard in the livestream and over the Zoom platform.

III. Approval of the Historic Preservation Commission’s Minutes from its June 23, 2022 and July 1, 2022 Special Meetings

Minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

IV. Public Comment (comments can be provided via Zoom Chat)

The speaker, Patrick Barnidge, noted he was a resident at the intersection of Old Slave Road and Spiceberry Lane. He moved to this location three (3) years ago with his family. He noted he was representing the neighborhood in supporting the name change request as more inclusionary and representative of current times. He noted he has signatures of support from 100% of the residents on the street. He noted the name chosen was “Madison Valley” as a nod to Elijah Madison and the history surrounding that individual in this area.

V. New Business

A. Ready for Action – One (1) Item

1. Street Name Change Request – Old Slave Road (**Ward One**)

Chair Stevens requested a motion from the Historic Preservation Commission to move the agenda item "Street Name Change Request – Old Slave Road" to first on the agenda. Secretary Bachert made the motion and Commissioner Hrubes seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Director Vujnich presented, noting the history of the name change request. He identified that in 2013, the Historic Preservation Commission had supported a similar request, recognizing the present name may not be appropriate for 2022. He gave some background on Elijah Madison, the individual honored by the new street name. Mr. Madison was a slave brought to the area in the 1800s, fought in the Union Army during the Civil War, and returned as a freed man. His burial is located along Wild Horse Creek Road. Director Vujnich stated the Department was supporting the name chosen as appropriate. He noted the Department of Public Works had contacted St. Louis County to ensure the name would not be a problem. The Fire Marshall was also contacted and also stated the change, if accepted by St. Louis County, would be acceptable to the District. Finally, he acknowledged the support for the name change as one reason the Department was recommending approval. He noted ultimately the City Council would make the final decision.

Commissioner Hrubes asked if the United States Postal Service was in the loop. Director Vujnich noted that St. Louis County is first to approve the request, and then it forwards it to the Post Office. Chair Stevens expressed concern about residents receiving their email with the new address. Director Vujnich noted he would make a call to ensure there was a procedure in-place.

Council Liaison Rambaud expressed concern about the lack of suffix. Director Vujnich noted "Valley" was the suffix in this case. Dr. Rambaud noted he had difficulties using that particular suffix, when he had named the road to his residence. Dr. Rambaud noted that, aside from this concern, he thought it was a great name change and an improvement.

Vice Chair Scott noted the present name had not been applied to the road until the 1970s, so there was very little historical significance to its present name. However, he encouraged the City to place a plaque in the public right-of-way in recognition of Elijah Madison, an important historical figure, so it would have some interpretation.

Council Member Clark approached the Commission and asked if African American groups had been approached for input into this name change. Chair Stevens noted that, when the issue had come before the Commission in the past, many members of the Westland Acres community had given their input. Director Vujnich noted that there had been mixed perspectives expressed by that community, but that generally it wished to keep some historical significance to the road name.

Commissioner Hrubes made a motion the Commission accept the Department's recommendation and approve the name change request. Commissioner Rowton seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Chair Stevens requested that the Commission be kept in the loop, as the name change request moved forward in the process.

B. Not Ready for Action – Two (2) Items

1. Discussion Regarding the Age Threshold Used to Determine Qualification as Historic
(Wards – All)

2. Overview of Maintenance Bids for Old Pond School (**Ward One**)

VI. Old Business

A. Ready for Action – Six (6) Items

1. Student Route 66 Taskforce Updates (**Wards – All**)

Planner Keefe gave a brief presentation to the group, showing photos of the Student Route 66 Taskforce Members and providing a general synopsis of the first meeting with them. She noted more detailed information was included in the draft minutes provided in the packet.

Planner Keefe then gave a presentation on the proposal for the addition of youth liaisons to the Historic Preservation Commission. She noted that, while initially, the proposed liaison would be a Student Route 66 Taskforce Member, the intent of the Department was to permanently allow for the inclusion of youth, whether assigned to this project or another. She noted that the Commission had had an opportunity to review the proposed By-Laws and the Department was requesting action on the item.

Commissioner Rowton commented he felt the Commission should have the ability to appoint a Youth Liaison, but not be required to do so. Planner Keefe noted the language could be amended to say “may” instead of “shall” to reflect this direction, if other Commission Members agreed.

Commissioner Hrubes asked if the Commission could appoint them with a termination date. Planner Keefe noted the non-voting liaisons serve for one (1) year. Commissioner Hrubes noted he was fully in support of youth participating.

Chair Stevens noted that anyone who would participate on such would be until their termination date. She also noted the Commission could get more youth involved, focused on other projects, such as the Essen Log Cabin, vs. using the same group over and over again.

Vice Chair Scott asked who would be doing the appointing, noting the current liaisons are appointed by the Mayor and approved by City Council.

Director Vujnich noted the Department would conduct additional research and come back to the Commission at a future date with a refined proposal based on the received input and questions from the Commission.

Commission Liaison Broyles noted how pleasantly surprised she was at how enthusiastic and engaged the students were about the project. She noted the students should be given the option to continue in future projects.

Chair Stevens noted City of Wildwood did not choose the students, the school administration appointed them, so that is how she knows these students are good.

Planner Keefe noted some of the accomplishments of some of the students, noting the Taskforce contained tennis champions, participants in Water Polo Olympic events, participants in national history and geography bees, etc.

2. Route 66 Roadside Park Project Updates **(Wards – All)**

Planner Keefe reviewed some key milestones of the park project, summarized the key outcomes from the Visioning Workshop, and noted some next steps, including working with Rockwood coordinators to develop and coordinate the Student Design Competition.

3. 2022 Points of Interest Map Redesign - Pin-Up Review **(Wards – All)**

Planner Keefe presented, she noted the Commissioners might be best served to step down from their podiums and review the near final version of the Points of Interest Map. She noted the cover panels had not yet been designed. Commissioners reviewed the map in its actual size, and Director Vujnich noted the Department could distribute the map to Members for their review at home.

Vice Chair Scott noted that the document was very attractive and would be highly engaging to people. Planner Keefe noted it would be available for Celebrate Wildwood Event.

4. Wildwood History Book Discussion **(Wards – All)**

Planner Keefe presented, noting that, with the hiring of a book Copy Editor, a new direction for the book's ending was being explored, eliminating Chapter 5 of it and reincorporating portions of the chapter into the rest of its content, instead ending it with a photo essay celebrating "25 years of Wildwood." She noted the new finish date target for the book was the weekend of July 4th, in 2023. This new date was reflective of a coordination meeting with all responsible parties and advice from the new Copy Editor, who is significantly experienced in this type of publication.

Commissioner Rowton advocated for a living book, where it could be continually updated with additional chapters. Planner Keefe commented that the on-demand publishing of the book allowed for future chapters to be incorporated into it fairly easily. Director Vujnich acknowledged the book will need to be continually updated, if no other reason than to incorporate new facts or correct errors.

Vice Chair Scott noted that it is difficult to separate current events from history. He stated you can't bring a history book up-to-date, that it has to have an ending point until the day a new period of time can be looked back on and reflected upon.

Planner Keefe noted the book's author, in this discussion, had commented that she had tried so hard to stay objective with the content, that the chapter had started to read bland. Chair Stevens acknowledged that commentary did help to add color to the content.

Commissioner Hrubes asked for clarification, wondering if the book would be ended at Chapter 4. Planner Keefe noted that, presently, the thought was to end the book with the City's incorporation, followed by a "25 years of Wildwood" photo essay, and then completed with an epilogue.

Council Liaison Rambaud asked about receiving copies of the book manuscript, noting there were still many errors that had not been addressed. Planner Keefe noted she could provide a clean PDF of Chapters 1-4 and the draft Incorporation Chapter, but the rest of the book was in-development.

Chair Stevens asked about the size of the book. Planner Keefe noted the size of the book was decided to be 8.5" by 11" but may need to be tweaked to meet the requirements of Kindle Direct Publishing. She stated the book would be available in paperback, in hardcover (hardcover laminate), and as an e-book.

Commissioner Hrubes motioned to approve all proposed changes to the ending of the book. Vice Chair Scott seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

5. Discussion of Essen Log Cabin Locations **(Wards – All)**

Director Vujnich presented, noting the item was a priority for the Commission because the project is funded for 2023. He noted today's discussion would pertain to location of the cabin within the community, based on its identified use. He noted the group had some concerns about security, access, etc. The three (3) locations identified for the cabin now were limited to 1) Community Park, 2) Village Green, or 3) Glencoe City Park. Director Vujnich noted the site plans received by the Department for this discussion arrived the day before and lacked the overall context. The park designer is still working on additional plan sets with this more detailed information but was not able to provide it for the meeting. Director Vujnich noted that, without the overall context, the Department was not requesting a decision from the Commission at this time. The Department has noted that, to make the project affordable, existing utilities had to be used as much as possible. The cabin was situated on the identified sites accordingly.

Upon a question from Commissioner Rowton, Director Vujnich responded that all three (3) locations are popular by users. He noted the Department would rank locations based on the amount of current/anticipated use.

In response to another question, Director Vujnich noted that security is best for Village Green, followed by Community Park, and the least being Glencoe City Park.

Vice Chair Scott noted that Community Park was his favorite location, but did state the site being examined was in a low area. He expressed concerns about flooding. Director Vujnich noted the discussion had also occurred with the park designer, and Community Park was more susceptible to flooding on the southern end of the great meadow. Vice Chair Scott noted it could be moved east up against the hillside, if needed. He noted Community Park and Village Green were his favorite locations because they were more removed from the main walkway and road. He commented that Glencoe was also subject to flooding. He noted without additional information, he would be voting for Community Park.

Chair Stevens asked about security cameras. Director Vujnich noted that Village Green would be well-monitored due to its proximity to City Hall. Community Park may have cameras in the future, but not at the potential location identified for the cabin. Glencoe City Park has no cameras.

Commission Liaison Broyles concurs with much of the discussion. She noted her choice would be Village Green because of safety and accessibility.

Dr. Rambaud noted that his concerns were topographical. He noted it would be nice to have some elevations around the sites examined for the cabin. He stated he had originally leaned toward Community Park, but was now more of a proponent of the Village Green location because of the amount of activity anticipated there.

Chair Stevens commented that, prior to her becoming a part of the Commission, she had come to speak to it on another matter. That night, the room had been abuzz about the log cabin caper.

Director Vujnich noted there would be some decisions to make about the foundation of the cabin, given the foundation stones were never recovered, along with the roof being destroyed.

6. Update on 2022 Work Program (**Wards – All**)

Director Vujnich noted that much of what is on the work program is being done. No questions or discussion occurred.

B. Not Ready for Action – Two (2) Items

1. Update on Kohn Park Sign (**Ward One**)
2. Historic Route 66 Revitalization Initiative Work Program Update (**Wards – All**)

VII. Review of Proposed Zoning/Plats/Site Development Plans/Demolition Requests – Two (2) Items

- A. *Discussion of Preliminary Site Visit* for a **Demolition Request** for a group of buildings and structures located at 18456 Woodland Meadows Drive (Locator Number 25X520021). Demolition is proposed for one (1) existing single-family dwelling and all associated accessory structures upon the property. The date of construction of the primary residential dwelling of historic significance is indicated as 1910, according to St. Louis County Department of Revenue – Assessor’s Office Records, and circa 1875, according to the Wildwood Historic Building Survey. This age threshold does require the HPC to consider this request, as it moves forward, given at least one (1) of these structures is in excess of 75 years of age. (**Ward One**)

Planner Keefe presented, noting the Commissioners had attended a site visit to the property on July 22, 2022. She noted that an outcome of the meeting had been instruction to Mike Whalen, of Whalen Custom Homes, to provide the Commission with more detailed information regarding the salvageability and restoration of the structure. It had also been proposed by Mr. Whalen that a portion of the structure could potentially be preserved as an accessory structure, depending on report findings. She noted the Department’s discussion with Mr. Whalen revealed that his architect would need more time than a week to return a more detailed report for the structure. The Department was therefore requesting this item be postponed to the next agenda.

Commissioner Rowton motioned to postpone the item. Secretary Bachert seconded the motion. Vice Chair Scott brought up the need to look at the economic feasibility of restoration of the residence compared to the cost of tearing it down and building new. He noted he would not vote for demolition based on a reasonable extra cost expected to maintain a historic residence, noting Mr. Whalen had known about it going in.

Planner Keefe reminded the Commission the structure was not presently on the Wildwood Historic Register and the Historic Preservation and Restoration Code was a voluntary code. While the Commission has the authority to make recommendations pertaining to historic structures, the owners ultimately have the right to decide what to do with them.

Vice Chair Scott acknowledged the Commission was not the last word, but noted the structure was included in the Historic Buildings Inventory. Planner Keefe clarified that the Wildwood Historic Buildings Inventory merely identified buildings meeting a specific age threshold, but did not carry the weight of the historic register.

Vice Chair Scott acknowledged the Commission could only offer a recommendation.

Motion to postpone action passed by unanimous voice vote.

- B. *Review of letter*** offering options for the preservation of the primary residence that is located at 18410 St. Albans Road (Locator #24X540073). The primary building, built circa 1913, has been surveyed, and is included in the City of Wildwood's Historic Building Inventory. **(Ward One)**

Director Vujnich presented, noting a site visit that was conducted by the Commission that past March to the Connell House, the "twin to Old Pond School." He noted that, in the Master Plan, historic properties may be categorized under a special land use area, allowing for flexibility and incentives for historic properties. The Department took this item to the Planning and Parks Committee of City Council to gather input before bringing it back to the Commission. He noted the Department had received a strong endorsement from that Committee. He stated he had met with Tim Kloepfel that past week, and stated the ownership group appeared interested, and would review the materials provided and return with some potential uses for the property. Director Vujnich introduced the incentive letter written by the Department and requested amendments or action upon it.

Vice Chair Scott noted he thought the letter sounded good and was the right direction. Commissioner Rowton motioned to approve the letter. Commissioner Hrubes seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

VIII. Other Matters for Consideration – One (1) Item

- A. *Discuss opportunity to tour Historic Glencoe*** with Ms. Ava Morgan Gilbert and her daughter September 9, 2022 or September 12, 2022. Ms. Gilbert was born in Glencoe in 1937. Her father was the pastor of the church in the area and an avid trout fisherman. Her great grandparents and grandparents also lived in Glencoe. She now lives in Illinois and is curious to revisit Glencoe and see if any of the buildings she remembers from childhood are still in existence today **(Ward Six)**

Planner Keefe presented.

Chair Stevens noted she would like to see the interview videotaped. Planner Keefe noted they could probably rope some students into the project, but it was then noted they would probably be in school at that time. Director Vujnich noted Senior Planner Newberry would likely be up to the task.

Vice Chair Scott commented that he found the history of Glencoe very intriguing. He was very much in-support and would be there. He thought it should be recorded.

Commissioner Hrubes motioned to approve a site visit coordinated by the Department. Vice Chair Scott seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Planner Keefe then noted an email she had received recently by Andrew Dial, the Grants Manager for the State Historic Preservation Office, regarding the Underrepresented Communities Grant Program, which is a grant opportunity offered to Certified Local Governments with the intention of diversifying the National Register. She noted this grant would very likely be available the following year around this same time, also noting that honoring the community of Westland Acres was on the Commission's Work Program. She noted that, to apply for the grant, there would need to first be engagement with the community members before any project could be identified. Director Vujnich noted there are several active residents still in the area that could be contacted.

Director Vujnich noted the Celebrate Wildwood Event is on September 24, 2022, and this matter would be on the August agenda of the Commission. Chair Stevens asked if Union Baptist Church would be in attendance. Director Vujnich confirmed.

Vice Chair Scott noted the Commission needed training every year. He stated he would like additional training for Commission Members on restoration and maintenance of historic buildings and the National Register process. Planner Keefe noted there were two (2) upcoming trainings to schedule, 1) archeology, and 2) restoration of historic buildings.

IX. Upcoming Meeting Date – August 25, 2022 (Thursday)

X. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

Chair Stevens thanked the Department staff for their work. Commissioners then applauded Chair Stevens for the snacks.

Vice Chair Scott made a motion, seconded by Secretary Bachert, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.