

CITY OF WILDWOOD
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

MEETING OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WILDWOOD CITY HALL
16860 MAIN STREET
WILDWOOD, MISSOURI 63040
AND VIA ZOOM
May 25, 2023

I. Welcome and Roll Call

Meeting: Thursday, May 25, 2023, hosted at Wildwood City Hall, in City Council Chambers, and via Zoom, at 6:30 p.m.

Attending: Commissioners Hrubes, Slauter, Hammond, and Hensic, Vice Chair Bachert, Secretary Rowton, Council Liaisons Rambaud and Nyhan, Alternate Quarternik, Student Route 66 Taskforce Liaison Myers, and Chair Stevens

Absent: Commission Liaison Broyles

Staff: Planner Robyn Keefe and Director Joe Vujnich

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Hrubes, a veteran of the United States Air Force, led the Pledge of Allegiance at the request of Chair Stevens in honor of Memorial Day.

III. Opening Remarks by Chair

Chair Stevens noted that Monday, May 29, 2023, is Memorial Day. She gave a history of the holiday, stating that its roots went back to Decoration Day, three years after the Civil War. She states that now all veterans and family members are honored with decorations on their grave sites.

IV. Approval of the Historic Preservation Commission's Minutes from its April 27, 2023 Meeting

Approved by general consent.

V. Public Comment

Steve Scott, former HPC Vice Chair and Commissioner, thanked Nolan for his active participation in the Commission. He expressed his hope that it would be just the beginning of Nolan's career as an activist. He noted that at age 18, Nolan would be eligible for a seat on City Council or any of the City's boards and commissions. He extended this wish for the Student Route 66 Taskforce and thanked them, too, before taking his seat.

VI. Old Business

A. Ready for Action – Ten (10) Items

1. The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Historic Preservation Recognition Award Certificates **(Wards – All)**

Chair Stevens, in her capacity as a representative of the O'Fallon Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter, presented the national award certificates for Excellence in Historic Preservation to each member of the Historic Preservation Commission, including Steve Scott, former member, the Council Liaisons, and Department staff. The group posed for a picture in front of the dais.

2. Student Route 66 Taskforce Update **(Wards – All)**

Nolan presented the update, noting the same gentleman who had won the attendance prize at the movie event took first place in the Route 66 Scavenger Hunt. Planner Keefe noted the Route 66 Scavenger Hunt winner accepting his prize at Vittoria was filmed live on Facebook. She also noted that the Student Route 66 Taskforce received a proclamation from the Mayor and a national award in Historic Preservation from the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution during the City Council meeting on May 8, 2023.

3. Updates Regarding Changes to HPC Composition **(Wards – All)**

Planner Keefe noted the City Attorney was currently working with the Department to research the legalities of adding youth members to the Commission, but that no draft of proposed legislation was available for review yet.

4. Wildwood History Book Update and Book Launch Planning **(Wards – All)**

Planner Keefe presented, highlighting the Book Launch Committees thoughts regarding the Celebrate Wildwood Event and PR and marketing leading up to it. She noted the History Tent would be located next to the Wildwood Historical Society Tent, with the Book Tent in-between. Each tent would have its own banner. She also noted one idea that had come out of the Committee was to have a parade float dedicated to the book and asked if there was interest from the members in helping with it (noting the Department did not anticipate putting much staff time into it other than logistical support). Commissioner Hrubes, Dan Rowton, and Vice Chair Bachert volunteered. Nolan Myers indicated he would ask Taskforce members if there was an interest in volunteering for it as well. Planner Keefe went on with her presentation, stating the Department was hiring a marketing consultant to assist with these efforts. She noted the book at Celebrate Wildwood would be branded as a Special Edition of it.

5. Madison Valley (formally Old Slave Road) Memorial Plaque Update **(Ward One)**

Planner Keefe presented, stating the Department had met with Babler State Park representatives earlier in the month and received positive support for installing the marker within the interior of the park, particularly at the identified location along Wirth Drive. She noted the marker was in alignment with the park's efforts to tell the untold stories of the area, and park personnel would provide further interpretation of the marker in its education and programming. Finally, she noted the identified location was also being considered for a future greenway and could be a defining feature of it.

Commissioner Hrubes asked about access to Wirth Drive, clarifying that it was not a public street, but a road contained within the park. Commissioner Hammond confirmed and give more detailed instructions for arriving to it, after entering into the park.

Council Liaison Rambaud voiced concern about the potential lack of traffic to the marker, indicating it may not achieve what the Commission was hoping, given it would be located in the back corner of the park. He noted that the headline for the verbiage of the marker should be more descriptive about what the marker represents, vs. containing an acronym most people may be unfamiliar with. He suggested "Honoring Service in the United States Colored Troops" instead of just "USCT."

Commissioner Slauter suggested confirming the City was allowed to abbreviate to "USCT" with the US Military. She agreed that adding something with more context was a good idea.

Commissioner Hammond stated he thought the location in the park was perfect and would attract cyclists and pedestrians in the park, especially if there was a future greenway. He asked if there would be any issue moving the marker when the greenway was constructed, and Planner Keefe noted there wasn't and the issue had been discussed at the meeting.

Commissioner Hensic stated he felt the Babler Park location was detached from the original intent of the sign.

Director Vujnich noted he has been an advocate for installing markers off public rights of way, noting the safety concerns involved. He expressed a similar concern for the bridge location, just north of Madison Valley. He stated there was a link to Babler State Park, given the Tylers and the Colemans had owned land within it. He again emphasized the park staff's interest in telling the history. He concluded by saying he was advocating for the park location, given the safety consideration and felt the Commissioners would be surprised by just how many people were visiting the park and exploring within it. He noted the park was crowded at the City's Plein Air Event.

Secretary Rowton noted the area was just a few blocks away from the Madison Valley intersection with Wild Horse Creek Road. Commissioner Hrubes noted people might be hesitant to stop on a major thorough fare. He said if the marker was located in the park, there might not be as many hits, but there would be more interested hits.

Council Liaison Rambaud asked Planner Keefe to define "greenway." She noted it was a multi-use trail connecting one place with another, gravel or paved, like the Al Foster Memorial Trail. Commissioner Hammond noted the larger greenway plan for the region, stating that if these paths were constructed, a person could go all the way from the Monarch Levee down to Al Foster Memorial Trail.

Commissioner Slauter noted that there should be a plan connecting the location of the marker to its origination to demonstrate the intentionality behind it. Planner Keefe confirmed that there would be public information meetings, a public process, and an unveiling ceremony.

Commissioner Hammond thanked the Department for the Project Schedule.

Planner Keefe noted Monday, June 19, 2023, was the identified day that appeared to work with the most members. She took an inventory of hands. She confirmed there was enough of a showing for that day and requested Commissioners “save the date.” She noted she would send additional logistical information closer to the date.

6. Update on Potential Project for Westland Acres **(Ward Two)**

Director Vujnich presented, noting the Department had spoken with Pastor Harvey Fields who had been the long-time pastor of Union Baptist Church. The pastor had identified several individuals who would be interested in participating and spearheading such a project. He noted the Department would forward the goals identified by the Commission.

7. Essen Log Cabin Update **(Ward – All)**

Planner Keefe presented, noting that several Essen family members had come to City Hall that past Friday to learn about the cabin’s reconstruction and visit the flagged area for it in Village Green. She noted they were excited for it, and a couple indicated they might have tools or other period-specific items to donate to it for educational purposes.

Planner Keefe then presented an update regarding the donation of logs from a cabin of the same era built in the City of Manchester. The donor had provided an article about the cabin, included in tonight’s packet, and additional pictures. She noted all this information had been shared with Patterhn-lves and all involved appeared excited to investigate their potential use.

Council Liaison Rambaud noted he loved the City was receiving more logs, given they were going to come up short. He noted the consultants should be given the flexibility to maximize their use, even if the logs were to be used for additional structures and living areas.

Alternate Quarternik indicated concern about losing the historical integrity of the structure. Dr. Rambaud reiterated he didn’t feel this cabin would be historically accurate, but that it would period accurate.

Director Vujnich noted Patterhn-lves had been engaged already, but noted that once the contract was approved, the Department would request they undertake a site visit to where the logs are stored.

Director Vujnich gave a couple updates on Village Green. He noted the existing trash facility was to be relocated to the east side of the parking lot at City Hall, where the Mayor’s Grove of Trees was presently located, and then the City would relocate the Mayor’s Grove of Trees to the area around the proposed location of the log cabin.

Dr. Rambaud noted the trees were in bad shape within the Mayor’s Grove. He felt the relocation would work out well and allow some trees to be replaced in the process.

8. Champions of History Nominations – Paul Wojciechowski, Judy Sahn, and Larry Thompson **(Wards – All)**

Director Vujnich noted the City Council had taken final action on the memorial activities for Paul Wojciechowski.

He noted the HPC had unanimously supported Judy Sahm being nominated as a Sustaining Member, and tonight the Department was requesting a final action. The motion was made, seconded, and passed by unanimous voice vote.

Director Vujnich then presented research regarding Larry Thompson. He noted Mr. Thompson had served four (4) years and four (4) months on the Commission, as well as several other commissions. Finally, he noted Mr. Thompson had gifted a restored wood-burning stove to Old Pond School. The Department recommended that Mr. Thompson be nominated as a Sustaining Member.

Secretary Rowton suggested a plaque be made for the wood-burning stove recognizing Mr. Thompson.

A motion was made to nominate Mr. Thompson. The motion was seconded and then passed unanimously.

9. Historic Survey of Properties for Years 2023 through 2025 **(Wards – All)**

Planner Keefe presented, noting Michael Allen of the Preservation Research Office had submitted a proposal to the Department for the work to survey forty-three (43) new properties. She noted Mr. Allen had indicated willingness to present to Commission, before the work commences, to introduce himself and discuss project steps.

Commissioner Hrubes asked what would happen in the event a property was not accessible from a public location. Planner Keefe noted the Department would help facilitate access in such instances.

Commissioner Hammond asked if all the work was to be completed by the October date. Planner Keefe confirmed.

A motion was made to move forward with the proposal, seconded, and passed unanimously by a voice vote.

10. 2023 Work Program Update **(Wards – All)**

Planner Keefe noted the Department was available for questions regarding any content contained within the Work Plan. There were none.

- B. Not Ready for Action – Four (4) Items
 - 1. Update on Kohn Park Sign **(Ward One)**
 - 2. Historic Route 66 Revitalization Initiative Work Program Update **(Wards – All)**
 - 3. Route 66 Roadside Park Update **(Wards – All)**
 - 4. J.P. Connell House Update **(Ward One)**

VII. New Business

A. Ready for Action – **No Items**

- 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)**

VIII. Review of Proposed Zoning/Plats/Site Development Plans/Demolition Requests – One (1) Item

- A.** Demolition request for two (2) single-family dwellings and two (2) accessory structures that are located at 1928 Wild Horse Creek Road (Locator Number 23X440143). A Zoning Authorization application proposing demolition for all four (4) of these structures was filed with the Department on May 5, 2023. The date of construction of the primary residential dwelling of historic significance is indicated as 1947, according to both St. Louis County Department of Revenue – Assessor’s Office Records and the Wildwood Historic Building Survey. This age threshold does require the HPC to consider this request, as it is processed, given the structure is in excess of 75 years of age. **(Ward One)**

Chair Stevens noted the Minutes from the site visit needed to be approved. A motion was made, seconded, and passed by unanimous voice vote.

Planner Keefe presented, noting all structures were in poor condition and did not hold much historical significance. She noted the primary concern of members had been to protect the grand trees surrounding the structures. She noted City code enforcement had already been out to the property to ensure that preservation fencing was installed, and trees were protected.

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

- A. Two additional meeting dates for 2023** – Wednesday, July 19, and Thursday, December 7

Planner Keefe noted two (2) additional meeting dates had been added to the calendar for the Commission to accommodate months where the date for the fourth Thursday had not been available.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed by unanimous voice vote to accept the new dates.

Chair Stevens clarified that the Historic Preservation Commission would be meeting in September, given the meeting was occurring after Celebrate Wildwood. Director Vujnich noted the meeting was important for debriefing the big event. Planner Keefe noted the book launch could be debriefed, too.

X. Upcoming Meeting Date – June 22, 2023 (Thursday)

XI. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

A motion was made, seconded, and passed by unanimous voice vote to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.