

CITY OF WILDWOOD
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

MEETING OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WILDWOOD CITY HALL
16860 MAIN STREET
WILDWOOD, MISSOURI 63040
AND VIA ZOOM
June 22, 2023

I. Welcome and Roll Call

- Meeting:** Thursday, June 22, 2023, hosted at Wildwood City Hall, in City Council Chambers, and via Zoom, at 6:30 p.m.
- Attending:** Commissioners Hrubes and Hensic, Vice Chair Bachert, Secretary Rowton, Council Liaison Rambaud, Commission Liaison Broyles, and Chair Stevens
- Absent:** Commissioners Hammond and Slauter, Alternate Quarternik, Council Liaison Nyhan, and Student Route 66 Taskforce Liaison Myers
- Staff:** Planner Robyn Keefe and Director Joe Vujnich

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Stevens requested that Council Liaison Rambaud lead the pledge.

III. Opening Remarks by Chair

Chair Stevens noted that soon after Memorial Day is Flag Day. She noted it was encouraging to see so many flags flying in honor of the country and its people.

IV. Approval of the Historic Preservation Commission's Minutes from its May 25, 2023 Meeting

Minutes were approved by general consent.

V. Public Comment

None.

VI. Old Business

A. Ready for Action – Eight (8) Items

1. Student Liaison Update/Comments (**Wards – All**)

Planner Keefe noted that Student Liaison Myers had attended the site visits to historic marker locations earlier that week and offered his input.

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

This item was presented third on the agenda due to traffic challenges encountered by the presenter.

Planner Keefe introduced Michael Allen as the selected consultant for the Historic Building Survey Update. Mr. Allen introduced himself and discussed next steps for the survey effort. He noted a catalogue of photos would be taken for each property from the public right-of-way or, in some instances, from the private properties where it could be arranged with assistance from the Department of Planning.

Director Vujnich noted the contract was on the City Administrator's desk for signature.

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

Planner Keefe presented, detailing three proposed changes to the composition of the Historic Preservation Commission: 1) Addition of one (1) or two (2) non-voting youth members, 2) Extension of voting rights to board and commission liaisons, and 3) Establishment of an "Emeritus Advisor" position. It was explained to the Commission that, after extensive research by the Department and consultation with the City Attorney, the Department was advising against a vote for any youth member. She noted the impetus for creating the Emeritus Advisor position was to retain a past member's knowledge and experience, in some capacity, particularly noting the many long-term members with terms to expire in the next year. Finally, she noted that input was desired from the Commission, but that final action on the matter was not requested at this time.

Director Vujnich also presented, noting that it had taken longer than anticipated for the City Attorney's office to conduct its research, resulting on a short amount of time to finalize the proposed amendments and for the Commission to review them, thus the Department was simply seeking input tonight. He did note the amendments would result in eleven (11) members on the Commission. He stated he did not believe this amount was a problem, referencing the ten (10) members on the Planning and Zoning Commission and sixteen (16) members on the Wildwood City Council. He did not believe the number would result in an "unwieldy" Commission. He noted that Wildwood's position on term limits was unusual compared to neighboring municipalities, extending them to board and commission members, as well as elected officials. He noted there was a limited time for a group of people to form relationships, learn, and grow together in working on City projects. He then advocated for the Emeritus Adviser position. Finally, he advised the Commission to wait on voting on the By-Laws, until the amendments to the ordinance had been approved.

Commissioner Hrubes asked who would appoint the Emeritus Advisor. Ms. Keefe stated the Emeritus Advisor would also be appointed via majority vote of the Commission, similar to how liaisons were appointed. She noted the length of term might need to be reconsidered, given comments from Chair Stevens earlier in the week.

In response to a question, Director Vujnich stated there were two (2) components to City Council meetings, the Work Session and the Regular Session. Thus, City Council reviews nearly everything that is considered by the Commission.

Chair Stevens stated the difference between the youth members and Emeritus Advisor is that the Mayor was not involved in the case of youth members. Planner Keefe clarified the way the language was presently drafted, the youth members would be appointed by majority vote of the Commission and then presented to City Council for acceptance and acknowledgment. She stated the reasoning was the youth members were not full participants of the Commission, given they were non-voting, and thus did not need appointment by the Mayor. She noted

the way the language was presently drafted for the Emeritus Advisor position, that individual would be appointed by majority vote of the Commission, but if serving another term, would need to go before City Council for reappointment. Planner Keefe then requested that Chair Stevens share her thoughts about the Emeritus Advisor position, given she had made some astute observations.

Chair Stevens stated that the Commission would lose four (4) Commissioners in 2024. She questioned the three (3) year term, given that there would be so many former Commissioners to consider. She suggested a shorter term might be desired. She did note that she as Chair could call on someone for advice. Planner Keefe noted Chair Stevens had also pointed out earlier the Council Liaisons, Commission Liaisons, and Youth Liaisons were all one (1) year terms and suggested the Emeritus Advisor position should be consistent with this term length.

Dr. Rambaud stated he felt anyone who gives their time and sits up on the dais should receive a vote. He was comfortable with more voting members. He agreed a renewable, shorter term, might be desired. He suggested that more than one Emeritus Advisor position should also be considered.

Commission Liaison Broyles stated that she would appreciate a vote, given the amount of time she contributed to the Commission's activities. Chair Stevens clarified the proposed amendments would address this issue.

Secretary Rowton asked if the Emeritus Advisor needed to be a position, or if privileges could just simply be extended to former Commissioners.

Director Vujnich admitted that when first considering an Emeritus Advisor position, he and Planner Keefe had immediately thought of Mr. Scott, given his background in architecture and length of time residing in the City and wrote the description of the position with him in mind. He did note a long list of people had served on the Historic Preservation Commission, but termed out, who could be contacted.

Secretary Rowton asked what would happen once youth members had fulfilled their one (1) year term. Planner Keefe stated there were some administrative considerations, but ultimately, they would need to be reappointed by the Commission. Mr. Rowton expressed concerns about youth members potentially not attending meetings or being disengaged; he wished to ensure a mechanism for not reappointing them, if it came to it. Planner Keefe assured the Commission it would have a voice in the process.

Chair Stevens called upon Mr. Scott to speak as a member of the public. Mr. Scott asserted that he did not feel the Emeritus Advisor should have a vote, but would hopefully influence the vote. He also stated a preference for a one (1) year term to give the opportunity to step back from the position or for another interested party to be appointed.

Planner Keefe summarized the discussion as mostly having to do with the Emeritus Advisor position, noting a preference for a one (1) year term or more of a blanket granting of privileges. She confirmed the Commission was comfortable with extending the vote to Commission Liaisons.

It was asked how youth members would be approached with the opportunity. Planner Keefe noted there would be an application process administered by the Department, and existing relationships with Rockwood School District, the private schools in the area, and homeschool coordinators would help facilitate involvement. A couple Commission members asserted the age range should be changed to reflect high school students only, and

Planner Keefe confirmed with the rest of the Commission the Department should move in that direction with the language.

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

Planner Keefe announced the arrival of the paperback proof of the book, and noted applications for the ISBN, Library of Congress Control Number, and copyright items had been made. She also noted several organizations had been contacted for testimonials, and recommendations for others were welcomed from Commission Members. It was suggested that both the City and County library systems should be contacted. Additionally, Planner Keefe noted the Book Launch Planning Committee, and the Department, were already promoting the book. She encouraged Members to promote the book in their own circles.

Secretary Rowton asked if the book might be a part of the Village Green time capsule.

Director Vujnich thanked Commission Members starting back in 2015, who supported the book in its beginnings, and the present Commissioner Members for bringing it home. He also thanked Ms. VonGruben and Planner Keefe for their efforts to bring the book to its completion.

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

Planner Keefe presented, providing a picture slideshow of the site visits that had taken place Monday, June 19, 2023, and discussing the highlights of each location.

Dr. Rambaud noted he believed Babler State Park was the best location for the marker. He suggested rather than installing the plaque in December, as presently planned, the finished marker could be displayed at City Hall, until the spring when a ceremony might be better attended, possibly as a part of Juneteenth.

Secretary Rowton suggested the marker could be installed in September. Planner Keefe stated the present deadline of December was the soonest the task could be accomplished and accommodate the review process.

Commissioner Hrubes stated the park location would reach a larger audience. He noted he was amazed at how close that location was to the previous one.

Council Liaison Rambaud motioned to approve the Minutes of the site visit. Secretary Rowton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Council Liaison Rambaud motioned to choose the Babler State Park location for the historic marker. Commissioner Hrubes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Planner Keefe then presented some suggested verbiage revisions from the Missouri State Parks Cultural Resources Division. She noted Chris Ferree, Park Superintendent, had noted all were not mandatory, but that the primary point was the use of the phrase “formerly enslaved.” It was agreed by Commission Members that locational information should not be eliminated from the marker, but there was debate about the “formerly enslaved” terminology, not on principle, but given the context of the verbiage around it. Planner Keefe suggested Members send her their comments over the following week, and she would come back to the Commission with revised verbiage.

Planner Keefe also advised that a woman had contacted the Department and offered to provide it with a list of all United States Colored Troops (USCT) enlistees by mid-July. The woman had informed the Department she was already conducting the research, and thoroughly checking findings against St. Louis County enrollment lists and census data. Planner Keefe noted that, depending on the number of names determined, the Department could either go forth with a two-sided marker or add a QR code connecting to a webpage with all the names listed upon it. She advised a decision on how the information was presented was not needed at this particular meeting, but if the Commission as a whole was interested in this research, it could potentially guide decisions at a later date. When asked about the impact on project timelines, Planner Keefe conceded it may minimally delay the project, but there was space for it, particularly if the Commission decided to delay the unveiling.

Secretary Rowton suggested that, if there was this additional research, and the Commission knew exactly who had served, it might be worth looking into a monument versus a plaque. Commissioner Hrubes commented he felt that not many people were aware of the United States Colored Troops. Director Vujnich noted he would advise the Commission to look at a two-sided marker versus starting over with another type of representation.

Dr. Rambaud thought it was a great idea to use a QR code and read the names at the unveiling ceremony. He commented that, if moving to a two-sided marker, it would be nice to add a map to the marker.

Commissioner Hensic, commenting on the specific suggested verbiage, noted that until the men actually joined the USCT, they were "enslaved," not "formerly enslaved." Commissioner Hensic commented that a map was a good idea, since he felt the project was getting disconnected from where it all started.

Planner Keefe stated she would review the verbiage again, taking into account all that was discussed during the meeting, and produce a new draft. She said it sounded like there was agreement that a full list of enlistees was worth pursuing. Finally, she reiterated that the project schedule may be pushed back, but that she felt she had built in enough of a time buffer in the present schedule to accommodate it.

Chair Stevens asked if it was possible to have a mock-up of the marker at Celebrate Wildwood. Director Vujnich noted he felt Engraphix had the capability to do such, given they'd produced them in the past.

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

Director Vujnich presented, noting he would like endorsement from the Commission on a draft letter he had produced for the community representatives of Westland Acres.

Planner Keefe informed the Commission that Council Member Clark had her hand raised to speak on Zoom. Chair Stevens granted permission for Ms. Clark to present. Ms. Clark noted she would like to make a comment on the last topic. Ms. Clark suggested that, when the wording on the plaque was completed, it be sent to Colonel of the County Police Department or Lieutenant Colonel Doyle, both Black leaders of the community. She noted she felt it needed to be approved by the Black community. Director Vujnich noted Captain Mundel had contacted Colonel Gregory, Chief of the St. Louis County Police Department, and he had the verbiage in his possession for such review.

Director Vujnich asked if there were any comments on the letter to Westland Acres. Dr. Rambaud made a motion to endorse the letter. Vice Chair Bachert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

7. Memorial Tribute Program Nomination – Judy Sahm **(Wards – All)**

Director Vujnich presented. He stated City Council had endorsed the Commission’s nomination for Judy Sahm, and the Department would be moving forward with the tasks associated with it. Chair Stevens asked about the Commission’s nomination of Larry Thompson. Director Vujnich noted the Department would be completing the first two (2) nominations, before moving onto the third.

8. 2023 Work Program Update **(Wards – All)**

Planner Keefe noted that Essen Log Cabin contract would be acted upon by City Council in July. She stated the Department was available for questions on any item included in the Work Program. No questions were asked.

B. Not Ready for Action – Six (6) 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)**
5. Essen Log Cabin **(Wards – All)**
6. Memorial Tribute Program – Future Nominations **(Wards – All)**

VII. New Business

A. Ready for Action – Two (2) Items

1. Celebrate Wildwood History Tent and Parade Planning **(Wards – All)**

Planner Keefe presented, noting the Department was already looking ahead for the Commission’s involvement at the Celebrate Wildwood Event, given the book launch. Planner Keefe noted she had been working with the graphic designer to design three (3) banners for the event, including a Historic Preservation Commission banner, a book banner, and a Wildwood Historical Society banner. She listed some of the suggested displays and activities, touching on the word searches and other children’s activities as effective tools for initial engagement in the history tent.

Planner Keefe noted there was interest from the Commission in having a history book parade float. She stated the Department was available to assist, wherever possible, if contacted with specific needs. It was then determined the parade float be discussed at the History Book Launch Planning Committee, which was meeting the next day.

It was asked if golf carts would be available for the float. Director Vujnich noted there were extra carts, four-seaters, for this purpose. He noted the Commissioners were not bound by a particular mode of transportation.

Commissioner Hrubes commented that there was thick foam that could potentially be used to create a 3D model of the book, with the cover wrapped around it.

Planner Keefe urged the Commission Members to save the date for Celebrate Wildwood, noting it was an “all hands-on deck” event, given the book launch.

2. Updates to Wildwood Points of Interest Map **(Wards – All)**

Planner Keefe presented, noting the Department was ordering another 2,000 maps for the Celebrate Wildwood Event, given it would likely be down to around 200 of the 2022 version of it by Celebrate Wildwood. She noted 2,000 was the most cost-effective quantity. She suggested the Essen Log Cabin and the Madison Valley Marker could be added to it, and the information about the Wildwood History Book could also be updated.

Secretary Rowton commented he would not add projects until they were ready. Planner Keefe noted the Village Green was presently featured on the map, with timeline of expected completion for Phase One. She suggested the other additions might be treated similarly.

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 – **No Items**

IX. Other Matters for Consideration – **No Items**

X. Upcoming Meeting Date – July 19, 2023 (Wednesday)

Planner Keefe reminded the Commissioners the next meeting was on a Wednesday, which is a shift from the usual schedule.

XI. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

A motion was made, seconded, and passed by unanimous voice vote to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Chair Stevens had a closing thought for the Commission, “Keep our flag flying, it is historic preservation.”