

FLORENCE TOWNSHIP HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES, SEPT. 12, 2023

Members present: Katy Beckman, Janet Malotky, Pam Miller, Jim McIlrath (Florence Township Board liaison), Liz Schmidt (Goodhue County Historical Society liaison)

Members absent: Carol Gardner

Citizens present: Steve Dietz

Chair Katy Beckman called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. and led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. The minutes of the Aug. 8 meeting were approved as read.

Design applications: None presented, but Janet asked whether replacing siding on a historic home in the Old Frontenac Historic District would require a permit. None of us immediately knew for sure, but a Google search indicated that it would indeed require one from Goodhue County, and that it would need to be reviewed by the HPC. Janet will look into the siding situation she's noticed near her Old Frontenac home.

OLD BUSINESS

Grant No. 2 update: Katy said Carole Zelle, the history researcher who has been the recipient of two research grants from our township, recently communicated that she's still heard nothing from the State Historical Preservation Office re her work resulting from Grant No. 2. SHPO is reviewing her work; a response from it is hoped for by the end of this year.

Bylaw updates: The HPC bylaws are now fully updated with gender-neutral language and a sentence saying that an HPC member may attend a meeting remotely and have it count toward a quorum. There is no indication that we can find that the bylaw update requires approval by the

Town Board. Pam will make sure the updated HPC bylaws are posted on the township website.

Locust Lodge: Jim said Town Board chair Mike Blair told him that Locust Lodge owner Margaret Anteblian has not replied to the most recent township letter to her. But subsequent discussion indicated that it's not clear whether the letter that Pam wrote for the Town Board to send to her has been mailed, or whether Mike and Jim are referring to an earlier HPC letter. The confusion comes because this summer, the HPC sent Anteblian a certified letter simply notifying her about the township's newly updated Property Maintenance Ordinance. Post Office tracking shows that letter did indeed get to her, though she has not replied. But we're not sure the subsequent, far more important letter that needs to go to her saying the Town Board is ready to take action re her property has been sent. (Pam wrote the letter, but the Town Board must send it.) We'll check with the Town Board on that at its upcoming Monday meeting.

Lights out?: Update on the two streetlights in Old Frontenac that don't meet our Historic District dark-skies guidelines:

Re the one down at the beach, Steve Dietz was present when an Xcel employee inspected it and said that lowering it to meet Historic District guidelines would "blind people," Steve said, because of its high wattage. After discussing the matter with Steve, the Xcel guy said the wattage will be lowered as it is changed to a security light.

Re the second light, which is at the corner of Van Blarcum and Faribault, confusion lingers. Janet said it is not clear whose property that light is on. Jim said he talked to the family whose property it is on or near and that they "buy the bulb" and Xcel uses the light to tell if the nearby transformer is working. The question was asked if that light could be lowered to meet Historic District guidelines, especially since another nearby homeowner, Michael Tortorello, has asked why the light is there, given the guidelines and ongoing dark-skies events in Frontenac State Park, just up the hill. This situation seems to be in limbo, but the HPC may reach out to Xcel to ask for more information on this particular light.

Our dear sweet Joyce's memorial fund: Donations in our late friend and HPC member Joyce Engstrom's honor may now go to the Town Board with the designation "Joyce Engstrom Memorial Community Engagement Fund." So designated, these donations will go directly to any HPC ventures in Joyce's honor. Most likely, that will be an annual community plant exchange.

NEW BUSINESS

Katy will attend the Sept. 28-29 [PreserveMN conference in Mankato](#) on our behalf. Thank you, Katy, we all said, knowing how busy our young working mom chairwoman is. Jim encouraged her to turn in her mileage costs to the Town Board. Liz said that the 2024 conference will be in Red Wing, which might make it possible for several of us to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:37 p.m. The next HPC meeting will be held at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 10.

Respectfully submitted,
Pam Miller, HPC secretary