

Minutes of Meeting
Sangamon County Historic Preservation Commission
June 1, 2016

Members Present: Chuck Pell, Chairman
Bob Sherman, Vice Chairman
Mike Brooks
Jerry Jacobson
Tina Lathan
Aakash Raut*
James Schackmann
Norm Sims
Dean Williams

Members Absent: Jeanette Goza and Norm Sims

Staff Present: Steve Keenan

Others Present: Janice Wray and Ann Hughes

Call to Order: A quorum being present, Chairman Pell called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

Chairman Pell entertained a motion to allow Commissioner Raut to attend the meeting via speakerphone. Commissioner Schackmann made a motion to allow Commissioner Raut to attend the June Historic Preservation Commission [HPC] meeting via speakerphone due to family or other emergency. Vice Chairman Sherman seconded the motion and the voice vote to approve was unanimous.

Approval of Minutes: Chairman Pell entertained motions to approve the May 4 and the May 18 minutes. A motion to approve the May 4, 2016 minutes was made by Vice Chairman Sherman and was seconded by Commissioner Lathan. The voice vote to approve was unanimous.

A motion to approve the May 18, 2016 minutes was made by Commissioner Schackmann and was seconded by Commissioner Williams. The voice vote to approve was unanimous.

Public Hearing: Chairman Pell introduced the public hearing for the Buffalo Hart Presbyterian Church. He entertained a motion to recess the regular meeting and to open the public hearing. Commissioner Lathan made a motion to recess the regular meeting and to open the public hearing and the motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Sherman. The voice vote to approve was unanimous.

Chairman Pell reviewed the adjacent property owner notice requirements. Staff said there were four certified mailings sent out and four were returned. Chairman Pell said the hearing gives the landowner and adjacent property owners an opportunity to present information for or against a proposed landmark. He said he does not know if there have been opponents to a landmark in the past. Chairman Pell said two members of the church are here and are interested in the pros and cons of landmarking the Buffalo Hart Presbyterian Church. He said the group feels [landmarking] is in general a good thing. Chairman Pell said many of the pros might not apply here, as the church is tax-exempt. Chairman Pell said a (perceived) con is what happens when the

congregation decides they want to complete remodeling or other construction to the church, e.g. tear off the siding, change the windows, or demolition. He said if the process works right that the County informs the HPC that the church wants to put on a new roof on the bell tower and that the HPC would evaluate the request for a certificate of appropriateness. Chairman Pell said the ordinance does not really stop the church from doing anything as the property owner. He said the (perceived) cons are minimized by the fact that the landowner can do usually do what they want eventually. Chairman Pell said the HPC cares about the County's history and so wants to be part of the evaluation process [for a building permit]. He said the certificate of appropriateness described is very common for historic preservation bodies. Chairman Pell said there are several landmarks in Springfield, and the Springfield Historic Sites Commission evaluates improvements in a similar fashion. He said the process ensures a property owner is not harming a landmark in a way that affects its historic attributes. Chairman Pell said that because of owner consent the HPC can do little to stop the church from doing what it feels is best for its property. He said it is a feel-good that the church would be a County landmark. Chairman Pell said the HPC considers the Buffalo Hart Presbyterian Church to be a historic resource. He said the congregation started long before the church was built. Chairman Pell said there is significant pride of place with the church; and, this helps make it deserving of a landmark.

Vice Chairman Sherman said the HPC is a sounding board for recommendations. He said if someone comes and proposes 'X' then the HPC could say well you should think about constructing the improvement this way. Vice Chairman Sherman said he sees the HPC's role as more of a recommending body rather than an arbiter.

Chairman Pell said the church members have an interesting question. He said they asked are you telling us we need to replicate the church as it existed in 1900. Chairman Pell said this is not the case. He said it might be nice to have a potential pros and cons of landmarking on the HPC website. Chairman Pell said this might alleviate some of the church's concerns.

Commissioner Brooks said if Route 54 were redesigned to run through the church's property would this protect them from eminent domain. Chairman Pell said he does not know if it gives them cover. He said it is a positive to say this is a County landmark that is recognized as significant. Commissioner Jacobson said historic resources are considered when planning is done for a state or federal road project. He said decisions are made partly on the evaluation. Vice Chairman Sherman said that early roads could not go through cemeteries and orchards. Chairman Pell asked the church members to introduce themselves. The church members identified themselves as Ann Hughes (Clerk of Session/Secretary of the Corporation) and Janice Wray (Treasurer of Board of Sessions and Head of Building and Grounds). Chairman Pell asked Commissioner Jacobson what are the pros and the perceived cons of landmarking.

Commissioner Jacobson said the usual argument against protecting historical resources is that it violates individual property rights. He said this does not apply because the church is a public facility that is an institution. Commissioner Jacobson said he does not see any downside to landmarking a public/community facility of this type. He said the pros are recognition, a sense of pride to the church, and that the community recognized the church as something worthwhile of preservation.

Chairman Pell said the only perceived con that he can surmise is if the church members want to do something to the church from the point of tearing it down to major renovations. He said there might be a new roof on the horizon for the bell tower or the whole church. Chairman Pell said

what happens if the HPC says during the building permitting process that wow the improvement should be green and not blue or that is not the right shingle and the roof should be metal. He said if the church says it wants to do 'X', but the HPC says 'X' is not appropriate that does not stop the church from getting it done. Commissioner Jacobson said if the HPC denies the permit then the property owner can proceed to the County Board and the Board can override the HPC. Chairman Pell said I am sure that would happen. Staff said he thought the ordinance indicates the HPC is the final decider of certificates of appropriateness and that it then proceeds to court. Commissioner Jacobson asked if this is the case. Staff said to his knowledge there has never been a certificate of appropriateness, with which Chairman Pell concurred. Chairman Pell said the HPC has never seen any work done on the landmarked pool at the old Lamplighter Inn. He said the first County landmark is the Brunk farmstead that exists as a ruin today. Chairman Pell said the farm has some outbuildings but the landmark is the entire farmstead because there is an old barn and a ruin of a house that has historic value. He said at the site the Morgan horse was introduced to the community. Chairman Pell said each County landmark has an unusual story that contributes to its history. He said the Brunk farm is on the National Register [of Historic Places]. Chairman Pell said he does not know if the church would rise to being on the National Register. He said the church is important for the vernacular of the County and that it is different in that respect. Chairman Pell said if approved, the church would be given landmark status. He said if the church does not want landmark status anymore it could request that the County Board remove the landmark status. Chairman Pell said as an extreme example Soldier Field was on the National Register but was removed after renovations. He said if the church wants to wrap a new structure around the historic exterior then maybe the HPC would want to remove the landmark status. Staff said removing the landmark goes through the County Board just as landmarking does.

Ms. Wray asked if the landmark is approved how people would know the church is landmarked. Chairman Pell said this is a question with which the HPC has struggled for a long time. He said the HPC does not have a plaque to give the church if it is landmarked because there is no budget. Chairman Pell said the HPC would love it if there were a commemoration of the landmarking somewhere on or in the building. Chairman Pell said the church would be mentioned on the County's website. Staff described the web map that shows County and City landmarks. Chairman Pell described the Lincoln-Van Buren Trail and the Illiopolis Munitions Plant Water Tower. Vice Chairman Sherman asked why the HPC could not make landmark certificates. Chairman Pell said the HPC is a volunteer organization. Ms. Wray said the church could add the landmark status to its Sunday bulletins. Chairman Pell said there would be a vote to recommend to the County Board that the Buffalo Hart Presbyterian Church, built in 1900, be a County landmark. He said the County Board has the final vote. Chairman Pell said unless there is opposition, or unless the County Board feels this is detrimental to the church, the County Board might see this as a feel good thing. Chairman Pell asked what [County Board] District the property is located. Staff answered he believed District # 3, David Mendenhall. Chairman Pell said that in all likelihood the County Board member would propose the motion on the landmarking. He asked to show some photographs he took of the church. Commissioner Williams said he has a bronze plaque made of the landmarks he proposes signed by Chairman Pell and the [HPC] members. He said he would donate one to the church. Chairman Pell described the pictures of the large overhead doors in the church. Ms. Wray said the doors are a pull-down type. Vice Chairman Sherman asked if the doors are segmented like garage doors, to which the reply was no. He asked if the doors go straight up into the attic, to which the reply was yes. Chairman Pell asked if the north side is the pulpit, to which the reply was yes. He noted the north wall is blank and wondered if it ever had windows, to which the reply was no. Chairman

Pell said the Palladian windows are at the west and east ends of the sanctuary. Vice Chairman Sherman said he could see where the doors could go up into the wall very much like a stage. Chairman Pell said the older windows are in that room. Ms. Wray said there are three windows. Chairman Pell said the windows on either side of the sanctuary were blown out in the past. He said there is a window on display that someone found in the attic. Ms. Wray said it matches the three that are in that room. Ms. Hughes pointed out that was from the old entryway when it was changed. Ms. Wray said the window was framed to be preserved. Chairman Pell asked if there were any other questions. Ms. Wray and Ms. Hughes said no we think you have answered most of them. Staff outlined the two other meetings where this would be discussed prior to a final vote [the Public Health, Solid Waste and Zoning Committee, 6:00 PM, on Thursday 6/16; and, the County Board, 7:00 PM, on Tuesday 7/12]. He said the HPC is a recommending body and that the County Board has the final vote. Ms. Wray asked if it is helpful to have something written from the church. Staff said it would be helpful to have something in the next week or so if the church wishes to submit it. Chairman Pell said if you want to support or oppose the landmarking the person to reach out to would be your County Board member. Staff added the Committee meeting would be the first time the County Board would get more information about the proposed landmarking. Chairman Pell said the HPC is overseen by a committee that decides what goes before the County Board. Vice Chairman Sherman asked if the church could contact their County Board member and let him know that this is coming up. He said he does not see a problem with that. Commissioner Williams asked if the HPC could present a similar plaque to the George Power Courthouse. Chairman Pell said that depends on what the church wants. He said the plaque from Commissioner Williams would be something the church could hang in its multi-purpose room.

Chairman Pell entertained a motion to close the public hearing and resume the regular meeting. Commissioner Jacobson made a motion to close the public hearing and to re-convene the regular meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Lathan. The voice vote to approve was unanimous.

Commissioner Williams made a motion that the [Buffalo Hart Presbyterian] Church be recommended to the County Board for landmark status by the HPC. Staff asked for clarification that Commissioner Williams believes it meets the criteria for designation as a landmark. Commissioner Williams said he definitely feels the church meets the criteria to be a landmark. He said it was the CNN of its day and was an important community communications hub. Commissioner Williams said it further was the most important gathering place in the area. Vice Chairman Sherman seconded the motion and the voice vote to approve was unanimous.

Chairman Pell said we would be in contact. Staff said the next meeting date would be the Public Health, Solid Waste and Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday June 16 at 6:00 PM in the County Board's conference room. Everyone thanked Ms. Wray and Ms. Hughes for their comments and attendance.

Chairman's Report/Comments: Chairman Pell asked if before a certain date there would be a discussion of what is going on at the Sangamon County Fair. He said he really appreciated Commissioner Williams' connection to [Pastor] Mary [Jessup] with the church. Chairman Pell said he did not think [the church members'] concerns were great; but he hoped they would be satisfied with the information given at the public hearing. He said it is something to think about to address the pros and cons of landmarking.

Committee Reports: Commissioner Jacobson gave the Oldest Farmhouse Committee report. He said the dates of the County Fair are June 15-19. Commissioner Jacobson said the owner of the oldest house found in the search would select the date of the final certificate ceremony. He said the ceremony would likely be sometime between 10 AM and 3 PM, preferably the Thursday or Friday of the Fair. Commissioner Jacobson said a certificate was drafted and that Commissioner Brooks would make adjustments and changes as needed to the plaque text. He said there would be a press release to go out the Monday prior to the Fair as a teaser for the final ceremony. Commissioner Jacobson said the information about the oldest farmhouse would be held back until the day of the presentation. He said it would be up to the oldest farmhouse winner to choose the day. Commissioner Jacobson said they would add Brandt to some of the final literature since they are underwriting the cost of a plaque to give to the winner of the oldest farmhouse. Vice Chairman Sherman asked Chairman Pell if Chairman Pell would print the certificates. Chairman Pell said he would prepare a board to show all the houses highlighted by the one that is chosen as the oldest.

Commissioner Brooks said Farm Bureau and Brandt are both accepting of having the ceremony in their spaces at the County Fair. He said the display could stand in either one of those spaces. Chairman Pell asked for clarification. Commissioner Brooks said the Brandt rep sounded excited about having the farmhouse display near the Brandt display; or, the display could move between the two areas [Farm Bureau and Brandt]. Chairman Pell asked if Brandt has a graphics specialist so the three logos would appear on the final display. He asked if Brandt could put out a certificate, or should the HPC just get it done. Commissioner Brooks said we should just get it done. Vice Chairman Sherman said there should be four signatures on the certificates: [HPC Chairman] Chuck [Pell], the County Board Chair, the Farm Bureau, and Brandt. Chairman Pell said that makes sense but the Committee can decide. Commissioner Brooks said he does not think all the sponsors will care if they sign the certificates or not, especially if the logo is on the certificate. Chairman Pell said my deadline is June 14 because the display will be in someone's booth. He asked if there is a size requirement. Commissioner Jacobson suggested Commissioner Brooks and Chairman Pell keep in consultation on the nature of the space and details about the ceremony. Chairman Pell asked if Commissioner Brooks was in contact with Brandt or the Fair manager, to which Commissioner Brooks said Brandt. Commissioner Brooks said he would talk to the Fair board chair. He said there should be an easel at the ceremony. Commissioner Brooks, Chairman Pell, and Vice Chairman Sherman discussed potential use of an easel. Chairman Pell, Commissioner Brooks, and Commissioner Jacobson then discussed potential options for the layout of the display. The consensus appeared to be to have several houses with the oldest farmhouse prominently displayed.

Old Business: None.

New Business: Commissioner Jacobson said certificates are an easy solution to recognize County landmarks. He suggested looking at printing certificates one could put in a frame. Chairman Pell, Commissioner Jacobson, and Vice Chairman Sherman discussed a potential certificate for the Lincoln-Van Buren Trail. Chairman Pell said it is a fantastic point and that maybe a Committee should study it. Vice Chairman Sherman said something in a vestibule would be nice. Commissioner Brooks suggested signs similar to the Centennial Farm signs. Vice Chairman Sherman said he thought the signs from the Department of Agriculture were approximately \$100. Commissioner Lathan asked if the discussion was for signs or certificates. Chairman Pell said it is under debate. Commissioner Brooks asked if IDOT could make one, to which several people said no. Commissioner Jacobson asked if the HPC could approach the

County Board to ask for sign money in the budget. Chairman Pell said there was talk of approaching the Finance Committee about using unspent meeting compensation funds in the budget for signs.

Initial Recommendation for New Landmark Applications: None.

Member Reports: Vice Chairman Sherman said he is compiling a bibliography of house styles for each of the Commissioners, but had printer difficulties this month.

Commissioner Jacobson asked if there is a handout on house styles. Chairman Pell said there was a series of videos from IHPA on house styles. He asked Anthony Rubano and was told the IHPA is trying to put the videos on their website so people can view them. Chairman Pell said if it were done, he would send the link to everyone.

Staff Reports: Staff suggested someone from the HPC attend the Committee meeting on June 16. Chairman Pell said he normally attends the Committee and County Board meetings where landmarks are discussed.

Public Comment: None.

Additional Comments: None.

Adjourn: Chairman Pell entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Brooks made a motion to adjourn the June meeting with Commissioner Schackmann seconding the motion. The voice vote to approve was unanimous and the meeting adjourned at 5:02 PM.

Respectively submitted,

Steve Keenan

*attended via speakerphone