

**CITY OF SAINT PETER
HERITAGE & PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, January 28, 2020
Saint Peter Community Center – Governors Room**

The meeting was called to order by Community Development Director Russ Wille at 5:30 p.m. Commissioner's Larry Potts, Terry Bergemann, Emily Bruflat, Joe Metzen and Brian Oviatt were in attendance. Absent were Commissioners Judy Douglas and new member Sharon Lytinski. Community Development Director Russ Wille and Administrative Secretary Cindy Moulton were also in attendance. Visitors present were Paul Tanis, Megan Willet, Matt Borowy, Jim Brandt, and the RoboBros.

Approval of Agenda:

A motion was made by Bergemann, seconded by Oviatt to approve the meeting agenda with the deletion of the Oath of Office. All voting in favor, the agenda was approved as amended.

Election of Officers:

A motion was made by Bergemann, seconded by Oviatt to nominate Potts as Chairperson. With all voting aye, the motion carried.

A motion was made by Metzen, seconded by Bruflat to nominate Bergemann as Vice - Chairperson. With all members voting aye, the motion carried.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Metzen, seconded by Bergemann to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of October 9, 2019. All members voting aye, the minutes were approved as presented. Potts noted that the July 30, 2019 have not been approved. Wille will include the July 30, 2019 Minutes on the February 25, 2020 agenda.

Meeting in a Box (State Preservation Plan Input)

Wille stated that SHPO has asked Minnesota preservation commissions to hold a "meeting in a box" to assist SHPO with the development of a revised historic preservation plan. Commissions were asked to consider why historic preservation is important in today's world.

Wille provided a variety of options to consider as it relates to the threats of historic preservation. As part of Exercise 1, attendees at the meeting were asked to choose six of their top concerns as it relates to the threats of historic preservation.

The group identified the economy, lack of resources, and the public not valuing historic buildings as their top three.

Discussion followed.

Willette felt that the lack of full participation and without a full buy-in by the building owners, the city won't get the historic look that would enrich the downtown.

Potts inquired as to why people chose Economy as one of their top picks.

Responses included pressure of the economy, the project takes longer to complete and it is more labor intense, as well as the expense of the project.

Bruflat commented that lack of understanding plays a large roll. She said that the younger generation is not interested in history and there doesn't seem to be a solution. She stated they feel new is better than old and that could relate to a lack of understanding. She felt that publicizing would have a positive impact.

Oviatt disagreed and felt that people miss historic buildings.

Bergemann stated that there are not a lot of contractors that specialize in preserving historic structures.

In Exercise 2, attendees were asked why historic preservation is important.

Preservation of Cultural Identity/Heritage received the highest rating. Members felt Saint Peter should be distinct from other cities. Educational Angle and Economic Vitality were also ranked in the top three. Tanis felt that history has something to say about the vitality of the town

Wille indicated that he will report the finds back to the State Historic Preservation office.

St. Peter Post Office – Handicapped Ramping

Wille introduced the RoboBros Lego Building team, which is a team made up of six 6th grade boys. The team given the task to identify a problem with a building or public space in their community, design a solution, share their solution with others, and then refine it. The RoboBros chose to solve the problem of handicap accessibility to the post office. Wille indicated that the group met with Postmaster Jim Randolph, Eileen Holz (accessibility advocate), and Wille to receive feedback on their idea.

The RoboBros made a presentation to the Commission and explained their project.

Wille said that in a discussion with Randolph, Randolph pointed out that adding a ramp would be a violation of the postal regulations and didn't think the ramp could be constructed. He also added that donations could not be used to fund such a project.

Wille questioned how Northfield was able to construct a cement handicap ramp. Wille shared that he intended to contact Northfield to inquire as to how they were able to construct a ramp.

Randolph agreed to explore options to help the project come to fruition.

The Commission asked if there were City funds available to finance the project. Wille indicated that the EDA has Grant funds but that the Grant states that the funds cannot be loaned to government entities.

Potts was impressed with the rendering that was presented to the Commission. He said that the design was exceptional and that the ramp blended nicely with the architecture of the building.

Reports

Certified Local Government Status

Wille reported that the City hasn't submitted the criteria to have Certified Local Government Status. He indicated that he will be submitting a copy of the 2019 Annual Report to the State Historic Preservation Office. Wille added that he will provide a copy of the Annual Report to the Commission once it is completed.

Potts volunteered to attend the State wide preservation conference.

Adjourn

With no further business, a motion was made by Bergemann, seconded by Metzen to adjourn. With all members voting aye, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Bruflat indicated that she will not be able to attend the February meeting.