

DIXON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

CITY HALL
P. O. BOX 318
DIXON IL 61021
dhpc@discoverdixon.org

Minutes of the Commission meeting of April 14, 2014

1. Call to order. The meeting was called to order by John McLane in Council Chambers at City Hall at 205p.

2. Roll call. Commissioners present at the time of roll call were James Higby, Greg Langan, John McLane, and Duane Paulsen, with Linda Brantley arriving soon thereafter. Also in attendance were James Burke, Mayor of Dixon; David Nord, Dixon City Administrator; Scott Brown, Project Manager at Wendler Engineering Services; and Jeff Reis, Engineer at Willett, Hofmann & Associates.

3. Approval of minutes. Minutes of the meeting of November 18, 2013 have been distributed electronically, and printed copies have been distributed to all persons present at today's meeting. **Greg Langan moved, and Duane Paulsen seconded, that the minutes be approved as printed and read. Voting Aye: Higby, Langan, McLane, and Paulsen. Voting Nay: None. Motion carried.**

4. Notices and communications.

Several items were included in the Commissioners' meeting agenda packet:

- a. a memo from Secretary Higby summarizing the changeover of our email account to an arrangement using mail.google.com (Gmail) as its gateway. In the opinion of the Secretary, "this change is for the much better"
- b. a chart showing the dates of initial appointments, dates of appointment to current terms, and dates of expiration of the terms of the sitting Commissioners. The chart shows that the term of Commissioner Langan will expire on June 30, 2014. Commissioner Langan expressed an interest in serving another term. **Mayor burke will arrange for Commissioner Langan's re-appointment to the Commission.**
- c. the Dorochoff panel showing the John Dixon Pioneer Marker, which currently rests on a large rock at the northwest corner of First Street and Peoria Avenue. As part of the Streetscaping Project this marker, a bronze plaque originally mounted on the Peoria Avenue side of the Dewey Hotel building which once occupied the corner lot at that intersection, and which indicates the putative location of "Father" John Dixon's homestead, is scheduled to be relocated some 15 feet to the west to allow for a greater turning radius from Peoria onto First. The plaque had originally been erected in 1901 by the Dixon Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Considerable discussion ensued. Project Manager Brown indicated that he was unaware of the existence of the Dorochoff Survey. **Secretary Higby will provide a digital file of the survey to Messrs. Brown and Reis later this week.**

Project Manager Brown spoke of a plan to incorporate an arrangement featuring a statue of John Dixon, a planter, and a bench into the Streetscape in that general area. He provided several copies of a broadside showing an aerial view of the downtown area to be handled by his firm, Wendler Engineering Services, as well as two 8 1/2" x 11" details of the intersection in question. Commissioner McLane questioned the aesthetics of the planned statue grouping.

- d. the Dorochoff panel of the building at 318 West First Street. While there has been no formal application by the owners for façade modification to date, one is likely to be forthcoming.

- e. the Dorochoff panel of the building at 502 West First Street. This building consists of two conjoined brick structures, the building on the corner originally built in the 1910s as a grocery, the other as a residence. Renovation of the interiors of both buildings has already begun. Commissioner McLane has made inquiry at City Hall as to the nature of the building permit which has been issued. Said permit is for work which does not include façade modification, although it is very likely that such an application is forthcoming.
- f. Mayor Burke indicated that an application for façade modification is in progress for property at 319 West First Street, the building formerly occupied by the Fung Ming Restaurant.

5. Public comment. There were no comments by the public.

6. Old business.

- a. In deference to the work schedules of the two engineers present, discussion of a Historic Homes Map Project was tabled. Upon its subsequent reprisal Commissioner McLane distributed several copies of a brochure originally prepared in 1983 by the Bureau County Architectural Preservation Society and published by the Princeton (IL) Tourism and Visitors Bureau, which features "A Self-Guided Tour of Princeton's Historic Homes and Buildings." Thirty-three sites are exquisitely illustrated and accompanied by their names, dates of construction, addresses, and short narratives explaining the architecture of each. Also included in the brochure are maps of the two areas in Princeton where these buildings may be found. A concise history of Princeton, Illinois and the Red Covered Bridge north of town rounds out the presentation.

Commissioner McLane proposed that the Commission co-ordinate a similar project in Dixon by involving such organizations as Dixon Main Street, Lee County Historical Society, the Northwest Territory Historical Museum, and others. Mayor Burke suggested that Dixon Tourism, headed by Vicki Turner, would be our best partner in such an endeavor. **Commissioner Higby will pursue the proposal with Lee County Historical Society President Pat Gorman.**

7. New business.

- a. Commissioner Langan commented at length on two issues: 1) When the Reagan Peace Park, located on the northeast corner of Galena Avenue and Second Street, was originally conceived, the plan included three historical marker plaques. While bids from local companies for the production and placement of the plaques were received, that part of the project was never consummated. Mayor Burke responded that the plaques will indeed be eventually put in place at the park. 2) The story of Charles Walgreen is of the utmost importance to the history of Dixon. Mr. Walgreen's guarantee of the assets of the Dixon National Bank during the Great Depression is not to be forgotten, and it is noteworthy that the Bank did not foreclose on a single borrower during those hard times. Walgreen had become the major stockholder in the Bank until he sold his interest to the Lovett family.
- b. Subsequent to Commissioner Langan's observations, Commissioner McLane reprised his aesthetic concerns as to the arrangement of the elements of the proposed John Dixon statue grouping at First and Peoria. In his view, sculpture is best enjoyed and appreciated in the round, and the proposed arrangement of statue, planter, and bench is too tight to allow 360° contemplation of the statue. Considerable discussion once again ensued, with other attendees making comments as well. Perhaps the most significant of these was an impromptu history of the statue proposal, offered by Commissioner Langan: it seems that the statue project began several years ago with a number of larger donations, but current contributions are being received through pocket change dropped in collection jars placed about town. This state of affairs may render the entire issue moot. **Duane Paulsen moved, and Greg Langan seconded, that the Commission accept the changes as set forth by Scott Brown, regarding the relocation of the John Dixon [Pioneer] Homestead Marker. Voting Aye: Langan, McLane, Paulsen, Brantley, and Higby. Voting Nay: None. Motion carried.**

c. **In anticipation of the receipt of applications for façade modifications at 318 West First Street, 502 West First Street, and 319 West First Street, the Commission has asked Commissioner McLane to visit all three sites to learn of the intended modifications and assist the owners/tenants in making their applications.**

d. The next meeting of the Commission will be held in Council Chambers at 130p on Monday, April 28, 2014. **City Administrator Nord will reserve Chambers for us.**

8. Adjournment. Linda Brantley moved, and Duane Paulsen seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. Voting Aye: McLane, Paulsen, Brantley, Higby, and Langan. Voting Nay: None. Motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 330p.

Respectfully submitted by James Higby, Secretary
Dixon Historic Preservation Commission