**LISBON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
Minutes of Meeting  
October 21, 2021**

The meeting was called to order by President Hess at 4:32 p.m. at City Hall. Present: Rebecca Hess, Amelia Kibbie, Marc Mohn (arrived at 4:40 p.m.), and Ann Opatz. Absent: Marianne Zahorik. Guest: John Bardsley, City Council Liaison.  
  
Moved by Hess, seconded by Kibbie, to approve the agenda. The motion passed on a voice vote of 3-0.  
  
Moved by Kibbie, seconded by Hess, to approve the minutes of the September meeting. The motion passed on a voice vote of 3-0.   
  
Volunteer Hours: Commissioners reported their hours for the month of September.

Save Our Buildings, Save Ourselves Video Project: Final edits to the video were offered. The video will be shown at a City Council meeting in early 2022 as discussions regarding the FY23 budget begin. The group expressed appreciation to Commissioner Kibbie for her work on this project.

Meyers Farmstead Historic District: Hess reported that she has not received a proposal for developing a preservation plan for the barns from Align architecture & planning. She suggested contacting the Silos & Smokestacks organization to request their assistance identifying firms to contact.  
 Two vinyl 4’ x 4’ signs have been ordered and received from Rickard Sign & Design. The signs, which note the area is closed to the public while stabilization work takes place, will be installed near the barns, one on West Market Street and the other on North Jefferson Street.   
 Opatz, Zahorik, and Drayton Kamberling met with Candy Streed and Laura Elfers of the Silos & Smokestacks organization on October 1. A summary of the site visit is attached for the record. It was recommended that the City form a working group to develop concrete plans for the development of the Nature Park, including an overall plan for the park broken down into phases with estimated costs and a timeline for completing each phase. The working group should be comprised of individuals with expertise in various aspects of the components that were included in the plan as presented to the Iowa Department of Transportation in Lisbon’s REAP grant (that resulted in the $75,000 award from the State that provided partial funding for the purchase of the property from the McElmeel family).

Update on History Center Building Rehabilitation: Phase I Life Safety repairs have been completed. Prior to payment of the BSM invoice, an inspection of the repairs by City Administrator Siggins, LHPC chair Hess, and a representative from the History Center Board will take place.   
 Hess and Opatz will meet with Siggins at the end of the month to plan for Phase II Preservation components. The History Center Board has received a check for $19,000 for the Linn County Community and Economic Development grant, awarded to help with the cost of removing the paint from the west wall, part of Phase II Preservation efforts.  
   
Update on Library Building Rehabilitation: Phase I Life Safety repairs have been completed. As with the History Center building, an inspection of the repairs will be completed by Siggins, Hess, and a representative of the Friends of the Lisbon Public Library. Hess and Opatz will meet with City Administrator Siggins at the end of the month to plan for Phase II Preservation components.  
  
Update on Trailblazer Signs: The trailblazer signs have been installed in three locations along Business 30. The destination signs on US 30 and the exit ramps will be installed by DOT in late October/early November.  
  
Update on Comprehensive Plan: The date for the public presentation of the new comprehensive plan has not yet been set.  
  
Update on Grout Museum Oral Histories: No report; however, the Silos & Smokestacks representatives recommended we start these oral histories soon.  
  
Iowa Barn Foundation: The Silos & Smokestacks representatives recommended LHPC make a connection with the Iowa Barn Foundation to inform them of the Meyers Farmstead Historic District, given that this historic district is the only one of its kind in the State. Opatz and Zahorik are working on a letter of introduction.

Review of 2021 Goals and Action Plans: Goals and action plans for the year were reviewed and discussed.

Other business: Hess reported that she spoke with Mike Hunter of Lloyd Table Company about the repairs that are underway on the Opera House. He noted that the entire building is being tuckpointed by a mason from Mount Vernon. Hess will obtain his contact information as a possible contractor for the west wall preservation components at the history center and library buildings.   
 Noting the number of repair and improvement projects underway in the community, Opatz suggested sending a letter to historic building and home owners who are working on their properties as a way to make a connection with them and encourage continued care and protection of historic resources in the community.  
 John Bardsley reported that the BE Lisbon grant application period is open, with $5,000 being awarded to the successful applicant. LHPC encouraged the City to contact all businesses to inform them of this opportunity.  
 Opatz reported on the very competitive nature of the Linn County Community and Economic Development grant. Twenty-five organizations applied for nearly $500,000 with 12 organizations receiving $165,000 in funding. The Lisbon History Center received a $19,000 grant award for the removal of the paint on the west wall of the building.  
 The group discussed submitting an article for publication in the Linn News, a rural newspaper produced by Woodward Communications and circulated in the rural areas of Linn County.

The meeting adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Submitted: Ann Opatz, Secretary

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
 Rebecca Hess, Chair

Summary of Site Visit by Silos & Smokestacks – October 1, 2021

Marianne Zahorik, Drayton Kamberling, and Ann Opatz met with Candy Streed and Laura Elfers of the Silos & Smokestacks organization on Friday, October 1, to visit the Meyers Farmstead Historic District. The visit included a tour of the Meyers Farmstead Historic District and the nature park, followed by lunch and conversation about a possible partnership with the Silos & Smokestacks organization.

Candy Streed serves on the State Historic Preservation Office’s Nominations Review Committee, and became aware of the Meyers Farmstead Historic District while serving on the panel conducting the review of Lisbon’s nomination of the Meyers Farmstead Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. In April of 2021, Candy approached LHPC to explore the possibility of the Meyers Farmstead Historic District becoming a Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area Partner Site.

To summarize the October 1 tour and discussion:

**What is Silos & Smokestacks?** The Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area is one of 55 national heritage areas in the United States. The organization falls under the auspices of the National Park Service. The National Heritage Area in Iowa encompasses 37 counties in the northeastern and eastern part of the state, including Linn County. The mission of the Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area is to interpret farm life, agribusiness, and rural communities -- both past and present –and thereby preserving and telling the story of American agriculture and its global significance.  
  
**How can Silos & Smokestacks help Lisbon in its efforts to plan and develop the Nature Park, including marketing and programming in the Meyers Farmstead Historic District?** The Silos & Smokestacks organization provides technical assistance in the development of interpretive media (signs, brochures, exhibits, videos, audio tours, educational programs, walking and driving tours, electronic media) for the site. This level of assistance helps ensure the natural, cultural, and historical resources are developed and managed in a manner consistent with professional preservation and interpretation standards.  
  
**What are the benefits of having a Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area Partner Site designation?**  The Silos & Smokestacks organization helps develop local, regional, and national heritage tourism and tell the story of American agriculture. This organization has spent the past 30 years helping communities develop strategies for creating unique experiences based on individual sites within communities. Candy and Laura noted that Lisbon may have the only farmstead within a city limits in the State of Iowa – that makes us unique. Once designated as a National Heritage Area Partner Site, Lisbon joins other partner sites in Iowa and will be included in tourism marketing efforts of the Silos & Smokestacks organization. This designation also connects us to the Silos & Smokestacks organization at the national level.

Candy and Laura suggested Lisbon apply for designation as a Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Emerging Site since Lisbon is in the very early stages of stabilizing the barns (with plans to rehabilitate the structures at some point in the future) and developing the Nature Park. The next application cycle begins in 2022. Designation as an Emerging Site gives us access to technical and financial assistance, including grants, notification of resources and training, and general consultation as development of the area begins. As planning and development of the area takes place, an invitation to apply to become a Partner Site will follow, if appropriate.  
  
We were encouraged to start work on oral history videos with those familiar with the Meyers Farmstead (Miriam Meyers Johnson and Steve McElmeel), with the assistance of the Stories From the Farm program at the Grout Museum in Waterloo. Marianne Zahorik has already reached out to the Grout Museum to get this project started.

We need to think strategically about how the history of the farmstead and park can be incorporated into the experience we’ll be offering as a National Heritage Site. A workbook available from the S&S organization will guide us in this effort.

The City should consider forming a working group to start developing concrete plans for the development of the Nature Park and Meyers Farmstead Historic District, including an overall plan for the park broken down into phases with estimated costs and a timeline for completing each phase. The working group should be comprised of individuals with expertise in various aspects of the components that were included in the plan as presented to the Iowa Department of Transportation in Lisbon’s REAP grant (that resulted in an $75,000 award from the State that provided funding for the purchase of the property from the McElmeel family). Other important members of the working group would include representatives from Lisbon Parks & Rec, Lisbon Historic Preservation Commission, Lisbon History Center, and Lisbon Schools. Seeking broad input for this important project will be very, very important. Once the plan and timeline have been developed, the next logical step is completion of the workbook mentioned in the previous paragraph.

There was some discussion about grant funding, and the advantages/disadvantages of the Meyers Farmstead Historic District being owned by the City. A non-profit group such as Friends of the Meyers Farmstead Historic District could be formed to help protect the property and raise funds for on-going maintenance and programming. Candy noted the importance of active pursuit of grant funds. S&S will help identify grant opportunities but they do not write grants for individual sites. Laura suggested that Drayton look at the Rural Development and Community Facilities grant available through the USDA for storm shelters. ECICOG may be able to help the City with that grant.  
  
We were informed that the Iowa Barn Foundation provides grants to privately owned barns, but making a connection with that organization was recommended. If Heritage Site designation is awarded, we could connect with this organization to keep our site on their radar screen for barn tours, etc.

Candy and Laura both commented on the location of the parking lots as shown in the current diagram of the Nature Park, noting that the parking lots are too close to the barns. Laura also noted that contractors need to exercise caution when making infrastructure improvements that might disturb or impact the foundations of the barns. They suggested an archaeological survey of the park, something we might do with the assistance of a Cornell College class or the Office of the State Archaeologist in Iowa City.

Candy and Laura are very excited about our project, and a tour of the property brought forth many ideas for establishing a partnership between our two entities. If done properly, the end result will be beneficial to our community, Linn County, and the Silos & Smokestacks organization.