

Florence Township Heritage Preservation Commission

HPC Meeting Minutes from Tuesday, August 13, 2019

Attendees: Bill Bruce, Cathy Kouchich, Bill Flies, Lorry Wendland and Janet Bruce

Guests: Tom Johnson, Edie Sward, Lynne Staker, Jean Pontzer, Jane Webster Urbach, Brent Urbach and Peggy Knudsen

The regular meeting of the HPC was called to order at 6 PM. A quorum was present. The July HPC minutes were read and approved. No building permits were presented.

The agenda for this meeting included a discussion of the 2012 Florence Township Park Plan. It is the opinion of HPC members Bill Flies, Cathy Kouchich and Bill Bruce that the plan is required to be reviewed by the HPC and that this has never been done.

Jean Pontzer, Lake Avenue, Frontenac had requested to be on the agenda, and she was given an opportunity to present to the committee. She is of the opinion that the Minnesota DNR financed plan that was implemented this year in Valhalla Park, titled 'Proposal to Restore Oak Savanna Landscape along the Mississippi River at Florence Park' does not adhere to the 2012 Florence Township Park Plan. This was disputed by several attendees.

Further, the requirement for the HPC to perform this review was disputed by several attendees. We reviewed the wording of the ordinances but were unable to obtain an agreement with attendees that it was a legitimate requirement.

Lynne Staker, Lake Avenue, Frontenac described the work she and her husband have done in Valhalla Park. They have removed invasive vegetation from the area across from their home while maintaining significant tree canopy. Attendees seemed to approve of that work.

The discussion branched off to the many topics, the Park Plan, Oak Savannas, the DNR Grant, etc. and was heated at times. Almost all attendees expressed their opinion at some point. Eventually, the parks discussion was terminated, and we moved on to other matters.

The commission discussed the signs on County Highway 2 on the entrance to the Frontenac Historic District. These signs are once again becoming difficult to read because of stains and tarnished metal. They were reconditioned several years ago at significant cost and the commission is reluctant repeat this. Cathy and Bill Bruce will investigate methods of cleaning them.

The commission is in agreement that we should once again, in earnest, take action toward revising the boundaries and ordinances that define the Frontenac Historic District and bring the Township, the County, the State and the National Park Service into agreement as to what those boundaries are. Bill Flies has stated that John Rupp, who is developing the Villa Maria, has expressed interest in adding that property to the district. Bill Flies will take the lead on this project. It is the intent of HPC to keep all property owners that may that may be affected by this project informed.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 PM.

Submitted to HPC members by Bill Bruce, 19 August 2019.

Approved 10 September 2019.