

**Historic Preservation Commission
of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, March 17, 2016

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1 The Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Onalaska was called to
2 order at 4:06 p.m. on Thursday, March 17, 2016. It was noted that the meeting had been
3 announced and a notice posted at City Hall.

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5 Roll call was taken, with the following members present: Ald. Harvey Bertrand, Nancy
6 Tolvstad, Sandy Whiteman

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8 Also Present: Interim Land Use and Development Director Katie Aspenson

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10 Excused Absences: Gary Lass, Jon Grider

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12 Absent: Jim Nelson

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14 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

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16 The minutes from the December 17, 2015 meeting could not be approved as there was no
17 quorum present.

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19 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per individual)**

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21 As there was no one from the public present, Item 4 was addressed next.

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23 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

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25 **Item 4 – Discussion about Designation of Onalaska Cemetery as a Local Historic Site**

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27 Katie said Traci Schnell of Heritage Research, LTD, was asked to look into possibly designating
28 the Onalaska Cemetery as a Historic Site. Katie said there are very specific criteria necessary in
29 order to designate a cemetery, noting that cemeteries, birthplaces and graves typically are not
30 considered eligible for the National Register. Katie said a site must be a religious property that
31 has significance from an architectural or artistic distinction. Katie said she is unaware of anyone
32 of that nature in the Onalaska Cemetery. Another requirement is that a building of significance
33 that was removed from its original location had to have been relocated to the cemetery. Katie
34 said another requirement is there must be a birthplace or a grave of a historical feature “of
35 outstanding importance.”

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37 Nancy said she believes the city might be able to meet that requirement.

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39 Katie said she was given the example of George Washington, and she also told the commission
40 the Onalaska Cemetery does not meet the required criteria [for National recognition].

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42 **Item 5 – Update on Survey of Historic Properties Project within the City of Onalaska**

Reviewed 3/21/16 by Katie Aspenson

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44 Katie said she believes Traci still has one portion of the city left to survey, and she told the
45 commission that Traci will be generating a list of sites and locations that do meet the criteria.
46 Katie said the commission will be adopting this list, and Traci will be meeting in late April with
47 the Wisconsin State Historical Society and discussing the list. Katie said the process of
48 designating additional sites may begin once the report is in hand. Katie said the project must be
49 completed by the end of this summer and noted that the grant the city had received funds Traci's
50 efforts for writing reports and taking photographs. Traci will submit an invoice for the survey,
51 the city will pay her and then submit documentation to the State of Wisconsin so funding may be
52 obtained to pay back the city.

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54 Ald. Bertrand asked Katie how many historical properties she thinks Traci will find.

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56 Katie said she cannot provide a specific number, and also that Traci was not optimistic she
57 would find many. Katie said the properties have to be at least 50 years old and noted it is easier
58 to designate a group of structures and create a historic district than it is to designate properties
59 individually. Katie cited the example of houses in a neighborhood that were constructed at the
60 same time and possess distinct architectural features. Katie said designating a historical district
61 would make it possible to obtain more federal and state tax credit opportunities for citizens
62 residing in the district. Katie said the State of Wisconsin may provide funding through another
63 grant if the city chooses to designate a historic district in the future.

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65 Sandy said this project is creating awareness and that someone might purchase a home and
66 restore its exterior.

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68 **Adjournment**

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70 Motion by Ald. Bertrand, second by Sandy, to adjourn.

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72 On voice vote, motion carried.

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74
75 Recorded by:

76
77 Kirk Bey