

## MEETING NOTES

Thurston County Historic Commission  
Wednesday, November 08, 2023  
Thurston County Community Planning & Economic Development  
3000 Pacific Ave SE, Room 110, Olympia, WA 98501

**Members & Alternates Present:** Chris Hoffman, Bill Lindstrom, Rebecca Sanchez, Rob Kirkwood, Charlie Roe, Troy Wilson, David Petrich, Charles Gloyd, Grace Edwards

**Members & Alternates Absent:**

**Chairing:** Grace Edwards

**Staff Present:** Sonja Cady, Community Planning & Economic Development

**Guests:** Janice Arnold, Stan Klyne, Ira Kitmacher

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. by Chair Edwards

#### **A. ADMINISTRATION**

1. Land Acknowledgement
2. Roll Call-Roll call was taken, attendance is listed above
3. Approval of Meeting Agenda

**Commissioner Hoffman moved to approve the November 08, 2023 agenda. Commissioner Lindstrom seconded. Motion carried.**

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

**Commissioner Hoffman corrected the minutes to show that the meeting was chaired by Commissioner Hoffman and that Commissioners Edwards was absent. Commissioner Roe moved to approve the October 11, 2023 meeting minutes as amended. Commissioner Lindstrom seconded. Motion carried.**

## **B. Heritage Day Recap and Survey Report (Committee Chair/Staff)**

Commissioner Edwards opened the topic by explaining that Heritage Day is an annual event that helps fulfill the Thurston County birthday celebration obligation and gathers Heritage Grant recipients to share details their projects. It is also an opportunity for local historic groups to promote events or projects and share.

Commissioner Hoffman gave a brief recap stating that the only attendees were grant recipients who were tabling the event. He shared he would like to see a larger turn out from the public and encouraged more public outreach to encourage people to attend since so much hard work goes into the event. He added that he would like to limit the presentation times and potentially not allow for PowerPoint presentations. Commissioners Kirkwood and Lindstrom agreed with Commissioner Hoffmans take away of the event.

Ms. Janice Arnold attended and presented at Heritage Day and agreed that the attendance was small, but it was her first Heritage Day and she didn't have anything to compare it to. She added that it was difficult to visit with other historic groups when working a table and would have liked to have had more opportunity for discussions with each group. She asked how the event was publicized? Ms. Bowers answered that it was posted on the county's social media pages and the County Friday Five newsletters. It was also emailed to over 70 people. JOLT news attended the event and followed up with an article, they offered to help publicize the event for 2024. Commissioner Kirkwood suggested that the subcommittee begin meeting now to start planning the next event, and for the Historic Commission to remain in contact with other local historic groups throughout the year to help plan the event.

Ms. Bowers sent a post Heritage Day survey at the suggestion of Commissioner Hoffman. Five responses were received, many echoed the thoughts of the Commission. She shared some of the suggestions including, more marketing, more members of the public, include a speaker, have a workshop on a specific topic, another location and season, and inviting students. Some responses shared details of previous events that had hands on activities for kids and a lot of public participation. Ms. Bowers added that it is hard to define what the event is, is it a birthday party or share and tell?

Commissioner Kirkwood clarified that in the past the Down Through the Decades was put on biannually by local historic groups. There was a fall event that coincided with Pioneer days and students of the Tumwater School District were we required to attend. This event had a very large turn out and a lot of activities for kids. The spring events had a very small public turnout and was a chance for historic groups to get together and talk.

Commissioner Sanchez agreed with the feedback from the participants and suggested targeting student groups at colleges, high schools, and middle schools. The Commission could find a contact form each school and ask that they provide the Heritage Day flyers to history teachers. Hands on activities could be planned in advance and added to the flyer to help promote.

Commissioner Edwards asked that the subcommittee meet prior to the December meeting to begin planning.

**In between topics, Commissioner Edwards took a moment to ask the Commissioners, staff, and guests to give brief introductions.**

### **C. RAC Interpretive Panels Update (Rob/Dana)**

Ms. Bowers submitted the requested drawings to the City shortly after the October meeting. The Lacey staff member working on the MOU has been out of town but will be sending the MOU to the interim County Manager via docusign shortly. Staff will clarify whether there is a language in the MOU granting the City the ability to review each panel. It would be preferred to have one contact at the city review the panels for substantive changes and not on the editing of text level.

Commissioner Lindstrom shared drafts of the St Martins and Nisqually Tribal plaques put together by Bruce Murray. The drafts were received well by the Commission and Mrs. Arnold gave the suggestion to print the drafts to scale to ensure legibility.

### **D. Historic Register Update (Staff/subcommittee)**

Commissioner Edwards thanked the Commissioners who have been busy doing site visits! They have made a lot of progress. The letter requesting to access the historic properties was originally sent to 30 property owners, 17 of which have responded. Commissioner Kirkwood shared that the site visits have been going well and the property owners have been very welcoming and been excited to share their properties.

Commissioner Edwards asked what the next steps will be? Should the Commission send a follow up letter to those who did not initially respond? Commissioner Sanchez agreed to draft an inviting letter to the remaining property owners asking to schedule site visits, she will send it to staff to be mailed within the next few days. Once all of the sites have been visited the subcommittee will put together a report to present to the whole Commission to determine what properties still qualify. The Commission would like to ask the CLG coordinator Michelle Thompson to attend this debriefing meeting.

The Commission further discussed how the qualifying criteria gives flexibility and leeway to keep properties designated historic to ensure preservation. Commissioner Sanchez shared details about the Swayne House as an example of this. The house was removed from the register because of the addition of a garage, several years later they reapplied for placement to the register and it was granted. Commissioner Hoffman added that he attended the CLG training via Zoom and how it was helpful.

### **E. Water, Woods & Prairies Update (Staff/Bill)**

Ms. Bowers will be meeting with City of Lacey staff on November 21<sup>st</sup> to discuss the book MOU. Commissioner Edwards added that the Commission requested \$10,000 of the 2024 budget to be reserved for an additional printing of the book if the MOU does not get approved. The Board of County Commissioners will be making a decision on the budget prior to the end of the year.

## **F. African American Civil Rights National Park Grant Update (Staff)**

Ms. Bowers reiterated that the County was approached by Holly Borth with the City of Olympia to apply for an African American Civil Rights grant with the Olympia Historical Society & Bigelow House Museum, Dr. Thelma Jackson, and other jurisdictions. It was discovered that there are unmarked graves of African American settlers in the Odd Fellow Cemetery and was later found that there are similar situations in other cemeteries throughout the county. The County originally signed off to be the fiscal agent for the grant, but the City no longer has the staffing capacity to facilitate the grant. Mr. Davis and the Racial and Equity department authorized the County to pursue the grant and were able to apply on October 31<sup>st</sup>. If the grant is approved, the County will be working with a consultant to identify and register African American historic sites and graves throughout the county, as well as publish the findings. The Historic Commissioners are welcome to research and review information.

## **G. Ordinance Revision and Historic District Discussion (Staff/Grace)**

Commissioner Edwards briefly summarized the need for an ordinance revision as it has not been done since the 1980's. There is also a current proposal for a historic district and this portion of the ordinance may need revision. Ms. Bowers informed the Commission that the policy for updating an ordinance is through the docketing process. A docket item needs to be applied for by a member of the public and the deadline is December 15<sup>th</sup>. The Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) works with the Planning Commission to prioritize the docket. Ms. Bowers is hopeful that this item would be a priority because the BoCC has an existing docket item to update the language of the Advisory Boards and Commissions to accommodate a five member board.

Commissioner Kirkwood asked for the ordinance subcommittee to meet prior to the December meeting to have the Commission review the application prior to the December 15<sup>th</sup> due date. Staff will forward the information to the subcommittee.

## **H. Staff Updates (Staff)**

- Ms. Bowers will be working on the contract with Shanna Stevenson to be completed in December.
- The second Besse Rd Historic Sign was approved and is ready for installation. The applicant has paid for the original sign and the two signs should be installed shortly.

## **I. Other Business**

- Commissioner Lindstrom shared that the Lake Lawrence "Edwards" Pavilion will be celebrating their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and wondered if there is anything the Commission can do to help promote this. Commissioner Roe added that the Thurston Journal has recently discussed writing an article about the pavilion.
- Commissioner Kirkwood would like to see a Thurston County museum so we don't lose our history. The pavilion has a lot of historic photos, they would be gone if there was a fire like at the Evergreen Ballroom.

## **J. Adjournment**

**Commissioner Kirkwood made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Petrich seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

*Prepared by Sonja Cady, Historic Commission staff*