

**LA CROSSE COUNTY HISTORIC SITES
PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

LA CROSSE COUNTY, WISCONSIN
Administrative Center 400 4th Street North
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601
Telephone (608) 785-9563 Fax (608) 789-4821



April 7, 2007

Rick Bernstein, CLG Coordinator
Wisconsin Historical Society
816 State Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53706-1482

RE: 2006 Annual Report

Dear Mr. Bernstein:

This communication has been approved by members of the La Crosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission as its required CLG annual report to the Wisconsin Historical Society.

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Commission Members: Jason Gillett, County Board Supervisor
Harriet Schuppel, citizen member: Onalaska representative
Richard Bedessem, citizen member: Bangor representative
Kent Sween, West Salem Historical Society
King Holley, real estate broker
Vicki Twinde-Javner, archaeologist
Barbara Kooiman, architectural historian

The commission held seven monthly meetings in 2006. Regular meeting notices are sent to local newspapers, television and radio stations; relevant County departments; and various state and local preservation representatives, including the Wisconsin Historical Society. Commission members also make the effort to announce the meeting dates (the first Friday of each month for most of year, and subsequently changed to last Friday of the month due to scheduling conflicts) to interested persons and organizations with which they make contact, inviting them to attend the

meetings.

Several important topics were introduced and worked on over the course of 2006. The Commission continuously looks at possible sites for historic designation. Typically, sites are brought to the Commission by property owners, although intensive surveys done by the Commission have also determined such sites. One such property was brought to the Commission the previous year, and the final resolution was drafted in early 2006, and then presented to the County Board and was successfully voted on to be placed on our Historic Sites list. The Commission continued working on making a list of potential sites to be nominated to our county historic sites list, and progress is being made on starting the nomination process of some of these.

In conjunction with the nomination of historic sites, the Commission also designed an educational brochure to distribute to the public and local historical societies entitled "Informational Brochure on Nominating Historic Sites in La Crosse County". This brochure detailed such topics as what is the Commission and what do we do, what is a historic site, how many sites are currently on the Historic Sites list maintained by the Commission, how someone can nominate a site, how nomination of a site could affect personal use of property, what are the benefits of having a historic site, and what to do if someone does not want their property nominated to the Historic Sites list. This brochure also included a color photo of one of the potential new sites that will be nominated to our Historic Sites list. The Commission had 300 copies of this brochure printed, and one is provided with this report. This is just one way that the Commission facilitates communications with individuals and organizations.

Each year, since 1995, with the exception of 2004, the County Board has provided some money to be administered by the commission as a Preservation Grant. All county societies which fit the criteria are notified of the grant money, which varies from year to year; they are invited to submit proposals for projects which would make use of the money. In early 2006, the Commission reviewed the projects which had been awarded the grant money the previous year, making sure that all project requirements had been met, including proper documentation. After this, the Commission was pleased to inform the county societies that we had \$1000 for fiscal year 2006 to offer for grants for qualifying projects. The Commission received 3 applications for the 2006 grant, and the Commission split the \$1000 grant between 2 local historical societies for their projects:

Onalaska Historical Society - \$600 for new display case

Bangor Historical Society - \$400 for insulated blinds to use in their museum.

The Commission has also had continuing discussions of possibly publishing an educational booklet for the public as a fundraiser. This potential booklet could contain information on the history of La Crosse, and architectural/archaeological properties in the area (with photos). This would be a large undertaking, and the Commission has had lengthy discussions on how to facilitate such a project, and how to make sure there is adequate funding for such an endeavor.

The Commission also received communications from the Wisconsin Historical Society asking

that we encourage our County Administrator to endorse the nomination of the Mindoro Cut, one of two remaining hand hewn road cuts in the United States, to the National Register of Historic Places. The Commission was pleased to write such an endorsement letter to our County Administrator.

News reached the Commission of one of the versions of the proposed County budget for 2007, in which the entire operational funding and grant money for the Commission would be cut. This version had erroneously listed the Commission as an outside agency. Lengthy discussions were held about what to do about this, as one other year, the Commission was also erroneously placed on the outside agency list. This seems to come from some confusion between our Commission and the La Crosse County Historical Society. Therefore, the Commission wrote a letter to be reviewed by the County Board emphasizing our status as a County appointed Commission. This version of the budget did not pass, and we were able to keep our funding, and were actually awarded an extra \$275 that we requested for the extra foreseen expenses by nominating numerous new sites to our Historic Sites list (cost for adds for public hearings and recording of Historic Site at the Register of Deeds).

Over the year, the Commission has also discussed various topics of interest brought forth by Commission members regarding information from historical societies, or in the local media. Such topics included expansion and changes to proposed buildings and/or properties, re-locations of one of the local historical societies museum materials, and other pertinent topics of interest.

This report briefly sums up the activities of the La Crosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission over the year 2006, as it sought to continue its service to the community. If you have any questions concerning this report or the activities of the commission, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Vicki Twinde-Javner, Chair
La Crosse County Historic Sites
Preservation Commission