

City of Lancaster  
Historic Preservation Commission Meeting  
July 17th, 2024

Meeting Notes

1. Meeting called to order at 5:00
2. Roll Call: Member present Jon Angeli, Stuart Harper, Bruce Fritz, Kyle Vesperman, Linda Luckey, Mike Johansen and Mike Steffel
3. Approved Historic Preservation Commission minutes of 7-19-2023 all in favor on voice vote
4. Discuss Dewey Church-
  - a. The future of the Dewey Church
  - b. The Nelson Dewey Church group is losing members and may disband
  - c. The church would likely revert back to the city
  - d. Jon Angelli and David Timmerman would like to make a push to get the building preserved.
    - i. The building is the last pre Civil War public building in the city
    - ii. The Grant County Historic Society is not interested in taking on another project.
    - iii. What should happen next?
      1. The building has to have a purpose
      2. Usable space for the community
        - a. Pop up shop
        - b. Museum speakers
        - c. Incubator space
        - d. Venue for events
  - e. David Timmerman shared a possible concept drawing of the reimagined space
  - f. Current projects needed to stabilize the structure
    - i. Roof - estimated cost 29 thousand dollars
    - ii. Painting- estimated cost 29 thousand dollars
    - iii. Other unknown ?
  - g. Ongoing questions-Do we have the desire? What are the costs? What possible uses? Do we have enough meeting space already? What will be the administrative costs?
5. Discuss Darlington's historic district and its management
  - a. No concrete information was available, so this was tabled until the next meeting
  - b. Bruce Fritz is responsible for getting the info for the next meeting.
6. Future agenda items
  - a. Report on the church
  - b. Darlington's historic district
7. Next meeting scheduled for August 21st at 5:00 pm
8. Meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm

## City of Lancaster Historic Preservation Commission

Minutes: Aug. 21, 2024, City Hall

1. Call to Order: Chair Harper called the meeting to order at 5 p.m.
2. Roll Call: Present: Jon Angeli, Stuart Harper, Mike Johansen, Linda Lucke, Kyle Vesperman (Quorum present)
3. Minutes: M/S/C on voice vote, with correction of the spelling of Lucke's last name (Johansen motion, Angeli second)  
*Bruce Fitz and Mike Steffel joined the meeting at 5:03 p.m.*
4. Dewey Church:
  - Johansen discussed the physical state of the building: water, gas and electric are connected to site, sewer is available but stubbed off; some broken windows, lack of insulation, gaps in siding, needs paint; roof needs tear-off and replacement (estimate is \$20,000); floors are at different heights, which could require constructing internal ramp. He believes architect's sketch circulated at July meeting does not adequately preserve the historical character of the building.
  - General discussion:
    - a. Organization has about \$20,000 but needs to hand off responsibility for the building.
    - b. If the building is preserved, what is its potential use and purpose beyond serving as a monument? Is there a need for this space in the city, or does it compete with other venues? It could, for example, be a space to host traveling exhibits from Wisconsin Historical Society and others, but would that compete with historical museum? Evidence shows that walk-in traffic to historical sites is not reliable; need events to attract visitors.
    - c. The building is resonant of what Lancaster was like 150 years ago: a community of white buildings. David Timmerman has been adding Dewey-related collections and artifacts to the building.
    - d. History of the site goes beyond Lancaster: There should be support statewide for a site such as this connected to the first governor. Conversely, WHS does not seem to be interested (and is cutting back support for other specialty sites of historical significance in SW Wisconsin). If no one else cares, should Lancaster?
    - e. Lancaster needs to ask directly for support from WHS, legislature, others.

### Action steps

- Angeli (with help from Timmerman): prepare document that summarizes the case for preserving site and generating financial and other resources
- Johansen: obtain occupancy limits for Dewey church, acquire estimates for repair work that would preserve structure for 20 additional years
- Harper: contact legislators to assess potential strategies of support
- Lucke and Fritz: Coordinate approach to WHS

5. Darlington Historic District:
  - Fritz shared Darlington's ordinance, which primarily covers exteriors of buildings in main business district. Noted that it is easy to work with, affordable, and flexible – perhaps to a fault. It issues a certificate of appropriateness for proposed modifications; it is designed not to cause delays. Dodgeville, by comparison, is more prescriptive.
  - General discussion: Businesses generally opposed Lancaster's last effort, saying they should not need city permission to remodel their exteriors. Any new effort should include early discussion and education, to reduce fear of change and fear of the unknown.
6. Future agenda items: nothing new
7. Next meeting: Wednesday Sept. 18, 5 p.m.
8. Adjourn at 5:51 p.m

Michael Kuchta  
City Administrator

## Historic Preservation Commission

Sept. 18, 2024, City Hall

1. Call to order at 5:01 pm
2. Present: Chair Stuart Harper, John Angeli, Bruce Fritz, Mike Johansen, Linda Lucke.  
Mike Steffel joined at 5:05 p.m.  
Absent: Kyle Vesperman, Rob Bell.  
Also present: David Timmerman; staff: Michael Kuchta.
3. Minutes of 8/21/24: Johansen moved to approve, Lucke second; all ayes
4. Dewey Church: Some commission members met 9/16 with Jason Tish from the Wisconsin Historical Society. Tish recommended going through the historic register process again (application was denied in 2008); emphasizing the Dewey connection in applications and designations; granting local historic designation for the church and other desired Lancaster sites. Tish said there is no capital money available, but there is planning money.

Members discussed education about the site, the marketing and visibility needed to inspire local donors (including through estate planning), emphasizing the statewide importance of the site, having information embedded on the city's website (promoting the web landing page through events, a brochure, a QR code, etc.), getting people into the buildings.

Harper sent a letter and supplemental material to Evers, Tranel, Marklein, Van Orden, and Baldwin.

Timmerman distributed promotional materials to the committee.

Consensus to begin drafting marketing information for next meeting; for Timmerman to write preliminary national registry application to be sent through the state.

5. Historic District: Harper distributed Lancaster's unsuccessful policy from 2010-'11. Committee discussed pros and cons of trying again. (TIF idea to support a preservation district also did not advance.) Previously, land owners resisted, primarily because of belief that conditions placed on a district would dictate or limit how they could use their property. Reviving the idea could make it necessary for 1-2 people to meet individually with every property owner and gather their thoughts and concerns before moving forward. Recognition that advocates would have to acknowledge horror stories, especially in more-restrictive communities such as Mineral Point, but share successes, too. Goal of reviving idea in Lancaster would be preserving building quality and appearance, providing flexibility in repair and improvements, reviewing plans without unnecessary delay and cost.
6. Future agenda items: Same
7. Next meeting: Wednesday Nov. 13, 5 p.m.
8. Adjourn: Johansen, Steffel MSC all ayes. 5:53 p.m.

■ *Michael Kuchta, city administrator*

■ *Corrected 11/13/24*

## Historic Preservation Commission

Nov. 13, 2024, City Hall

1. Call to order at 5:00 pm
2. Present: Chair Stuart Harper, John Angeli, Mike Johansen, Linda Lucke, Mike Steffel, Kyle Vesperman. Bruce Fritz joined at 5:02 p.m.  
Also present: city administrator Michael Kuchta
3. Minutes of 9/18/24: Johansen moved to approve, Steffel second (with correction of spelling of Sen. Marklein's name); all ayes
4. Dewey Church: Harper summarized responses from offices of Sen. Baldwin, Gov. Evers and Rep. Tranel. They suggested:
  - file applications to list the site on local, state, national registries of historic places to increase funding opportunities;
  - being aware that historical tax credits can be used or sold;
  - pursuing funding availability through Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (Ela Kadke) and nonprofit organizations, including sources that preserve church buildings;
  - deciding what use of the site should be (perhaps using Darlington as example of what multi-purpose use might look like).Discussion noted the need to look far and wide for funding connections (National Brewing Museum in Potosi benefited from tying location to Great River Road); being aware of limits and strings attached to outside funding (including that most funding does not cover maintenance); the need to inventory the physical work that is necessary (basic rehab, bathrooms, etc.) to get accurate estimate of costs; and how to address the limited visibility and use within the community.
5. Consensus to take on specific tasks:
  - Lucke and David Timmerman will research what is needed to apply for historical listings.
  - Fritz and Angeli will prepare document to encourage estate planning and other means to build an endowment.
  - Harper will talk with Kadke and Troy Maggied about how to include site in comprehensive plan process
6. Consensus to schedule quarterly meetings. Next meeting: March 12, 2025, 5 p.m.
7. Adjourn: Steffel moved to adjourn at 5:45, Johansen second; all ayes.

■ *Michael Kuchta, city administrator*