

**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



May 20, 2009

Joe DeRose
Wisconsin Historical Society
816 State Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53706-1482

RE: 2008 Annual Report

Dear Mr. DeRose,

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.

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

Commission Member

Contact Person: Vicki Twinde-Javner, Chair
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La Crosse, WI 54601

The commission held nine monthly meetings in 2008 (January, February, March, May, August, September, October, November, and December). The Commission continuously looked at possible sites for historic designation. Since the Commission meets only monthly, and with job commitments of some of the Commission members, an idea was brought forth to hire an intern to help with preparing nomination forms

for sites the Commission has been considering nominating. However, the Executive Committee felt that the Commission should look for a non-paid intern for this type of work. The Commission researched and discussed various properties that they felt would be candidates for the historic sites list, but no nominations were submitted in 2008.

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. Two grant applications were received and reviewed for 2008, and \$500 was awarded to Norskedalen Nature and Heritage Center to assist with expenses (costumes and lanterns) of their twilight history tour, and \$500 was awarded to the Preservation Alliance of La Crosse for an educational brochure relating to local preservation efforts and fostering the support of historic preservation in the greater La Crosse and Coulee Region.

In 2008, the Commission requested to be re-assigned to the jurisdiction of the Planning, Resources, and Development Committee. The Commission felt this would be a better fit for our organization, as we need guidance from this Committee for legal descriptions for any nominated site. The Chair of the Commission discussed this at an Executive Committee meeting, and the move for jurisdiction was approved. As part of this move, the Commission prepared a packet of information for the PRD Committee highlighting some of the brochures and research the Commission has done in the past.

The Bangor VFW sought out the advise of the Commission, as their headquarters building in Bangor, which is currently on the Commission's nominated historic sites list as part of the Hussa Brewery Complex, was being considered to be razed by the Village of Bangor for the creation of a TIF district. Originally, the VFW members were opposed to moving out of this building, and representatives from the VFW attended several meetings, and the Commission discussed options for them to pursue possibly saving the building. Ultimately, the VFW took a buyout from the Village to move to a new location.

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). 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.

The Commission also pursued the idea of having its own website. Currently, the meeting minutes of the Commission can be found on the County's website, but the Commission felt its own website would be more beneficial to the public. Various discussions were held about what could be on this website including what the Commission does, nomination forms, meeting minutes, photos of historic sites and brief summaries, applications for grants, copies of brochures and other publications put out by the Commission, contact information for the Commission, etc. The Commission felt this would be the best way to inform the public on the purpose of the Commission. The Chair and Vice Chair met with people from the County's IT department to begin this process.

The Commission worked on re-evaluating its ordinance. Currently, the ordinance does not give the Commission much say in demolition or re-modeling of historic buildings. The Commission had proposed some ordinance changes a few years ago, but decided to wait until the County's Comprehensive Plan was completed, as historic preservation was a part of this plan. In 2008, the Commission began again to revisit these proposed changes to the ordinance and discussed further changes and revisions.

This report briefly sums up the activities of the La Crosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission over the year 2008, 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