

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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Time and Date: The Historic Preservation Commission met on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. in the Maple Room of Wausau City Hall.

Members Present: Gary Gisselman, Blake Opal-Wahoske, Kevin Crooks, David Oberbeck, Brian Mason, and Patrick Bacher

Members Not Present: Linda Tryczak, Christine Martens, Steve Miller

Staff Present: Brad Lenz, Brooke Mueller, Samantha Kulig

Others Present: Mary (SeKara LLC)

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the *Wausau Daily Herald* in the proper manner.

Chairperson Gary Gisselman called the meeting to order at approximately 4:00 p.m. noting that a quorum was present.

### **Approve the meeting minutes for August 28, 2024.**

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Motion by Patrick Bacher, seconded by Kevin Crooks. Motion approved unanimously, 5-0.

### **Report on Plan Commission action for landmarking DAUV building**

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Gary gave a brief update to Mary from SeKara LLC, the new owners of the DAUV in regards to what happened at the previous meetings. Mary then updated the group and stated that they were unaware that this designation was occurring until they went to the closing and Emmerich gave them the letter stating that it was a possibility. She then did some research and read all of the minutes and stated that they have no plans to raze the building. Her business, SeKara LLC, has been in business since 2003 and have assisted living facilities for disabled adults. They intend to use this building for their administrative services and as a home base for their managers. They also plan on having a gathering space for their current 38 residents to have lunch together, do crafts, watch movies, etc. They were renting the building for a month before the purchase went through. They have been removing carpeting and repainting, cleaning and putting in new laminate flooring. They have also replaced one of the furnaces.

Mary asked the group what it would mean to have the building designated as a historic landmark. Gary gave her a brief history of the building and the reasoning for the possible designation. It was also pointed out that the only changes that would have to be approved by the group would be any exterior changes to the building that require a building permit. This would not include tuck-pointing the bricks, painting the exterior, etc. The designation also would not require that the current owners repair any past changes that would have needed approval retroactively. The designation would also prevent future owners from razing the building.

Kevin stated that if SeKara, as the new owners, wrote a letter to the council prior to the October 8 meeting or showed up at the meeting to state their acceptance of the designation that would help the council in their final decision. Mary agreed that the property needs some love, but ultimately stated that the property is in really good shape.

### **Discussion and possible action on landmarking Marathon County Home and Hospital (1200 Lake View Drive).**

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This was postponed from the Public Hearing so Marathon County could study the ordinance. We have not heard anything from Marathon County regarding this topic since then. Gary stated that we can act on this and get it sent to Plan Commission to which everyone else agreed that the landmark status should be accepted.

Patrick stated that the building is in excellent shape and Lance Leonord had previously stated that they have no plan to raze that building so he's not sure why there would be an opposition.

Kevin pointed out that it's one of the least visible historic buildings but it is still important to save it due to its architecture and history.

Motion by Kevin Crooks, seconded by Patrick Bacher. Motion to approve landmark status approved unanimously 5-0

### **Discuss new landmarks in Marathon Park – Little Red School House and East Gate Hall**

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Gary has stated that Anna with the Historical Society that runs the programs out of the Little Red School House has some concerns about what the County may have planned for it in the future. This was the Spooner School house that was moved to Marathon Park. The East Gate Hall (Youth Building-Stone Wing) was built by the National Youth Administration which placed the letters NYA within the exterior of the stone wall. This building hosted Martin Luther King Jr. when he spoke in Wausau as well as Michelle Obama.

Gary stated that the Episcopal Church of St John is interested in their facilities being designated historic landmarks. This complex, along with the Little Red School House and East Gate Hall, will be added to the agenda for next month to discuss and take possible action in landmarking. Public Hearing would be anticipated in January.

### **Discuss National District designation for the Downtown Historic District**

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Gary stated that there are enough unique buildings within the Downtown area to see about getting it designated as a National Historic District. A grant through the state Historical Society would be applied for and would be used to hire a consultant to draw up the nomination packet for the National Registry. It will be a lengthy process. Blake asked if this is something that would have to be voted on or if it would just get done. Gary stated that once it got to the point, the residents of that district would be notified. All the properties in the district would then have access to state and federal tax credits for historic properties. The boundary lines for this potential Historic District would be looked at in more detail in the future to potentially remove some empty/parking lots and make sure other buildings are included. This will be added to next months meeting to discuss in more detail what the timeline may look like as well as to possibly discuss with the local Historical Society on recommendations we well.

### **Discussion on other potential landmarks or districts**

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Brooke asked about the stone building with the rounded roofline located on the corner of Prospect Ave and Kickbusch St. Gary stated that this is the old Forward Electronics building, he also pointed out that the Longfellow neighborhood is being looked at to become a historic district because of the industrial buildings along the railroad tracks.

Brian brought up the old grocery store building at the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and Wausau Ave that was mentioned in previous meetings. It's at risk of demolition within 10 years or so for the reconstruction of that intersection by the state. Sam also mentioned the building located at 6<sup>th</sup> and Chicago Ave, currently owned by Blazing Gifts. This building was previously a merchant store it also has some nice architectural details. Patrick pointed out that in person, the building does need some attention.

### **Next Meeting Date**

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The next meeting date is October 30, 2024.

### **Adjournment**

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*Motion by Brian Mason and seconded by Patrick Bacher. Motion approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.*

**The Historic Preservation Commission is next scheduled to meet at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 23, 2024.**