

**CITY OF WILDWOOD  
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**

**MEETING OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM  
16860 MAIN STREET  
WILDWOOD, MISSOURI 63040  
February 28, 2019**

**I. Welcome and Roll Call**

Meeting: Thursday, 2/28/19, City Hall, Community Room, 6:30 p.m.

Attending: Chair Wojciechowski, Secretary Scott, Commissioner Compton, Commissioner Hrubes, Commissioner Hammond, Alternate Stevens, Planning and Zoning Commission Liaison Gragnani, and Council Liaison Taylor.

Absent: Vice-Chair Thompson, Commissioner Sprunger, Alternate Rowton, and Council Liaison Bartoni.

Staff: Director of Planning Joe Vujnich and Assistant Director of Planning and Parks Kathy Arnett

**II. Opening Remarks by Chair Wojciechowski**

Chair Wojciechowski welcomed everyone to the meeting. A memorandum was distributed to the Commission Members informing them of the role of the Members, Alternates, and Liaisons.

**III. Introduction of new Commission Member, Chris Hammond (Ward Three)**

Chair Wojciechowski introduced the Commission's newest member, Chris Hammond.

**IV. Approval of the Historic Preservation Commission December 6, 2018 and January 24, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made by Commissioner Hrubes, seconded by Commissioner Compton, to approve the meeting minutes from December 6, 2018. A voice vote was taken, with a unanimous affirmative result, and Chair Wojciechowski declared the motion approved by a vote of 5-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scott, seconded by Commissioner Compton, to approve the meeting minutes from January 24, 2019. A voice vote was taken, with a unanimous affirmative result, and Chair Wojciechowski declared the motion approved by a vote of 5-0.

**V. Public Hearings**

**a. H.R. 1-19 The Marianist Province in the U.S., c/o Curtis Ballenger, 4000 State Route 109, Wildwood, Missouri, 63025** - A request to place a family retreat lodge, which is located at 4000 State Route 109 (Locator Number: 26V310045), known as Marycliff (formerly Woodcliff), c. 1905, per St. Louis County Tax Records, c. 1891 per City of Wildwood's Historic Building Inventory [Survey 2014-15, Updated 12-6-2018, Page 120 of 343], on the City's Historic Register. This tract of land is zoned NU Non-Urban Residence District. The property owners submitted an application to place this building onto the City's Historic Register, with the intent of its continued use as a family retreat lodge at the Marianist Retreat Center, and no requested incentives from the City of Wildwood. **(Ward Six)**

Chair Wojciechowski read an overview of the public hearing process. Assistant Director Arnett read the request into the record. Director of Planning Vujnich provided an overview of the packet of information provided on the request. He noted the posting was completed in compliance with the City's Zoning Ordinance.

Assistant Director Arnett narrated a presentation of photographs of the subject site to orientate the Commission Members.

Curtis Ballenger, representing the Marianist Retreat, introduced Jim Ford, the Executive Director, and John Guenther, the project architect representing Powers Bowersox. The property owners provided a history of the subject site, including its construction in 1905. Payton Carr, the grandson of James Yeatman, who was the early developer of Glencoe and brought the railroad to that area in 1853, built Woodcliff in 1905, as a summer home. He lived on Vandeventer Avenue in the City of St. Louis, which was a very prominent location at the time. Mr. Carr's widow sold the property to the Brewers/Maltsters Union of Anheuser-Busch for a clubhouse. The Union owned it for four (4) years and then sold it to the Marianist Province. The property has a rich history, including its mention in the book, *The Crisis*, which sold 1,000,000 copies in 1900.

Mr. Ford noted the Marianist Order of the Catholic Church is the property owner. There are currently approximately three hundred (300) Marianists in the nation. In the 1940s, the organization was looking for a location for their brothers away from the City. Once they acquired the property, they changed the name of Woodcliff to Marycliff and added dormitory rooms. They then changed it to their national headquarters and converted Marycliff to offices. In the 1960's, the Marianists decided to use the property for retreats to give young men an experience outside of school. So, in 1967, a new building of 30,000 square feet was constructed. Marycliff is 12,000 square feet in size.

The Marianists have been hosting retreats for fifty-one (51) years on the property. While the organization is Catholic-based, the facility is open to all religions and wellness retreats. Their goal of the current remodel of Marycliff is to provide a family experience, with a faith element. The current plans are to remodel Marycliff to meet the needs of families; make it state-of-the-art, while honoring its historic elements; meet County codes, yet retain the exterior character. The project should go out to bid in late Spring, with a contractor for work to be selected in Summer, with project completion scheduled in 2020.

Their application to place the property on the City's Local Registry is to honor family traditions, as part of history. They intend to tie in family retreats with the building and its historical significance, having it be listed on the registry is important. The property owner is gaining nothing from the registry, since the Order is not requesting any incentives, but do gain the status of being on the registry and the knowledge of its historic importance.

Discussion was held among the petitioner and the Commission Members and included the following: the potential for applying to the National Register of Historic Places in the future; the addition that was added to Marycliff in 1950; the lack of modifications to the building from its original condition, with the exception of sleeping porches being changed for all-season use; the shingle siding on wood frame on the upper floor, with a stone first floor exterior; the lack of proposed changes to the exterior, which will only include general maintenance; the challenges with the Fire Department's Code requirements; the modification to electric and water from the front of the property (electric currently from the back); the new elevator, which will be electric not hydraulic; the proposed interior remodel for ten (10) suites, which will include a queen bed for parents, two (2) beds for children, and a separate bathroom; the remodeled building will also be used for overflow from the main retreat building, when necessary; the family retreats will be self-contained in Marycliff; the availability of non-profit conferences held on the property; the style of family retreats, which will be modeled after the New Jersey Marianist family retreat center; the desire of the members to tour the property; the addition of new HVAC units; the Code requirement of one (1) window being changed to a door on the north

side of the building; the pergola, built by Mr. Carr for his daughter's wedding; the stone wall and pergola, which were built at the same time as the house; the question if the applicant would want to add additional structures on the property, as part of the registry request; the National Register can include the entire site, not just the building; the question about the date of the Woodcliff book; the intention of the owner to include historical information for the families that will stay there; the question if the Wildwood Historical Society has done any research on the property, which they have not, but it did have a history night at the Center; the interior renovations being designed to look like what was there, even though state-of-the-art; the members' appreciation for the restoration effort; the existence of Westland Acres as the single historic district on the City's register; the facility predates the requirement of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), so the zoning is NU Non-Urban Residence District, but there are two (2) CUPs for the wastewater treatment plant and the cellular tower facility on the property; the use of Bays-ET service, which provides 50MB download speed, along with telephone service and their satisfaction with this provider; the artwork on site, made by Brother Mel Meyer, whose creations are all over the world; a sculpture garden, and the fresco in the chapel in the Marycliff building; the active role of Brother Herb in the incorporation efforts; the proposed changes in the parking for visitors, which will provide additional spaces in the area; the existence of a treatment plant on the property for wastewater management; and the potential for use of ground source HVAC.

A tour was scheduled for the Commissioners on Tuesday, March 19, 2019, at 4:00 p.m. The public hearing was then closed.

## **VI. New Business**

- a. Ready for Action – No Items
- b. Not Ready for Action – No Items

## **VII. Old Business**

- a. Ready for Action – Three (3) Items

### **1. Modifications to Content Discussed on January 24, 2019 relative to Next Chapter in Wildwood's Written History Covering 1920 – 1990. (Wards – All)**

Director Vujnich notified the Commission of an email staff received from Jill Von Gruben, the contracted author for this year's chapter of the Wildwood Written History Project. In her correspondence, Ms. Von Gruben noted her decision to not include a story about a fundraiser in the Pond Area in 1933, which in today's context would be inappropriate. In an effort to avoid any issues with the book's content, she made the decision to not include this story and wanted the Commissioners to be made aware of her decision.

Discussion was held regarding the following: the support of the members to remove the story, so as to not draw negative attention to a very positive project; the issue could create a public relations concern; the desire to keep the book positive; the lack of impact on the chapter without the story; and the desire to defer to the author's decision.

Consensus was reached to support the author in the exclusion of this story.

### **2. Proposal for the Development of Plans for Bid Specifications in Association with the Reconstruction of the Essen Log Cabin (Wards – All)**

Assistant Director Arnett provided a history of the Essen Log Cabin and its subsequent theft. She noted the City has had difficulty securing bids for the reconstruction of the cabin, given the lack of knowledge on the materials due to the unique circumstances of how it was dismantled. The Commission had previously discussed the need to have plans prepared for it and a set of bid specifications created to ensure comparable, and numerous, bids could be received.

Department staff had reached out to numerous architectural firms, with experience in historical restoration projects, and did receive a proposal from one (1) such firm to draft preliminary reconstruction plans. The firm was Patterhn Ives and the proposal, which was quoted at \$11,040.00, was presented to the Commission, with its support by the Department. Assistant Director Arnett noted there were two (2) optional add-ons the members needed to discuss and determine if they should be included, as part of the base proposal. The add-ons were for a structural assessment and a 3D visualization/rendering of the cabin.

Discussion was held regarding the following: the potential for insurance payments on the theft of the cabin; the desire to have the architect assist in location selection; the potential for the architect to complete a preliminary site selection analysis; the need of the Commission to start the process for site selection; the desire to not include either add-ons presented; and the reasonability of the hourly rate provided by the architect in the proposal.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hrubes, seconded by Commissioner Scott, to recommend approval of the Phase 1 contract with Patterhn Ives to the City Council. A voice vote was taken, with a unanimous affirmative result, and Chair Wojciechowski declared the motion approved by a vote of 5-0.

### **3. Update on 2019 Work Program of the City's Historic Preservation Commission (Wards – All)**

Assistant Director Arnett reviewed current status of the Commission's 2019 Work Program, noting nine (9) of the fourteen (14) items were underway, with five (5) remaining to be started.

Discussion was held regarding the possibility of an upcoming training session being completed by the City Attorney, as part of an ethics training.

#### **b. Not Ready for Action – Three (3) Items**

1. An offer from Mary Guise to sell to the City of Wildwood the original logs from the Heege-Boxwood Log Cabin. (Wards - All)
2. Discussion on archiving documents from the City's incorporation that are currently being stored at City Hall and Off-Site Locations. (Wards – All)
3. Work Program for Historic Route 66 Promotion (Wards – All)

The Commission Members requested an update on the items on the agenda listed as 'Not Ready for Action.'

Director Vujnich noted the logs from the Heege-Boxwood Log Cabin were reviewed and found to be damaged. The owner was informed by the City it was not interested in the acquisition of the logs. Consensus was reached by the Commission Members to remove the item from future agendas.

Director Vujnich noted the archiving of incorporation documents has been under discussion for some time, but an efficient solution for these materials to be saved has not been finalized. He noted this item may be brought back to the Commission's Work Program, when a few more pressing items have been completed.

Commission Liaison Gragnani, who was very involved in the incorporation effort, noted she would reach out to others who had been involved in it as well to determine if their assistance could be provided. Consensus was reached by the Commission Members to retain the item on future agendas and address it, when more information and time were available.

Director Vujnich noted the Historic Route 66 promotion efforts were ongoing and would be an action item on an agenda soon.

## **VIII. Review of Proposed Zoning/Plats/Site Development Plan/Demolition Requests – None**

## **IX. Projects-Initiatives-Efforts Updates**

Director Vujnich updated the Commission Members on each of the following items:

A. Social Media Initiatives – A number of posts have been completed in the last few months, including a feature on the Hencken House, the first of these items that are intended to highlight the City’s Historic Registry properties and invitations for stories for the upcoming chapter in the Wildwood History Book.

B. 2019 Points of Interest Map – The 2019 Map will include information on scenic byways from the historic communities of Kelpe, Centaur, Monarch, and Pond, which include the following roadways: Babler Park Drive, Centaur Road, Ossenfort Road, Pond Road, Rieger Road, and Wild Horse Creek Road.

C. Celebrate Wildwood 2019 – The City is looking for a new location for the event.

D. Historic Marker Program (one (1) sign remains for installation) - There is no change in this item. One (1) marker location remains and is waiting on a future bridge reconstruction project. The Department of Public Works is currently in right-of-way and easement negotiations. Given the negotiation timeframes, this project may be delayed.

E. Historic Preservation Training – Department staff is working on a guest speaker for the March meeting.

F. City Projects – Department staff provided information on the following projects, relative to historic preservation:

- Manchester Road (Historic Route 66) – Bids were opened today for the construction of Phase III of the streetscape project and the low bid was under budget. Utility work has already begun, with the project to be fully underway this Spring.
- State Route 109 – This significant roadway project will be underway in a few months. The archaeological evaluation showed there will be no impacts on any historic assets in association with this work.
- Belleview Farms – When the weather breaks, a number of site assessments will be conducted before decisions are made regarding the future use of the site. The Commissioners should anticipate having additional information on this site beginning this Spring.
- John L. LeCave Memorial Trailhead – This project has begun and is expected to be completed near the end of May. This project is located between the historic communities of Monarch and Centaur.
- Community Park Phase 3 – The City is working with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to rectify an issue from Phase 2.

G. Cemeteries - No change in the status of this project.

H. Other - None

**X. Other – None**

**XI. Upcoming Meeting Dates** – March 28, 2019 (Thursday), at 6:30 p.m.

**XII. Closing Remarks and Adjournment by Chair**

A motion was made by Commissioner Scott, seconded by Commissioner Hammond, to adjourn the meeting. With a unanimous voice vote, Chair Wojciechowski declared the meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.