

# Developing a Preservation Education Plan for the Heritage Preservation Commission of the City of Winona

## *Final Report*

June 10, 2015

I.	Introduction	Page 2
II.	Our process	Page 2
III.	Recommendations	Page 6
IV.	Documents	
	1. The short term mission statement	Page 7
	2. Two Year Plan	Page 8
	3. Foundational Documents of the Preservation Movement	Page 11
	4. Timeline of Winona Preservations History	Page 12
	5. Reports of meetings with four collaboration partners	Page 19
	▪ Winona County Historical Society	
	▪ Visit Winona	
	▪ Main Street	
	▪ Winona Area Public Schools	

**Greg Gaut**

**Historic Preservation Consultant**

---

**1235 Yale Place #408  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
612-200-9494 (home/office)  
507-279-7859 (cell)  
[GregGaut@gmail.com](mailto:GregGaut@gmail.com)**

## Introduction

On October 6, 2014, the City of Winona issued a Request for Proposals seeking a consultant to assist the Heritage Preservation Commission in the creation of a comprehensive and sustainable preservation education plan. The HPC had decided to seek this funding because it felt that there was a low level of awareness of the commission's mission and activities among the public generally and among property owners in the downtown historic district in particular.

In part, the commission's concerns relate to its desire to develop a semi-autonomous website to promote heritage preservation in Winona. However, members felt that the problem of the HPC's low profile in the community required more than just a better webpage. At the most fundamental level, the HPC faced the same dilemma that every similar organization in the county faces: how to demonstrate to the public and property owners that regulation based on the significance and integrity of historic properties benefits the entire community.

Three proposals were received by the October 20 deadline. At its October 22, 2015 meeting, the HPC decided to hire me as the consultant for this project. The city council approved the HPC's decision on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, and I appeared at the November 12, 2014 meeting of the HPC to outline the process and begin work.

## Our Process

At the **November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting**, I presented a work plan to the members of the commission who were present (there was no quorum). This plan had been laid out in the proposal I had prepared in response to the Request for Proposals. I reminded the commission that in deciding to develop a preservation education plan, they were fulfilling Goal #3 of the statewide preservation plan ("Educate, Educate, Educate"), and in fact, were perhaps doing more to respond to that statewide goal than the Minnesota Historical Society itself. I told them that we would need to think about what they wanted to accomplish, what audiences they wanted to reach, and what methods they wanted to use, and that clear priorities would need to be set.

I also noted that the commission was not operating in a vacuum, nor did it need to accomplish things in isolation. We needed to think about collaborating with other organizations in Winona who have similar concerns, including the Winona County Historical Society, Visit Winona, Winona Main Street, and Winona Area Public Schools (WAPS). We also needed to think about working closely with the State Historic Preservation Office at the Minnesota Historical Society.

The members present enthusiastically endorsed the plan, and therefore I proceeded to arrange meetings with the organizations noted above. On November 21<sup>st</sup>, I visited the Winona History Center and met with Mark Peterson, executive director, and Jennifer Weaver, assistant director, of the Winona County Historical Society. On that same date, I met with Pat Mutter, the director of Visit Winona, whose office is also at the History Center. On November 24, I met with Della Schmidt, the director of the Chamber of Commerce, and David Bittner, the coordinator of the chamber's Main Street program, at the Chamber's east side office. Joined by Jennifer Weaver, I met on December 22, 2014 with Kelly Halverson, the director of learning and teaching for WAPS, at her office at the high school.

I found that all of them shared concerns similar to the HPC and all were open to collaboration on one aspect or another of the HPC's potential education initiatives. I prepared written reports of each of these meetings and presented them to the HPC members. These reports are included as #5 in the Documents section of this report.

At the **December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting** of the HPC, I took the commission members "back to the basics" with a presentation about the documents which provide the legal foundation for historic preservation commissions and also the planning documents which guide our work. These documents, along with a cover sheet, were distributed to the commission prior to the meeting. They were arranged both by jurisdiction (federal, state, city) and chronologically. The members seemed to value this review, and several commented that in fact they had not previously been introduced to these fundamental documents. An edited version of the cover sheet is included as #3 in the Documents section of this report.

At this meeting I also reported on my first three meetings with potential collaborators, and we began to brainstorm a draft mission statement to guide our process. Of course, the basis mission of the HPC is clearly articulated by the Winona Ordinance 22.27 which creates the commission. However, we needed a short term mission statement to focus the commission on the immediate tasks. The commission members articulated concerns about not only creating an effective webpage, but also reaching out in a personal way to property owners in the district. One important idea was that the significance of historic buildings is best understood by telling the stories of the people who designed and built them, who lived and worked in them, or who sought to destroy or preserve them.

While in St. Paul during this period, I visited with Michael Koop, the State Historic Preservation Office staff person who is responsible for aiding HPCs around the state. I asked him for ideas about effective preservation education programs. He is a member of the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, and he put out a call for ideas through that network which returned a few interesting ideas. I asked him if he would travel to Winona for the January meeting of the HPC and he agreed to do so.

At the **January 14, 2015 meeting**, I reported on my meeting with Kelly Halverson from WAPS. She explained that it would be difficult to attract individual teachers to a project to create historic preservation curriculum not because it wasn't a good idea, but mainly because the teachers already feel overwhelmed by the curriculum demands incorporated into state standards.<sup>1</sup> We also continued our brainstorming on a draft short term mission statement, the final version of which appears as #1 in the Documents section of this report.

The main event of this meeting was the appearance of Michael Koop from the SHPO. Since 1992 he has been assisting HPCs around the state, and before that time he was an independent historic preservation consultant. He has visited Winona many times and is very familiar with the city. He urged the city to become affiliated with the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC), which he described as an important resource for local HPCs. In particular, he urged the HPC to consider getting a grant to host a training event sponsored by

---

<sup>1</sup> Michael Koop confirmed this when he noted that attempts around the state to develop preservation curriculum have been difficult to start and even more difficult to sustain.

NAPC called a CAMP, which stands for Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program. Typically, these are one or two day events attended by HPC members and city and *Main Street* staff.

Although the focus of his visit was preservation education, he reminded the commission that they have a number of statutory duties including surveying historic properties, nominating properties to the National Register, and designating properties as local historic sites. With respect to education, he thought that a web page should be a priority since the HPC had a very small presence on line. He pointed to the Faribault HPC's website as a good model for content, although it is somewhat dated in its style. He noted that we have good content already developed in walking tour brochures which could be used on a website. In fact, this content could be easily translated into an inexpensive walking tour brochure for the downtown, the need for which had been noted by Visit Winona.

He said that both the Legacy and CLG grant program are very open to proposals which advance the goal of preservation education. However, he also told the commissioners that much depended on the commission members themselves committing to volunteer work beyond attending monthly HPC meetings. He suggested that working subcommittees was a good way to mobilize the energies of the commission members.

I could not attend the **February 11 meeting** because of a prior travel commitment. At the meeting, the commission members discussed priorities, with web page development getting much support. The chairperson Lynn England asked that members volunteer for subcommittees, and this process was begun for subcommittees focused on web site development, communication and outreach.

At the **March 11, 2015 meeting**, I again took the commission "back to the basics" by presenting to the commission a draft timeline of Winona preservation history back to 1956. I noted that the historic preservation movement, in my opinion, has been strangely uninterested in its own history, even though there has been a full-blown national movement now for more than 50 years. Winona, I noted, has had a stormy history around historic preservation going back to at least 1956, when the Chamber of Commerce began its determined campaign to demolish the courthouse and the post office. This began a 17 year struggle which Marsha Neff and I have retold in two articles in *Minnesota History*. The controversy around those two buildings, which resulted in a mixed verdict, was only one episode of a larger story.

The timeline attempts to put in chronological order as many events in this history as I could find, including, of course, the birth of the HPC in 1989. I did not attempt to cover all the listings on the National Register in the city, but did try to include all the HPC's local designations. In my view, it is crucial that all commission members have some idea of the history of the historic preservation issue in Winona. They need to understand both the many successes and the many failures, and have some idea about why things turned out as they did. For example, the HPC hired a consultant in 1994 to develop the local designations of both a Windom Park residential district and a downtown historic district. However, the commission was taken by surprise by strong opposition by property owners in both districts and decided to

halt the process on both districts in 1996. Current commission members need to be aware of this, and if similar designations are to be proposed, understand how to best create a better result.<sup>2</sup>

This was also the meeting at which the commission finalized the substance of the short term mission statement and came up with a concrete list of priorities which would form the basis of the Two Year Plan. Based on these decisions, I then prepared the draft plan which was discussed and approved at the next meeting. Since web page development was the key priority, I met again with Michael Koop to discuss grant funding possibilities. He suggested that the best strategy was to break the web page development down into two or three stages, and fund each stage with a small Legacy grant (capped at \$10,000) or a CLG grant. The alternative is to seek a mid-sized Legacy grant (\$10-50,000). However those grants are much more competitive. A small legacy grant for this purpose, on the other hand, is almost a sure thing. Prior to preparing the plan, I met with Michelle Urbick, a local independent web developer who has worked with Frozen River Film Festival and the Winona County Historical Society, to get a better idea of how to break down the development of a semi-autonomous HPC webpage into phases.<sup>3</sup>

At the **April 8, 2015 meeting**, I presented an updated version of the mission statement along with a draft Two Year Plan, incorporating the priorities which had been set at the March meeting and what I learned from Michael Koop and Michelle Urbick. I also took the liberty of tentatively filling out the three subcommittees and articulating their responsibilities. The commission members present approved of the plan, along with a few small suggestions which have not been incorporated into the version that appears as #2 in the Documents section.

#### *Last minute addition*

Kelly Halverson, Director of Teaching and Learning at WAPS recently emailed me and Jennifer Weaver to say that she had not been able to generate any interest from teachers in developing a historic preservation unit. She suggested that we examine the Social Studies learning goals for grades 5-8 and see if we thought any were appropriate platforms for a heritage preservation unit. I will forward her email, which contains the learning goals as an attachment (41 pages), to Lynn England, for possible assignment to an appropriate subcommittee.

---

<sup>2</sup> In fact, the HPC successfully designated the downtown commercial district as a local historic site in 2007. The fate of a Windom Park district is still an open question.

<sup>3</sup> Doing business as Hello Blu Studio, 507-313-1157, [helloblustudio.com](http://helloblustudio.com)

## Recommendations

- ✓ In order to fulfill the goals articulated in the Mission Statement and the Two Year Plan, the membership of the HPC must be strengthened. The commission currently has two vacancies. HPC members should actively recruit new members who can best contribute to the work of the subcommittees.
- ✓ Careful attention should be paid to the orientation of new commission members. Some of the materials developed for this project, especially the Foundational Documents of the Preservation Movement (#3) and the Timeline of Winona Preservations History (#4), can be used for this purpose, along with, of course, any current planning documents.
- ✓ Don't forget about CAMP. Commission members can go to a CAMP hosted by another HPC, or better yet, host their own.
- ✓ If there is solid and organized community support, the HPC should consider locally designating a Windom Park Historic Residential District. At the very beginning of the process, careful attention should be paid to designing district boundaries which will not only define a coherent historical district but also increase the likelihood of ultimate approval. Alternatively, the HPC could consider pursuing National Register nomination of a district first.
- ✓ The plan calls for a systematic approach to prioritizing National Register nominations and local designations based on the three volumes of the survey. Here I will suggest some particular properties worthy of consideration.
  - The Winona Athletic Club, about which a very strong case can be made with respect to the social history of the Polish community of the east side. In addition, my impression is that it continues to be run by non-profit board which could benefit from the opportunity to apply for Legacy funds.
  - The band shell at Lake Park which Fred S. Bell donated to the city in 1923. Besides leading the library board for many years, he was instrumental in expanding the park system, especially Lake Park. He was a Laird Norton executive and son-in-law to William Harris Laird.
  - The Daniel Sinclair house at 75 E. Broadway. He was the editor of the *Winona Daily Republican*, and also postmaster under Republican administrations.
  - The Joseph and Rebecca Prentiss house at 101 E. Broadway. It was also the home of Charlotte Prentiss, even after her marriage to William Hayes. She was one of the key figures in the history of the Winona library, and the person to whom the mural in the library dome is dedicated.
  - The buildings at St. Teresa campus, either collectively as a district, or individually, most especially the Chapel of the Angels, which is one of the great buildings designed by Clarence Johnston, the state's most prolific architect.

## Documents

### Short Term Mission Statement

(Revised after April 8, 2015 meeting)

1. The Heritage Preservation Commission is an advisory body to the City Council. The HPC identifies, designates, protects, and promotes significant historic resources of the City. During the next two years, the HPC will make its purpose and activities more visible through targeted educational programming, which will be presented in variety of media formats.
2. The members of the HPC will create a **website** which is an interactive entry point for information on all aspects of historic preservation in the city. The website would be both historical (using historic photos, maps, and newspapers to connect users with Winona's past) and contemporary (providing easily accessible information for owners and builders involved in preservation planning).
3. The members of the HPC, in coordination with Winona Main Street, will **reach out to owners** of Heritage Preservation Sites, especially in the downtown historic district, offering clearly written information which responds to common questions about the maintenance and alteration of historic buildings.
4. The members of the HPC will work to deepen public appreciation of the value of preserving Winona's historically and architecturally significant sites by **telling the stories** of the people who built, lived in, worked in, and cared about the buildings and places of Winona.
5. In all this work, the members of the HPC will **collaborate** with other community organizations with which it shares common interests, including Winona County Historical Society, Visit Winona, Winona Main Street, Winona Area Public Schools.

## **Two Year Plan**

(Revised after April 8, 2015 meeting)

### **I. The Priorities of the Heritage Preservation Commission**

1. **Web page development**—The HPC will seek Legacy and /or CLG grants to hire an experienced local web designer to develop a semi-autonomous HPC website which will provide an attractive, visual, interactive entry point for everyone seeking information and ideas about historic preservation in Winona and the workings of the HPC (and especially the Historic Downtown District). The website would be developed over at least two stages, each financed by small (up to \$10,000) Legacy grants or similar CLG grant or a combination. The HPC will seek the first grant immediately upon approval of this plan. Possible stages of development might involve the following:
  - a. Stage One: development of a logo<sup>4</sup>, create site structure, add easily available content, such as FAQ, a map of district, the Design Guidelines, annual awards, a few Before and After photo displays.
  - b. Stage Two: To already created web site add more complex content, including an interactive map which includes clickable icons for National Register and locally designated properties which link to photos and information on each.

In addition, the HPC and the city will consider a limited service contract with a web designer to create additional sections on demand as events warrant, such as, new tax credit projects, new National Register nominations or local designations, etc

2. **Traveling display**—The HPC will seek Legacy and /or CLG grant to hire experienced exhibit designers to create a portable traveling display of three or four panels lavishly illustrated in color with information and visuals about Winona's history and its architectural legacy, as well as efforts to preserve it. The downtown historic district will be predominantly featured in this display. This grant will be sought as soon as this plan is finally approved. As soon as the travelling display is completed, HPC members and city staff will begin using the display at public events in conjunction with WCHS, Visit Winona, Winona Main Street, and WAPS. Priority will be given to downtown events, like Main Street happenings, Live at the Levee concerts, Farmers Market, etc.
3. **Handouts**--Members of the HPC and city staff will develop inexpensive tri-fold handouts which can be mass produced at low unit cost. Possible handouts include a simplified downtown walking tour, a driving Winona home tour, a driving Winona architectural highlights tour, and a brochure about the HPC and the downtown district

---

<sup>4</sup> The development of a logo will be a crucial part of "branding" the HPC. For example, the logo should also be used on all materials through which the HPC reaches the public, including the travelling display and handouts like walking tour brochures.



and other designated buildings. These will be created to meet the needs of Visit Winona, WCHS, Main Street, and WAPS as appropriate.

4. **Outreach to property owners in the downtown district**—Members of the HPC will make direct contact with every property owner in the downtown district by sending a letter with a copy of the *Design Guidelines*, and then following up with a phone call to see if there are questions or concerns. Members will seek to publicize success stories in the district, for example, the current tax credit project at the Kirch-Latsch Building, in the *Main Street* e-newsletter, and in other print and broadcast media, and to recognize such efforts in the annual awards. Members will also become directly involved in the appropriate Main Street committees, and seek ways to cosponsor events.
5. **Curriculum development**—If there is an interested teacher at WAPS, the HPC will collaborate with the teacher to develop a brief pilot lesson plan on historic preservation in Winona, possibly with grant funding. In addition, the HPC will seek a collaboration with the university's education departments to explore a unit involving heritage preservation lesson plan development in education classes.
6. **National Register and Local Designations**
  - a. Using the survey done of Winona in the 1990s, the HPC at its next several meetings will develop short lists of possible sites eligible for the NR or Local designation in the East, Central and West regions of the city. From these lists, the HPC will chose properties and instruct staff to apply for appropriate Legacy or CLG grants to hire consultants to complete the nominations.
  - b. If property owners in the Windom Park area seek protections for the historic character of their neighborhood, the HPC will respond by supporting the local designation of a district with appropriate boundaries.

## **II. Getting it Done: staff, consultants, subcommittees**

The HPC is a volunteer committee that must necessarily rely on staff and hired consultants for major work. However, the members must be actively involved in planning and preparing grants. In addition, available grant money is limited, and members must do some of the work as volunteers. A subcommittee structure will clearly divide the work into manageable pieces and assign responsibilities. The HPC will be organized into the following subcommittees, each of which has particular responsibilities.

1. **Web Development Subcommittee** (Andy Bloedorn, Kendall Larson, Preston Lawing)
  - a. Investigate models and vendors, and advise staff on grant strategy and preparation.

- b. Chose a designer, and then work closely with this person on content and formatting.
- c. Liaison with Visit Winona, WCHS, and Main Street on cross promotion, linking, etc of new webpage.

**2. Downtown Outreach Subcommittee** (Mary Edel Beyer, Lynn England, Wes Hamilton)

- a. Establish close working relationship with appropriate Main Street committees.
- b. Develop a cover letter which staff will send out to all property owners with copy of the *Design Guidelines*.
- c. Use Main Street *e-newsletter* to comment on positive developments in the district (Example: an article about the Kirch-Latsch project and how it uses rehabilitation tax credits which are only possible because preservation activists early on nominated it for the National Register.)
- d. Investigate use of radio and TV spots highlighting the preservation of Winona's built environment.

**3. Publications and Displays Subcommittee** (Susan Briggs, Merle Hanson, Carolyn Larson)

- a. Working with Visit Winona, WCHS and Main Street, develop an inexpensive (tri-fold) brochure for a downtown walking tour using content already developed for other brochures.
- b. Then move on to develop similar inexpensive tour brochures focusing on stained glass installations, historic homes, and highlights of Winona architecture.
- c. In consultation with WCHS, Visit Winona and Main Street, work with staff to prepare a grant to fund the hiring of an experienced exhibit designer to create colorful display panels for use at public events. They should be easy to assemble and completely portable.
- d. Start taking the display to appropriate public events, especially downtown.

## **Foundational Documents of the Preservation Movement**

*This is a list of documents key to understanding heritage preservation in Winona. Some have the force of law and some are planning documents. Staff should provide copies to all Heritage Preservation Commission members who should become familiar with their contents.*

### **Federal**

1. ***National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.*** The act creates the National Register, the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) in the states, Certified Local Government (CLG) program including grants to HPCs, Section 106 review of federally funded projects, and federal protection of federal properties.
2. ***Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.*** It's easy to say that a building must be preserved, but buildings have to be used, and this means alterations and maintenance. These standards provide the basic principles for the treatment of historic properties.
3. ***Penn Central Transportation Co. vs. New York City (U. S. Supreme Court, 1978)***  
This case affirmed the power of cities to regulate on the basis of historic preservation. The case concerned a plan to build a skyscraper on top of Grand Central Station, a historic landmark. In upholding the city's power to stop this plan, it confirmed the power of every city to enforce preservation ordinances.

### **State**

4. ***Minnesota Statutes 471.193 Municipal Heritage Preservation***  
The statute authorizing Heritage Preservation Commissions and defining their possible powers.
5. ***A New Season: Preservation Plan for Minnesota's Historic Properties 2012-2017***  
SHPO's five year plan, which includes "#3 Educate, educate, educate."

### **City**

6. ***Winona Ordinance--Section 22.27 Heritage Preservation Commission***  
The legal basis of the HPC and its procedures. Commissioners should have the ordinance close at hand.
7. ***Winona's Historic Contexts: Final Report of a Historic Preservation Planning Project (1991)***  
The HPC hired Gemini Research to prepare this context study, and then the three volume survey of Winona's built environment (divided into volumes for the east, west and central sections of Winona).
8. ***City of Winona Comprehensive Plan (August 2007)*** Note the section on historic preservation.
9. ***Winona, Minnesota Historic District Design Guidelines (2007)*** The document which educates and guides property owners when planning work on the exteriors of properties in the downtown historic district, and guides your review of those plans.

## **Timeline of Winona Preservation History**

*This timeline presents some highlights of Winona preservation history. Not all buildings that have been listed on the National Register are mentioned but I have tried to include all of the Heritage Preservation Commission's designations of local historic landmarks. It is always difficult to know when to start, but the events of 1956 seemed to spark the beginning of a preservation ethic in Winona. Remarkably, this was a decade before the National Historic Preservation Act.*

*Greg Gaut (June 2015)*

### **1950s**

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Sept 1956 | In response to a federal plan to upgrade the Post Office, the Chamber of Commerce begins a campaign to demolish the Post Office (1891) and County Courthouse (1889) and replace them with a modern building in Central Park.  |
| Oct 1956  | Winona County Historical Society (WCHS) publishes an open letter in the <i>Winona Daily News</i> opposing the destruction of the post office. S. J. Krysko, representing the Chamber, publishes a reply.  |
| Feb 1957  | In a straw ballot at a Chamber luncheon, 80 local business leaders endorse the Chamber's campaign. There is one "no" vote: Dr. Lewis Younger, WCHS president.   |
| Mar 1958  | Lead by the Chamber, forty local organizations vote to ask Senator Humphrey and other federal officials to support a new post office in Central Park. Writing as an individual, Lewis Younger publishes an impassioned letter "to fellow citizens" asking them to help preserve the Post Office and Central Park. |
| Apr 1958  | Federal authorities reverse course and announce support for a new post office.  |
| Nov 1958  | Meanwhile, the county board puts a \$1 million bond referendum on the ballot to fund the building of a new courthouse. It is defeated with a 57% no vote.   |

### **1960s**

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| July 1960 | City Council votes to approve the use of Central Park as the site of new post office. When the city attorney advises that the city cannot sell a park which was part of the original plat of the city, they invite the federal government to use its power of eminent domain to "condemn" the park and reimburse the city for the loss of it. |
| Nov 1960  | The county board puts a \$1.1 million bond on the ballot to fund the building of a new courthouse. This second referendum is also defeated.   |

- July 1961 The Committee to Save Central Park publishes full page ads in *Winona Daily News* with names of prominent Winonans who oppose the plan to build a new post office in Central Park.
- Sept 1962 On the day before a contractor began felling trees in Central Park to clear the way for the new post office, someone staples reprints of a *Readers Digest* article lamenting the loss of public parks and counselling public vigilance and resistance.
- Sept 1963 The new post office is dedicated.
- Oct 1963 The old post office is demolished; Northwest Banks builds the present building on the site. Today it is the Winona County Government Center.
- Spring 1967 WCHS publishes a booklet by William Wesley Peters, a leading Taliesen architect, calling for preservation of Winona's downtown especially the courthouse.
- Sept 1967 The county board puts \$1.3 million bond on the ballot to fund a new courthouse. There is intense campaigning on both sides of the issue. This third referendum is also defeated, but by a very small margin.

### 1970s

- Spring 1970 The county board decides to build a new courthouse from existing funds without another bond referendum.
- Sept 1970 The Winona County Progress and Preservation Association (WCPPA), a new organization representing people of various ages and backgrounds but publically led by people in their 20s like Greg Bambenek, Pat Frisby and Ed Maus, begins a new campaign to save the courthouse. Among other things, they record a 45 rpm record entitled "Save the Lady."
- Dec 1970 Minnesota Historical Society expedites the listing of the courthouse on the National Register in an effort to help preserve it. It is the first Minnesota courthouse to be listed.
- 1971 As part of an "urban renewal" initiative, the Morgan Block (bounded by Center, Main, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) is razed.
- Jan 1971 WCPPA sues the county in Winona District Court attempting to stop the opening of contractor bids for the new courthouse. The suit fails.
- Jan 1971 The *Winona Daily News*, which had editorialized in favor of the Chamber's plan from the beginning, changes sides and supports renovation of the courthouse.

- Mar 1971 WCPA publishes a two page center fold ad in the *Winona Daily News* listing 1100 citizens opposed to a new courthouse.
- Dec 1971 In a major reversal, the county board puts a fourth bond measure on the ballot, this time to renovate the existing courthouse. To the surprise of activists on both sides of the issue, it passes with a 60% “yes” vote.
- 1974 As part of an “urban renewal” initiative, the Latsch Block (north of 2<sup>nd</sup> between Center and Main) is razed.
- 1974 The courthouse renovation is completed. The interior was gutted. Five floors of useable space are created where previously there had been two.
- 1976 As part of an “urban renewal” initiative, the Steak Shop Block (bounded by Johnson, Main, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) is razed.

### 1980s

- 1980 Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Depot, 2<sup>nd</sup> and Huff, razed.
- 1981 The steamboat *James P. Pearson* (the *Julius C. Wilkie*) is destroyed by arson. It has been listed on the National Register.
- May 1985 After a series of studies, reports, and discussions about overcrowding at the library going back to 1977, the City Council votes to put a \$3.7 million bond referendum before the voters. The plan is to build a new library at the NE corner of Riverside and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. A Reuse Committee is appointed to consider the future of the 1899 library in the event the bond passes. The library had been placed on the National Register in 1977.
- Nov 1985 Voters overwhelmingly defeat the bond referendum. The city council then began planning for the expansion of the library. This work was completed in 1989.
- May 1986 City Council votes for a Heritage Preservation Ordinance and refers the matter to the Planning Commission to work out the details. This begins a three year process in which no consensus can be reached on the Planning Commission about whether to include non-voluntary designations of historic landmarks. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) advises that they will not approve Certified Local Government status if designation is voluntary. Eventually the Planning Commission reports back a draft ordinance with mandatory designations and various procedural safeguards.
- 1988 Rockledge, the E. L. King House in Homer, is demolished. It had been listed on the National Register. The owners chose to raze it.
- 1988 The Stockton Mill, also on the National Register, is destroyed by arson.

May 1989      City council adopts the Heritage Preservation Ordinance creating the Heritage Preservation Commission. Mark Peterson is the first chair.

### **1990s**

1990            The Winona Opera House is razed.

1991            The Kresge Block is razed.

1991            The HPC hires Gemini Research to prepare the *Winona Historic Contexts* report.

1991            SHPO prepares the nomination of the East Second Street Commercial Historic District to the National Register. It is listed January 25, 1991.

1992            The HPC hires Hess Roise & Co to prepare the *Historic Resources Survey of Central Portion of City of Winona* report.

1993            The HPC hires Hess Roise & Co to prepare the *Historic Resources Survey of - Eastern Portion of City of Winona* report.

1994            The HPC hires Hess Roise & Co to prepare *Historic Resources Survey of Western Portion of City of Winona* report.

1994            The HPC hires the consultant Barbara Kooiman from La Crosse to prepare the local designations of both a Windom Park Local Historic District and a Third Street Commercial Historic District.

1995            The HPC decides to move forward with the local designation of both districts.

1996            In the face of considerable public opposition expressed at a series of public hearings, the HPC decides to suspend consideration of the two districts.

1998            The SHPO prepares the nomination of the Winona Commercial Historic District (3<sup>rd</sup> Street) to National Register. It is listed on October 1, 1998.

1999            The HPC hires Hess Roise and Co. to prepare the National Register nomination for the Winona City Hall. It is listed on July 8, 1999.

### **2000s**

Feb 2000        The HPC designates the Winona City Hall as a local historic landmark.

Sept 2000       On Labor Day weekend, the courthouse floods when the suspended ceiling on the fourth floor fails and pulls down the sprinkler system. The *Winona Daily News*, the county administrator, and others argue for demolition of the water logged

building. At the request of WCHS, State Historic Architect Charles Nelson leads a reuse study which recommends rehabilitation of the building.

- Oct 2000      The HPC holds a public forum attended by the county commissioners. A full house hears 25 citizens speak in favor of renovating the courthouse.
- Feb 2001      The county commissioners hire a mediator to facilitate their tendentious debate about the future of the courthouse. In the end, they vote to renovate.
- Oct 2001      The HPC designates the Winona Public Library as a local historic landmark.
- Oct 2003      The renovated courthouse is rededicated.
- 2003          The developer Metroplains hires Hess Roise & Co. to prepare the National Register nominations for the Winona High School and Winona Middle School at 166 and 218 W. Broadway. This was done to achieve rehabilitation tax credits to finance the remodeling of the buildings as the Washington Crossing apartments. They are listed on January 2, 2004.
- 2004          The Winona HPC hires Dan Hoisington to prepare the local designations of a number of private residences:
- Peter Hallenbeck House, 376 W. Fifth
  - Ernest and Emma Breitlow House, 357 W. Wabasha
  - Leslie L. Brown House, 319 W. Wabasha
  - George and Elizabeth Whitman House, 351 W. Wabasha
  - Charles and Grace Youmans House, 227 Wilson
  - Fred and Frances Bell House, 255 Harriet
  - Emma Ball House, 409 W. Broadway
  - Conrad Bohn House, 420 Main Street
  - Hartmann House, 423 E. Fourth Street
  - East Side Fire Station, 601 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street
- 2004          Watkins Products acts to have its headquarter building at 150 Liberty Street listed on the National Register. It is listed December 4, 2004.
- 2006          The HPC hires Dan Hoisington to prepare the local designations of the following:
- Paul Watkins House, 175 E. Wabasha
  - Huff Lamberton House, 211 Huff
- April 2006      Merchants Bank announces its intention to raze eight storefronts adjacent to its 3<sup>rd</sup> street bank, all within the National Register Historic District, to enlarge its parking lot. The SHPO, Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, and the HPC all oppose the plan. The *Winona Daily News* and the Chamber support it. The bank demolishes the buildings and replaces them with signage telling their stories.



- June 2006 Arson destroys the C.C. Beck House, an 1876 Italianate mansion on the Saint Mary's University campus. After Beck, Bishop Heffron led the Winona Diocese from this house. Later it became a university building. The fire ended a ten year campaign by students, faculty, staff and alumni to preserve the building.
- May 2006 The HPC holds a public forum on historic preservation in downtown Winona.
- 2007 The HPC hires Daniel Hoisington to prepare the local designation of the Downtown Historic District (including the properties in both the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street National Register districts). The designation is completed with little dissent. Hoisington also prepares the *Historic District Design Guidelines*.
- 2009 In response to the school board's interest in closing one or more elementary schools in Winona, the HPC hires Dan Hoisington to evaluate four historic schools for eligibility for the National Register. This provokes a controversy.

### 2010s

- 2011 The downtown historic district is amended by Dan Hoisington to include the eastern half of the Winona & St. Peter Freight House.
- 2011 Hired by MDOT pursuant to Sec 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Landscape Research (Amy Lucas and Carol Zellie) complete a massive study of the area impacted by the proposed new interstate bridge. The report evaluates over 200 properties for historic significance and makes many recommendations. In particular, the consultants recommend the nomination of a Broadway Residential Historic District for the National Register. This work is a significant cache of research on the historic properties of central Winona.
- 2012 The HPC hires Landscape Research (Amy Lucas and Carol Zellie) to prepare the National Register nominations for Central, W-K, Madison, and Jefferson Elementary Schools. Members of the school board object, but eventually acquiesce. The four schools are listed on March 6, 2012.
- 2012 The HPC hires Greg Gaut to prepare the National Register nomination for the Milwaukee Road depot (currently the Amtrak Station). It is listed May 28, 2013.
- 2012 At the request of the homeowners, the HPC hires Greg Gaut to prepare the local designation of the Abner Hodgins House, 275 Harriet.
- 2013 Winona State University hires Greg Gaut to prepare the National Register nomination of College Hall (Somsen) and the Model School Building (Phelps Hall). They are listed on December 12, 2013.
- 2013 The Winona Chamber of Commerce and the City of Winona successfully apply to the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota to become a designated *Main Street*

program in Minnesota. Each designated program follows the National Trust's *Main Street Four Point Approach* of historic preservation-based economic development.

- 2013 A major fire at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Center destroy several buildings in the Historic District and damages the building on the northeast corner which was built in the 1870s for the post office.
- 2014 The HPC hires Greg Gaut to complete the National Register nomination of the Laird Norton Co. Building.
- 2015 A major fire damages the historic building at 151 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in the downtown historic district.

**Meeting with Mark Peterson, Director, and Jennifer Weaver, Assistant Director, Winona County Historical Society, November 21, 2014**

After explaining the goals of the HPC and the process leading to a preservation education plan, Mark and Jennifer brainstormed ideas with collaboration in mind. I noted that we are thinking of education in the broadest sense, with many possible audiences in mind.

1. They thought that HPC **web site development** was important and presented opportunities for collaboration. Their own *Stories in Structures* mobile app could be expanded to include more buildings, and especially homes. (It currently covers six downtown buildings. See <http://www.winonamntours.org/tour/>) One idea is to digitalize the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for Winona and make them available for viewing. Mark liked the idea of using photos of the same property showing how it “morphed” over time. They have a huge photo collection that can be put to great use.
2. More specifically, they wondered what **property and business owners in the historic district** receive? New owners and businesses at least should get a packet with the design guidelines and information from the original designation form which gives a brief history of their own property. Maybe there should be an event for owners.
3. Thinking big, a brief **video** introducing and promoting the historic district was mentioned as part of a larger campaign and as a way of alerting owners to the significance of their property and the district. This led to the ideas of collaborating with other **SE Minn HPCs** to produce something like a video or a conference. (Note: the following SE Minn towns have HPC’s with CLG status: Chatfield, Frontenac, Lake City, Lanesboro, Red Wing, Wabasha, Winona). This could be a way of leveraging larger CLG or Legacy grant funds.
4. Thinking about **K-12 education**, Jennifer mentioned that she had recently met with Superintendent Steven West and curriculum director Kelly Halverson. The meeting was about History Day, and they were enthusiastic about promoting it in Winona. But Jennifer thought they would be interested in curriculum ideas about the built environment and preservation. For one thing, each grade level needs a field trip. Jennifer offered to join me if I met with Kelly Halverson and I will follow up.
5. They hoped that the HPC and **Main Street** would team up on things, for example, jointly welcoming new owners to the historic district or sponsoring a workshop on design together.
6. And they hoped that HPC and WCHS could work with **Visit Winona** to produce materials, like a walking and bus tours of downtown buildings and homes, needed to attract bus tour and steamboat stops. Apparently, Winona used to attract more bus tour and steamboat stops than it does now. Tour companies favor cities that have well-developed activities for their customers.

### **Meeting with Pat Mutter, Director, *Visit Winona*, at the History Center, November 21, 2014**

After explaining the goals of the HPC and the process leading to a preservation education plan, Pat shared some of her ideas and concerns. I noted that we are thinking of education in the broadest sense, with many possible audiences in mind, with an emphasis on collaboration.

Pat emphasized that she has always promoted Winona's historic architecture as a way to attract people to Winona, but that she is dependent on other groups (HPC, WCHS) to produce content.

We talked about the **Historic Downtown walking tour brochure**, which was produced many years ago by the HPC with CLG funding and with help from the Chamber which at that time sponsored the Convention and Visitors Bureau. It's very good, and updated not too long ago, but also very elaborate and costly to reproduce. Hence, it is not used much. Pat thought that the context captured there could be the basis for **webpage development**, including an interactive map, and that maybe some of the content could be used in a cheaper format, like a simple trifold with a downtown walking tour.

She pointed out the **Arts and Heritage section of Visit Winona webpage** which has quite a bit on historic architecture, but nothing on historic homes. This is an area where HPC or WCHS could help with content production, both for the Visit Winona website and also for an inexpensive **home tour brochure**. The home tour could include about ten homes (enough for about an hour) that could be used by the trolley or by individual visitors. She noted that the expensive Stained Glass brochure they used to have has been discontinued, but that the content is on their webpage. (See <http://www.visitwinona.com/itinerary/arts-heritage/>)

Visit Winona has a **Facebook** and **Pinterest** page which emphasizes the visual. Beautiful pictures of things are popular and get noticed. They have historic buildings and she would welcome more submissions.

Overall, Pat was interested in promoting downtown and home tours, both with better on-line content and with inexpensive brochures. Even though websites are crucial, she said, visitors want to have a handout of some kind. The key is "**cross-promotion**" where content is shared and promoted by HPC, Visit Winona, Main Street and maybe more.

She also mentioned the monthly meetings on the second Tuesday at 8:15 where people gather to share what is going on in Winona related to tourism. Next one is December 9 at Masonic Temple. All our welcome.

Finally, she mentioned Dr. Hamid Akbari, Dean of Business ([hakbari@winona.edu](mailto:hakbari@winona.edu), 309 Somsen Hall, 507.457.5014) as someone at WSU who is community-oriented and might be interested in collaborations. His focus is on entrepreneurship.

**Meeting with Della Schmidt and Dave Bittner, *Winona Main Street*, at the Chamber Office,  
November 24, 2014**

After explaining the goals of the HPC and the process leading to a preservation education plan, Della and David shared some of ideas and concerns. I noted that we are thinking of education in the broadest sense, with many possible audiences in mind, with an emphasis on collaboration.

Overall the meeting was focused on working together to enhance the downtown and on cross-promotion of content and activities. Della noted that “times had changed,” due not only to the arrival of *Main Street*, but also because of an increased interest in downtown revitalization.

She hoped that the HPC could become more visible as a “**friendly resource.**” Today, most business owners don’t even know about it until they try to do something and then it’s another hoop to jump through. She suggested routinely promoting preservation successes via **press releases** (and phone calls) to media, **guest editorials** in the newspapers, friending *Main Street Facebook* page (and sending materials to David to post there), and using Main Street’s **e-newsletter** as an outlet for HPC articles. Also there is soon to be unveiled a *Main Street mobile ap* to which HPC could possibly be linked.

David noted that there had been some collaboration. Lynn England is a member of the **Main Street Design Committee** (next meeting 11:00 Dec 11 at Pet Medical). Several HPC members came to Catherine Sandlund’s presentation of the Secretary of Interior Standards. Also, HPC members were invited to the unveiling of the consultant’s design ideas for the vacant lot on 3<sup>rd</sup> street where the fire occurred.

David mentioned that Catherine is ¼ time for *Main Street* statewide. In that role, she will come to Winona once a year to do a **design rendering** on a selected storefront. This was done in 2014 for Yarnology, and the 2015 site has not been chosen.

Della talked about possibly having not just “guidelines” but “standards” for a limited area in downtown where things like signage and paint color could be addressed, tied with a campaign to educate property owners about how standards protect their investment.

One particular issue of education, Della mentioned that the repointing repair on the Alexander building on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street was not done as well as it should have been from a preservation point of view, and that the owner understood this, but that his **insurance** would not cover proper procedures. Future education should include advising property owners to make sure their coverage provided for proper rehab procedures. Possibly for a very small increase in premium, the coverage could have been appropriate.

**Meeting with Kelly Halverson, WAPS Director of Learning and Teaching, and Jennifer Weaver, Assistant Director, WCHS, at the high school, December 22, 2014.**

After explaining the goals of the HPC and the process leading to a preservation education plan, I laid out some examples of K-12 curriculum to open the discussion. I mentioned the *Teaching with Historic Places* website at the National Park Service, the various Grade 1-6 programs led by the Friends of the Upper East Side (NYC), and the *My Neighborhood/My Heritage* program for young people ages 12-18 in Michigan featuring photography (links below).

I noted that all these have some common features. Usually there is introductory classroom component followed by an actual visit to a historic building or site, often concluded by an exercise in photographing or drawing the site. The stories told by the buildings vary greatly. For example one of the New York programs focuses on the immigration history of a particular neighborhood. We all agreed that this might work well in Winona. For example, we could imagine a unit on Polish immigration history based on a study of historic buildings like St. Stans, the Winona Athletic Club, typical houses, etc.

Jennifer mentioned the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade activity recently done at the History Century which involved mapping the growth of Winona. This included a trip to the Garvin Heights lookout.

Kelly was very interested and thought that something could be developed. However, she cautioned that a new curricular initiative has to fit into the existing state standards. If it does not, then it is very difficult to get teachers to adopt it. Even if the issue of state standards can be overcome, new ideas for curriculum still must find teachers who are willing to take on something new.

She said that she would explore ways in which a historic preservation unit could advance the standards and also seek middle school and high school teachers who may be interested in hearing more. She will get back to us in January.

<http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/>

<http://www.friends-ues.org/education/>

[http://www.mhpn.org/?page\\_id=2263](http://www.mhpn.org/?page_id=2263)