

Thanks again to those who participated in the discussions concerning the Michael Witt Preservation Project... Dubbed MWP² by Floyd.

2nd Meeting of MWP²

April 16, 2005

Held at the home of Kay Kottas

In Attendance: Roy Harrington, Larry Harrington, Kay Kottas, Floyd Zabel, Jessie Harrington, Fred Zabel, Sarah Zabel, Dennis Zabel, Linda Sampels, Nancy Wingate, Dean Hesselgesser, Matt Steinhausen, Troy Schon, Mandy Kottas

History:

Boundaries of the original homestead and the current Floyd Zabel property were delineated on an aerial photo of the area.

A copy of the original survey from 21 Aug. 1886 was obtained by Kay Kottas

A digital copy of this is available.

The microfilm records of this property show that JG Wahl may have filed the original homestead deed in 1862 and subsequently sold the property to Michael Witt. It is believed that four families came together and the Wahls and Witts lived together in a small log house until the Witt house was built in about 1867.

More research is being done. Kay will send to the National archives for more information.

Discussion:

David Murphy of the Nebraska State Historical Society recommended that we talk to Matt Steinhausen who has worked to restore similar structures in Southeast Nebraska. Kay contacted Matt, who also contacted Troy Schon (a local expert in timber frame construction). Matt and Troy agreed to look at the house and give us an expert assessment of the value of preservation and/or restoration of the property and some suggestions.

Matt Steinhausen and Troy Schon attended the meeting. Matt brought photographs and he and Troy used the photos to explain the method of construction used in this type of building. Markings on the timbers were particularly instructive and unique to this type of construction. Matt provided us with a comprehensive written assessment and suggestions. Preservation was highly recommended and suggested with some urgency due to the roof damage and open walls that allow moisture to further degrade the structure. Matt stated that the value of the building itself as a tourist attraction would not be great, but that preservation was still very important. He recommended against moving the structure.

The family would like to thank Matt and Troy for sharing their enthusiasm and expertise. The two have suggested that they would like to return to the structure to do some detailed drawings. Matt and Troy left after their presentation. The meeting adjourned temporarily for a luncheon and resumed 1 hour later.

Progress on assigned tasks since the last meeting:

Larry and Floyd : Follow up with mover.

The Mover (Hornbacher) at a cost of \$75.00 determined the following:

Inside of building would need to be cleared out

Northwest corner would need to be repaired.

The adobe chimney would need to be boxed up.

Sandwich walls with plywood

Remove porch Or secure it

A Foundation would have to be set up at new site

Mover will inspect process
Secure route

Bids: move north to the road \$18,000
Hwy 15 \$22,000
Western \$24,000

Floyd contacted another mover and is waiting for another bid
Larry suggested that we could potentially build a platform and move the building to the mailbox ourselves for about same price.

Larry: Follow up with contacts from SE community College
They have too many projects right now
Talked to head of grants
Doesn't sound encouraging

Roy and Joyce: Scan articles and photographs and certificates pertaining to the house

Certificates and articles have been scanned and put on CD. The CD is available from Roy or Kay.

Randy Prior/Kay: Follow up on FRPP

Floyd's farm is eligible for the Farm and Ranch land Preservation Program. A separate charitable entity or Trust would have to hold an easement which would stipulate that the farm would always be used as a farm. A payment would be given to the landowner consisting of the difference between the current development value and the farmland value of the land. In Saline County, that value would not be great. The advantage would be affiliation with a charitable entity which might help to collect monies for the preservation and restoration of the building. Kay knows the directors of two of the entities and is familiar with their missions. The Nebraska Land trust is interested in preservation along the Platte and Niobrara River. The North American Prairie Land Trust preserves farmland in particular, but architectural preservation is not within the mission of either entity.

Kay Kottas: Follow up with NE Community Foundation and look into grants

Maxine Molle of the Ne Community Foundation put Kay in touch with Amy Cole, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Mountains/Plains Office

Amy suggested three grants that a "non-profit" group or a community could apply for
The Rural Heritage Initiative is designed to assist groups that have a history of working with rural heritage issues. It will provide funding and technical assistance to support regional demonstration projects in heritage-based economic development.

http://www.nationaltrust.org/about_the_trust/RFP/contracts_rfp_rural_form.html

Kay has a copy of the RFP (request for proposals).

The National Trust also has several grant programs that can be used for preservation planning activities like architectural plans or feasibility studies, but they can not be used for construction. These are summarized below: (none of these are for actual construction costs but could be used for consults such as Matt and Troy, and for educational materials.

The **Preservation Services Fund** provides nonprofit organizations and public agencies matching grants from \$500 to \$5,000 (typically from \$1,000 to \$1,500) for preservation

planning and education efforts. Funds may be used to obtain professional expertise in areas such as architecture, archeology, engineering, preservation planning, land-use planning, fund raising, organizational development and law as well as preservation education activities to educate the public.

The **Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation** provides nonprofit organizations and public agencies grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000 for projects that contribute to the preservation or the recapture of an authentic sense of place. Individuals and for-profit businesses may apply only if the project for which funding is requested involves a National Historic Landmark. Funds may be used for professional advice, conferences, workshops and education programs.

The **Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors** provides nonprofit organizations and public agencies grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000 to assist in the preservation, restoration, and interpretation of historic **interiors**. Individuals and for-profit businesses may apply only if the project for which funding is requested involves a National Historic Landmark. Funds may be used for professional expertise, print and video communications materials, and education programs.

Other GRANTS

Community Development Grants

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/stateadmin/index.cfm>

objectives and eligible activities

Nebraska program

http://crd.neded.org/cdbg/cdbg_certification.htm

Follow up with Architectural preservation consultant at UNL, send meeting notes to interested individuals

Dr. Ertl at UNL has not returned phone calls from Larry or e-mail from Kay.

Jessie Harrington: Find article in Beatrice paper regarding a Community enhancement grant for Fairbury

The article about the school project in Fairbury mentions several donations plus tax credits from the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority and historical tax credits for the building's inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Other sources of income for the project included the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, the Topeka Federal Home Loan Bank, Community Development Block Grant funds, and two sizable personable contributions.

Other Discussion

Saline Co historical society would require us to pay for moving it there.

Larry: We need something other than house to draw visitors, if move to hwy 15. For the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) need 2500 visitors per year
Need to create a job

Floyd: living farm potential

Larry: create models of structure
Draw visitors with gas station, restaurant or other

Current need is to preserve
Floyd can get free tarp to cover roof.
Trees need to be cut down to prevent rubbing against house.
Shingles could be replaced at a cost of 10-15,000 OR
A Building could be constructed over the house for a cost of 30,000. Larry has estimates for this price but it is a special deal that may not be available for long.

Funding

We need Non-profit status or to form a business or foundation
All will depend on what Floyd wants to do with the property.

The group identified the need to gather oral history, as many participants had stories to tell. Roy Harrington was appointed local historian to begin the process. There was discussion of putting together a meeting for the purpose of telling and recording such stories. This meeting may take place around Memorial Day when many folks are in town.

We also discussed a presentation for the Zabel family reunion in August.

It was suggested that Floyd might want to put the property into a trust for his descendants and stipulate a place for them on the board of the preservation group.

Further discussion ensued about the potential for a non-profit group and what the vision and mission statements might be. Kay presented a web site to help think about the process of filing for non-profit status and cautioned that we need to be careful that no one in the family would directly profit from such an endeavor. Several questions will need to be answered before we go that route.

NonProfit <http://fdncenter.org/learn/classroom/establish/>
http://fdncenter.org/learn/faqs/section_4a.html

see page 17 of pub577 (not for benefit of creator or creators family)

The mission of a non-profit should be broad enough to include a wide audience of potential members and to be careful not to exclude potential future activities.
Some suggestions for a mission were:

Mission: preserve house

 Educate about this architecture

 Ancestry

 Early homesteaders of Ne

 German ancestry in general

 Serve rural community economic development

 Jobs

 Bring people into community

Suggestions for a potential board of directors might be
President
Vice- president
Secretary

Treasurer
Historian

Larry suggested that other groups in the area with ties to this site or these ancestors should have representation from this group in order to advertise the issue.

Future assignments

Original deed - Roger Zabel thought he had it

Floyd will try to find it so that we can confirm the certificate numbers of the homestead

Kay will check with National Registry for homestead information

Kay and Floyd will ask John Carlson some of the questions we have concerning non-profit status

Floyd; Talk with John Carlson about future plans for the site