

Following are the minutes to the last MWP2 meeting and next scheduled work day.

Witt House Preservation Project

Held May 30, 2005 at 1:00 pm. at the home of Jessie Harrington

Attending: Bud and Nancy Wingate, Linda and Gary Samples, Jessie Harrington, Larry and Karen Harrington, Roy Harrington, Matt and Melissa Zabel, Floyd Zabel, Dean Hesselgesser, Kay and Joe Kottas, Betty Zabel

The meeting began with an update of activities since the last meeting. Matt Steinhausen visited the house this past week and prairie to the south. Matt made sketches of the front of the house, which have been distributed to interested parties. He found potential trail ruts in unplowed prairie.

Kay spoke with the director of the Nebraska Land Trust. The house and any portion of land on the property would qualify for the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program. This program would provide a cash payment to purchase the development rights on designated areas of the farm and assure protection in perpetuity. The payment would only equal the difference between farmland price and development price, which may not be much in this area of the county. Appraisal costs would be anywhere from \$800 to \$1,200.

Roy Harrington met with Floyd on Sat May 28 and cleared trees near the Witt House. Digital video and photos are available from Kay Kottas.

Troy Shon and architect friend, Lee took notes and made additional drawings of the building on Sat.

Kay Kottas and Jessie Harrington walked the prairie on Sat. Some of the ruts may be an old road. There is potential for good plant diversity. There are few exotic species other than downy brome and a few musk thistle.

Documents turned over to historian Roy Harrington include a copy of the original application for status on the National Historic Registry, Saline County Platte Maps from 1963, Platte maps from the time of the original homestead application. Roy has been tracking the genealogy of Michael Witt's children. Photos of Michael Witt and family are not available. Kay will check with some potential sources for photos in Lincoln.

Stabilization of the foundation will be necessary. Larry has found beams from old bridges available from the county for \$100 apiece. These are nearly long enough to reach across one side of the house. Bud will get in touch with a retired house mover to see if he has any large beams available.

After the meeting, interested individuals visited the site. Determinations were

- 1) most of the tarps available are too small, so Floyd will look for larger tarps. We will need three of the larger tarps
- 2) We will need two lift trucks to reach the roof of the building. Floyd has some of the necessary equipment.
- 3) tentatively the plan is to roll the tarps on irrigation pipe, then lift the irrigation pipe over the front roof and allow it to roll down the back of the roof, leaving the tarp as it rolls.
- 4) the tarp may have to be covered on the edges with boards and screwed onto the structure.
- 5) a major support beam for the roof is split and precarious. It was decided that the beam cannot be pushed back together without moving the roof back into place. The roof sliding forward may be the cause. A potential fix would be to lift the porch roof and put a jack near the beam and slowly move the beam and roof until the structure comes together.

Roy, Larry, Floyd and Kay walked the native prairie and Kay took GPS readings at some locations.

Meeting notes submitted by Kay Kottas

NOTE: since the meeting,

Larry and Floyd put supports under the roof of the house.

A tentative work-date has been set for Saturday, June 18 to put tarp on the Witt building and to repair a work shed for storage of items in the Witt building.

Floyd has been in touch with Lorene Riedesel from Beatrice.

Lorene is active in building restoration and non-profit groups. A tentative meeting with Lorene has been set for 4:30 pm on July 7th on-site. Anyone who would like to attend is welcome.