

Will County Heritage Alliance Inaugural Meeting Minutes

March 3, 2007

10:00 a.m.

***Andrew B. Barber and Clarence D. Oberwortmann Horticultural Center
227 N. Gougar Road
Joliet, Illinois***

Present:

Don Sala,	Beecher Historical Society	John Lamb,	Lockport Heritage & Arch., Will County Historic Preservation Commission
Bill Molony,	Blackhawk Chapter, National Railway Historical Society	Lorin Schab,	Midewin Heritage Association
Judy Bredeweg,	Bolingbrook Historic Preservation Commission	Joe Srsnick,	Mokena Historical Society; Former Will County Historic Preservation Commission Member
Dee deGroh,	Braidwood Area Historical Society	Mark C. Batson,	New Lenox Area Historical Society; Will County Historic Preservation Commission
John A. McIntyre,	City of Wilmington	Lou Broccolo,	New Lenox Library
Mike Speller,	Forest Preserve District Of Will County, Isle a la Cache Museum	JoAnn Potenziani,	New Lenox Public Library District
Cindy Bakkom,	Forest Preserve District Of Will County	Gina Wysocki,	University of St. Francis
Harry Klinkhamer,	Forest Preserve District Of Will County, Isle a la Cache Museum	Michael Rizo,	US Forest Svs.-Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
Robert Navarro,	Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau	Mary Jo Szymanski,	Will County Historic Preservation Commission
Lenore Weiss,	Historic Route 66 Preservationist	Sandy Vasko,	Will County Historic Preservation Commission
John Weiss,	Historic Route 66 Preservationist	Gretchen Sullivan	Will County Historic Preservation Commission
Kent Demuth,	Illinois Aviation Museum at Bolingbrook	Lynne Smaczny,	Will County Historical Society
Susan English,	Joliet Area Historical Museum	Amy Munro,	Will County Land Use Department
Debbie Greene,	Joliet Park District		

1. Welcome and Introductions

Lynne Smaczny, Executive Director, Will County Historical Society welcomed everyone and introduced co-sponsors, Cindy Bakkom, Supt. of Education, Forest Preserve District of Will County, and Amy Munro, Historic Preservation Manager, Will County Land Use Department.

Participants introduced themselves and the organizations they represented.

2. Background of Heritage Alliance Establishment

Smaczny introduced the background and purpose for establishing the Heritage Alliance. Participants discussed the importance for networking opportunities throughout Will County.

3. Purpose and Vision

a. Unique identity of each Will County heritage organization

Participants suggested that the formation of the Heritage Alliance could serve as a vehicle for groups to network without taking away from smaller organizations. Participants agreed that it is essential for each heritage entity to maintain its individual identity and that the Alliance should serve as an umbrella organization for improving communication, networking and sharing efforts among Will County heritage organizations. Smaczny briefly discussed the structure of the Kane DuPage Regional Museum Association as an example the Will County Heritage Alliance may want to look to for organizational structure.

b. Networking benefits

It was agreed that the focus of the group should be on Will County heritage oriented organizations. Greater resource coordination was emphasized. Participants discussed the need to market each other's events, training opportunities, and other resource sharing opportunities. The need to have a system in place such as a calendar of events to avoid conflicts with other Will County heritage events, especially fundraising events was discussed. Participants also discussed the need to coordinate on grant opportunities.

c. Collaboration on projects throughout the County

Participants discussed the following collaboration projects:

- Digitizing materials
- One central resource location to direct people towards finding specifics for their research efforts
- Regional Workshops
- Linking regional databases of archival information and collections

4. Discussion

a. Organizational challenges

The three County organizations (Will County Historical Society, Forest Preserve District of Will County, and Will County Historic Preservation Commission) can coordinate meetings for the; however, the intent is for the organization to run independently in the long term. Discussion was conducted on the pros and cons of structuring the organization as a formal, informal, or loose organization. Participants suggested that a more formal 501 (c)(3) may be better for getting funding and grants but another member organization of the group that is already a 501

(c)(3) might be fine. Other participants indicated that a loose umbrella organization may be better and suggested a loose organization but with guidelines. It was decided that the second meeting would address organizational structure issues. Ideas for guidelines, bylaws, job descriptions, sub committees, mission statement and other organizational documents should be emailed to Munro to compile and provide for discussion at the next meeting.

b. Communication needs

Participants discussed their interest in knowing what collections other Will County organizations have. They also discussed the need for a website to improve networking opportunities by providing direct contact information for each organization as well as an events schedule. Also, the website could serve as a point of contact for organizations that might not have the resources available to have their information available online. The Will County Land Use Department is willing to set up and house a webpage for the Alliance.

c. Resource sharing opportunities

Participants discussed the need to also have genealogical societies and libraries represented in the Alliance.

Other resource sharing opportunities included:

- Press releases, cultivate proper contacts at various media.
- Loaning artifacts for other museums to show.
- Speaker exchange, traveling exhibits.
- System set up for listing of documents available from all groups to help researchers.
- County Fair booth to highlight groups, museums, societies, to travel to other fairs.
- Exchange flyers or brochures so all groups can distribute other groups info.
- Cross link emails.
- Workshops to share software learning.
- Preservation workshops in towns to promote why preservation brings tax dollars and why our goals should be their goals.
- Share vendor information on who is local and has been used satisfactorily in the past for projects such as restoration, painting conservation and cleaning, textile preservation.
- Password protected databases for contact information that would be accessible only by Alliance organizations.

d. Other

The need for promoting other organizations, with an emphasis on partnership aspects and the need to avoid competing for the same funding was discussed as the likelihood for increase in funding

opportunities might be better with more organizations involved on a project.

5. Meeting Schedule

a. Frequency

Participants agreed that to maintain momentum, the Alliance should meet monthly at least for the first year, with the intent of meeting quarterly following that.

b. Time/Day

Participants agreed that 10:00 a.m. would be a good meeting time with future meeting times to be determined at a later date. In an effort to obtain information on the consensus for most preferable time and day for participants, a survey was distributed for participants to complete and return at the end of the meeting.

c. Location

Pilcher Park Nature Center. Participants discussed the merits of future meetings being conducted as traveling meetings vs. one central location. The survey distributed to participants will gather this information.

d. Next meeting date

Saturday, April 14 at Pilcher Park Nature Center at 10:00 a.m.

6. Announcements

- May 5 - Preservation Symposium at the Joliet Area Historical Museum
- May 5-6 - Route 66, 90-mile garage sale
- March 24 - Joliet Area Historical Museum Antique Appraisal
- March 29 - Joliet Area Historical Museum German Internment Camps Exhibit in the Midwest at the Joliet Library (Black Road Branch)
- First weekend in April - Forest Preserve District Isle a la Cache Grand Opening
- April 20 - New Will County Historical Society exhibit, Treasures from the Vault opens
- Weekend of May 5-6 - Will County Historical Society Pioneer Settlement opens; will have dress interpreters on site
- June 24 – Village of Bolingbrook Picnic – the Bolingbrook HPC will have a booth at which the Bolingbrook HPC would be willing to promote the Alliance

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.