

Michigan Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

September 19, 2019

First Universalist Church of Concord
200 Hanover Street, Concord, MI 49237

Commissioners in attendance: Laura Ashlee, Joe Calvaruso (by phone), Timothy Chester, Brian James Egen, Delia Fernandez (by phone), Susan Safford, Thomas Truscott, and Larry Wagenaar (by phone).

Excused Absence: Eric Hemenway

Staff: Sandra Clark, Sheri Giffin, and Heather Lehman

Members of the Public: Linda Haas, Jackson, MI; Joy Prettyman, Dearborn, MI; James Smith, Spring Arbor, MI

President Egen called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Approval of Agenda: Calvaruso moved to approve the agenda; the motion was seconded by Truscott and was unanimously adopted.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Chester moved to approve the June 20, 2019, meeting minutes; the motion was seconded by Ashlee and was unanimously adopted.

Marker Project:

The commission discussed the opportunity to review markers for content and involve local communities in a partnership. Chester reported discussing the idea with Diana Sieger of the Grand Rapids Community Foundation. She encouraged the commission to make connections with other community foundations and offered to host a network luncheon to connect with Kyle Caldwell, Executive Director of the Michigan Council of Foundations. Commissioners mentioned the Kutsche Office of Local History at Grand Valley, the Kellogg Foundation and other entities that might be interested in the project.

The commission discussed creating an overall strategic plan for the entire project from funding to assessment of markers. The plan will include working with individual communities or regions to review current marker content and condition and identify missing stories. Community foundations may be good partners in convening community members.

The commission decided the marker committee will take the lead on the project and will begin creating a strategic plan. The commission also agreed that this is a long-term project and it will be a focus of the commission for several years. The committee will investigate best practices and benchmarks from other states that have similar programs. The commission discussed the possible need for grant-funded staff or a consultant during the strategic planning and requests for funding stages of the project.

Marker Program:

- **Delisting of State Historic Sites** – Clark presented two sites to be delisted from the State Register of Historic Sites. Ashlee moved to approve delisting the sites from the state and

local registers of historic sites as presented (Appendix A); Safford seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously:

- ◆ **The Old Art Museum/Detroit Museum of Art, Detroit, Wayne County, HB21**
- ◆ **Saint Mary's School, Mt. Clemens, Macomb County, L1939**

➤ **Artifact Status:**

- ◆ **Policy** - A draft policy allowing a marker to be moved to artifact status was discussed. Commissioners noted the ownership of such markers should remain with the State of Michigan. Removal of a marker from artifact status would apply if it is not displayed appropriately or the conditions of the policy are not met. Demolition of the structure a marker focuses on would be cause for removal. Commissioners will review the policy, submit their comments, and vote on the amended policy at the next meeting.
- ◆ **Request** – The commission reviewed a request from the Gamma Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity regarding the original wall-mounted marker for the Alpha House, Detroit, Wayne County, Site No. L549. After discussion, Ashlee moved to deny the request because the marker has been replaced without text changes; Safford seconded the motion and it passed with Truscott and Wagenaar abstaining.

➤ **Approval of Marker Applications** - Written background information was provided on four new marker applications. (Appendix A)

- ◆ **Cadillac House, Lexington, Sanilac County**
- ◆ **Leelanau County Poor Farm, Maple City, Leelanau County**
- ◆ **St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County**
- ◆ **Thompsonville Junction/Village of Thompsonville, Thompsonville, Benzie County**

Ashlee moved to approve the Cadillac House marker application; Chester seconded the motion and it was unanimously adopted. Truscott moved to approve the Leelanau County Poor Farm marker application; Chester seconded the motion and it was unanimously adopted. Truscott moved to approve the St. Andrew's Episcopal Church marker application; Wagenaar seconded the motion and it was unanimously adopted. Safford moved to approve the Thompsonville Junction/Village of Thompsonville marker application; Truscott seconded the motion and it was unanimously adopted.

➤ **Approval of Marker Text** - Two new marker texts were presented to the Commission for review and approval.

- **Abolitionists in Jackson, Jackson, Jackson County**
- **George Shiras 3rd, Marquette, Marquette County**

Safford moved to approve the Abolitionists in Jackson marker text with amendments; the motion was seconded by Ashlee and was unanimously approved. Safford moved to approve the George Shiras 3rd marker text with amendments; the motion was seconded by Truscott and unanimously approved.

➤ **Reports:**

- ◆ The Marker Status report was distributed prior to the meeting. Davis has found locations for four of the five conservation markers and has an agreement for the fifth location.

- ◆ The Marker Fund report was distributed prior to the meeting.

Safford noted that she attended the marker dedication held on September 12, 2019, for the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit. After the dedication, she was given a brochure about the marker that contained more details about the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit.

State Historic District Reports:

The commission was provided two reports by the State Historic Preservation Office:

- Aretha Franklin Amphitheater/Chene Park Historic District, Detroit
- Boundary Modification Cherry Hill Historic District/Jorgensen House, Canton Township

Ashlee moved to accept the reports; Truscott seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Staff Reports:

The Awards Committee is reviewing the purpose for each of the awards. The committee will have a recommendation at the November meeting.

Clark is considering a Multicultural Advisory Committee to advise the commission and the MHC. A detailed proposal will be brought to the next meeting for discussion.

Chester congratulated Clark on her Award of Distinction from AASLH.

Wagenaar announced that the Historical Society of Michigan will be dedicating its new building on November 13 and all the commissioners are invited to attend.

Safford moved to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Chester, and the meeting adjourned at 12:08 p.m.



Sandra S. Clark, Executive Secretary

Delisting Items from the State Register of Historic Sites

The Michigan Historical Commission is charged with maintaining the State Register of Historic Sites. When a historic building is destroyed or so altered as to remove its historic significance, we require, by law, that the marker be removed. In most cases the State Register listing should also be removed at that time. At this time, we propose that the following sites be delisted from the State Register of Historic Sites.

Site No.	Date Listed	Name	Location	Reason for Delisting
HB21	1957	The Old Art Museum/Detroit Museum of Art	704 E. Jefferson Avenue, Detroit Wayne County	Building demolished in 1960 (destroyed to make room for the Hastings Expressway, today known as Interstate 75, the Chrysler Freeway)
L1939	1995	Saint Mary's School	Mt. Clemens Macomb County	Structure demolished; marker salvaged 2019

Michigan Historical Marker Application Synopses

Michigan Historical Commission

September 19, 2019

Cadillac House

Applicant: Stacy Fox/Callan Fox VanHemert

Marker Location: 5502 Main Street, Lexington. Sanilac County.

Requested Marker Type: Small, one-post, different text on each side.

John L. Woods and Jeremiah Jenks built the Cadillac House hotel in the Italianate style in 1860. The business opened on July 4 of that year with great fanfare: the Lexington Glee Club sang from the balcony; men fired ceremonial gunshots; boys marched in a parade; and the hotel served a “capital” dinner “in a style suitable for the occasion.”

At the time of the hotel’s construction, Lexington was the Sanilac County seat. The Cadillac House hotel and restaurant hosted those staying in town for the fishing and lumber industries. Various owners operated the hotel throughout the late nineteenth century. After Sandusky became the county seat in 1881 and the fishing and lumber industries declined near the turn of the twentieth century, Cadillac House adapted to Lexington’s growing status as a resort town. Thomas McVeigh Jr. purchased the hotel in 1892 and renamed it “The Lexington Beach Hotel.” It was known as the Cadillac hotel by 1898.

The hotel and restaurant thrived during the 1920s, as improved road conditions allowed travelers to take more summer vacations. The Cadillac boasted popular weekend “fish, chicken and frog leg dinners.” The hotel portion of the business closed by 1966, but the Cadillac remained open as a restaurant and bar until 2016. New owners reopened Cadillac House in 2018 as a hotel and restaurant after restoring the building to its 1860 appearance, including reconstructing the front porch and cupola. It received a Governor’s Award for Historic Preservation in 2019.

Recommend Approval.

Leelanau County Poor Farm

Applicant: Laurel Jeris

Marker Location: 1110 W. Burdickville Road, Maple City, Leelanau County.

Requested Marker Type: Large, two-post, different text on each side.

In 1901, Leelanau county supervisors purchased 120 acres of farmland containing two residences and one barn from Roswell and Mary Burke. There they established a “poor farm,” where indigent citizens could live under county provision and supervision, working if they were able. After a few years of operation, the county hired architect Jens C. Petersen to design an improved three-story brick residence with heating and plumbing that would “accommodate 35 persons without crowding.” It was completed in 1908.

The farm grew to include an icehouse, a hen house, a hog house and a windmill. The farm housed up to twenty residents at a time, as well as a superintendent and his family. In 1911, the poor farm’s original barn burned down. Architect Jens C. Petersen designed a new barn with a gambrel roof, built with a Portland cement foundation and plank framing. The barn contained nine milking stanchions, four work horse stalls, and a large hay mow. John Schettek completed its construction just a few months after the first barn was destroyed. A silo was added in 1913.

The Leelanau County Poor Farm operated until the mid-twentieth century. Today, the 1911 barn is the only structure still standing. It has retained most of its original design. In 2017, the Leelanau County Historic Preservation Society formed to save the deteriorating barn from being torn down. It acquired the barn by lease in 2018 and began a restoration project that is scheduled to complete in 2021.

Recommend approval

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

Applicant: Ann Garvin

Marker Location: 306 North Division St. Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County.

Requested Marker Type: Large, two-post, different text on each side.

In the early 1820s, the Reverend Richard Cadle arrived in Michigan as a missionary from the Episcopal church. He established St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Detroit and influenced the start of several other churches, including St. Andrew's, which was organized by the spring of 1828. It officially incorporated in 1833 under a territorial act. The church bought land near its current location from newspaper editor George Cornelius in 1834. On November 13, 1838, the first church building was dedicated. The small wooden structure was enlarged in 1856.

St. Andrew's hired architect Gordon W. Lloyd to design the current church. The nave was completed in 1869. A chapel and a rectory called Tatlock Hall were completed by 1881, and the church tower was added in 1903. The floors of the narthex, aisles and chancel contain Pewabic tiles, which were installed around 1917. A new parish hall, designed by architects Hammet and O'Dell Associated Architects, replaced the Tatlock Hall rectory in 1950.

St. Andrew's influence has reached beyond its church walls. It helped establish nearby Episcopal churches during the mid-twentieth century: St. Clare of Assisi and St. Aiden's in Ann Arbor, and St. Barnabas in Chelsea. In 1970 it joined and financially supported the Interfaith Council of Congregations (IFCC), an organization that funded social programs for disadvantaged communities. St. Andrew's partnered with the IFCC in 1982 to found the Shelter Association, housing the homeless of Ann Arbor in various locations. The church has also served free breakfast daily in the parish hall since 1982.

Recommend Approval.

Thompsonville Junction/Village of Thompsonville

Applicant: Ron Hitesman

Marker Location: At Civic Park in Thompsonville, Benzie County. Near the diamond crossing of the railroad tracks.

Requested Marker Type: Large, two-post, different text on each side.

Constructed in 1889, the diamond railroad crossing at Thompsonville Junction marked the intersection of the Frankfort & Southeastern Railroad (later the Ann Arbor) and the Chicago & West Michigan Railroad (later the Pere Marquette and ultimately the Chesapeake and Ohio). Both railroads had depots at the junction. Their lines connected Toledo to Frankfort and Chicago to the Traverse City area. The railroads carried both freight and passengers. In the summer of

1903, the Ann Arbor Railroad operated a “ping-pong” passenger train that took travelers from Thompsonville to Frankfort’s Lake Michigan resorts every few hours. The Ann Arbor Railroad and the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad ceased passenger service by the 1960s. Freight service ended in the 1980s. The diamond crossing rails were removed from their original location and placed in the village park sometime after 2000.

A village began growing around the Thompsonville Junction in 1890. Originally known as Lyndonville, it was renamed Thompsonville for S.S. Thompson, the president of the Frankfort & Southeastern Railroad. Multiple sawmills served as the community’s first businesses. Thompsonville incorporated as a village in 1892. By 1895, the Thompsonville Light and Power Company provided electricity for the small town. It had an approximate population of 1,200 people by 1901. That year, Thompsonville proudly labeled itself “The Biggest Little Town in Michigan” and boasted two churches, forty-eight businesses and multiple hotels. During the early twentieth century thousands visited Thompsonville’s annual street fair. Village growth slowed significantly after railroad operation declined.

Recommend Approval.