

Michigan Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2020

Michigan History Center

Board Room, 702 W. Kalamazoo Street, Lansing

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

Staff: Sandra Clark, Michelle Davis, and Heather Lehman

Members of the public: Karen Hudson Samuels, Black Historic Sites Committee (by phone); David Head, Black Historic Sites Committee (by phone); Jamon Jordan (by phone); Larry Cosentino, Lansing City Pulse.

President Egen called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

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

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Wagenaar moved to approve the November 14, 2019, meeting minutes as amended; the motion was seconded by Calvaruso and was unanimously adopted.

Local Historic District Study Committee Reports:

The commission was provided three reports by the Historic District Study Committee:

- Detroit Eastern Market, Detroit
- Ewart Depot, Ewart
- Elimination of Three Historic Districts and Boundary Updates for Two Resources, Portage

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

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Marker Project:

➤ Case Statement:

Clark reported that she and Chester met with Diana Sieger, director of the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, and Kyle Caldwell, president and chief executive officer, Council of Michigan Foundations, to discuss the idea of auditing Michigan Historical Markers with local communities in order to review the current content of the markers as well as to look for local stories that have not been told yet. Chester noted that last fall he had reached out to Diana Sieger on possible ways to reach broad audiences across the state. The Council of Michigan Foundations recently received a Kellogg Foundation grant that will reach out to the communities of Battle Creek, Kalamazoo and Detroit, with special funding initiatives that address diversity, equity and inclusion in those communities. Chester stated that the commission was doing that in essence with the

markers located on Mackinac Island, along with the markers that describe the Great Lakes. Caldwell proposed looping in his full-time coordinator who is working with the three communities for additional insight to the proposed marker project. Sieger chairs a coalition of community foundations in the immediate Grand Rapids region that includes Freemont, Muskegon, Allegan County, Grand Rapids, Ionia, Lowell, Grand Haven and Holland/Zeeland. She offered to discuss this project at their next meeting and asking if those community foundations would be interested in convening people for a discussion about local markers. One action suggested by both Caldwell and Sieger was to produce a single-page case statement that could be used when meeting with their contacts. Wagenaar moved to accept the Case Statement as presented; the motion was seconded by Ashlee and was unanimously adopted.

Wagenaar offered to discuss the possibility of featuring the marker project topic in a future addition of *Michigan History* magazine with staff at the Historical Society of Michigan. The commission supported this idea, seeing it as an opportunity to gain public awareness and support. Wagenaar agreed to update the commission after discussing it with staff.

➤ **Detroit's Black Historic Sites Committee**

Karen Hudson Samuels, vice chairperson of the Black Historic Sites Committee (committee), thanked the commission for allowing them to be on the agenda. The previous discussion on diversity and equity within the marker program has a close alignment to the committee's mission and vision. Prior to the meeting, Davis shared information on the founding of the committee and how the committee has moved forward with preservation and education in the Detroit area, regarding African American contributions that are often captured in Michigan Historical Markers. The committee is currently focusing on replacing stolen or damaged markers that focus on African American History in Michigan. It also works to raise awareness by hosting bus tours, a jazz series and other programs and events throughout Detroit.

The first topic for discussion is the historical marker for the Birthplace of Ralph Bunche, State Site No. 363. Originally the marker was approved for erection at 5668 Anthon Street, noted as the birthplace of Ralph Bunch. However, it appears that never happened. Instead the marker was mounted on the side of the City Foods grocery store located on Fort Street in Detroit. Currently the marker is missing from that location. The committee suggests ordering a replacement marker and having it erected at 5635 Fort Street, near the intersection with Junction in Detroit. Clark noted the current cost for a large, two-post marker with the same text on each side is \$3,240. The committee is seeking the commission's support to engage in conversation with those individuals directly connected to the property located at 5635 Fort Street.

The second topic for discussion was the Detroit Plaindealer, Local Site No. 450, historical marker. This marker was recently found in storage at Historic Fort Wayne. Originally it was approved to be erected near Shelby and State in Detroit. For a variety of reasons, it was never erected. Since the marker has recently been located and is currently in storage, the committee would like to move forward with recommending the marker be

placed at the Westin Book Cadillac property on the southwest corner of Shelby and State in Detroit. It was noted that this property is part of a historic district. It is uncertain at this time if the marker will need to be refinished or if new post will be needed. The committee is seeking the commission's support to engage in conversation with those individuals directly connected to this property.

Wagenaar moved to provide commission letters of support for the committee's suggested locations for the Birthplace of Ralph Bunche and the Detroit Plaindealer historical markers, pending the required owner's permission; Safford seconded the motion and it was unanimously adopted.

The committee noted its recent involvement in working with local community members and other key stakeholders on the Black Bottom historical marker. The committee looks forward to continuing such community involvement.

Jordan briefly explained the purpose of the bus tour and its significance to African American history in the Detroit Area. Additional information will be shared with the commission.

Clark noted the recent concern with some applications received from nondenominational churches in the Detroit area and the difficulty of being able to locate primary source documentation. At a previous commission meeting, the commission agreed to pay a stipend to an individual that could help with locating the non-traditional sources needed in order to share these stories. Clark agreed to share the names of the churches with committee members so that they can reach out to their contacts.

Head asked if others had any information about other programs or tours that are taking place outside of Detroit. He noted the importance of getting others to venture out of their local area and discover the real stories throughout Michigan. Clark noted the work of the Freedom Trail Commission.

Marker Program

➤ Artifact Status Requests

◆ Italian Hall Tragedy/The Italian Hall – Calumet, Houghton County, L1337

The commission asked to have the sponsor provide more information before it makes a decision.

◆ Erin United Presbyterian Church, L906, and Sacred Heart Church, L1354, both located in Roseville, Macomb County

After discussion, Ashlee moved to deny the City of Roseville's request to move the Erin United Presbyterian Church and the Sacred Heart Church to artifact status; Fernandez seconded the motion and on a roll call vote the motion failed with three votes in favor and five votes against. Calvaruso moved to approve the City of Roseville's request to move the Erin United Presbyterian Church and the Sacred Heart Church to artifact status as requested; Truscott seconded the motion and on a roll call vote the motion passed with five votes in favor and three votes against.

After further discussion, the commission noted the importance of having the artifact status policy be very clear and concise in its intention and expectations. Wagenaar moved to approve the following bullet point added to the current policy: In order to evaluate the proposed use of the marker as an artifact, the commission will request submission of a rough sketch of the proposed display of the marker showing the position of any labels and related images and artifacts, as well as the draft text for any labels; Calvaruso seconded the motion and it was unanimously adopted.

➤ **Move Requests**

- ◆ **Cereal Bowl of America, Battle Creek, Calhoun County (S131)** – The commission reviewed a request to relocate the Cereal Bowl of America marker to southwest corner of Mill Race Park, 11 W. Capital Avenue, near the intersection of Jackson Street West. After discussion, Wagenaar moved to approve the request to relocate the Cereal Bowl of America marker to Mill Race Park; Ashlee seconded the motion and it was unanimously adopted. The commission noted that the marker appears to need refinishing. It also thought the subject matter would merit a new text and a marker with different text on each side.
- ◆ **Grosse Pointe High School, Grosse Pointe, Wayne County (L1882)** – The commission reviewed a request to relocate the Grosse Pointe High School marker 6’-3” west and 46’-6” south(east) from its current position at the Grosse Pointe High School. After discussion, Wagenaar moved to deny the request to relocate the marker since the commission does not encourage placing two markers side by side; Truscott seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously. The commission recommends that each marker have the appearance of having its own space and location.

➤ **Delisting of State Historic Sites** – Clark presented one site to be delisted from the State Register of Historic Sites. Ashlee moved to approve delisting the site from the State Register of Historic Sites as presented (Appendix A); Truscott seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously:

- ◆ **Stroh Brewery, Detroit, Wayne County, S475**

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

- ◆ **Deal Mansion, Jonesville, Hillsdale County**
- ◆ **German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church, Hillsdale, Hillsdale County**
- ◆ **Grand Army of the Republic Building, Detroit, Wayne County**
- ◆ **Timothy and Lucretia Warner Homestead, Brighton, Livingston County**
- ◆ **Vasold Family Cemetery, Freeland, Saginaw County**
- ◆ **Michigan Association for Justice, Lansing, Ingham County**

Calvaruso moved to decline the Deal Mansion marker application since there was not enough primary source documentation to establish either the architectural significance of the house or associate it with significant events; Truscott seconded the motion and it was unanimously adopted. Wagenaar moved to approve the German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church marker application; Calvaruso seconded the motion and it was

unanimously adopted. Ashlee moved to approve the Grand Army of the Republic Building marker application; Truscott seconded the motion and it was unanimously adopted. Truscott moved to approve the Timothy and Lucretia Warner Homestead marker application; Safford seconded the motion and it was unanimously adopted. Ashlee moved to table the Vasold Family Cemetery marker application to allow time for additional cemetery research to be done before the decision is made; Truscott seconded the motion and the application was tabled. Truscott moved to approve the Michigan Association for Justice marker application; Chester 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.
 - ◆ **Leelanau County Poor Farm/Leelanau County Poor Farm Barn, Maple City, Leelanau County**
 - ◆ **St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church/St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County**

Truscott moved to approve the Leelanau County Poor Farm/Leelanau County Poor Farm Barn marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Wagenaar and was unanimously approved. Truscott moved to approve the St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Safford and was unanimously approved.

- **Marker Maintenance**

Ashlee suggested that since the markers are official property of the State of Michigan, and there are fees collected with each marker, the commission might use some of the available marker funds to assist with maintaining markers. After discussion, the commission agreed that this topic merited further discussion at a future meeting. The marker committee agreed to bring some ideas to the next meeting.

- **Reports:**
 - ◆ The Marker Status report was distributed prior to the meeting.
 - ◆ The Marker Fund report was distributed prior to the meeting.

Staff Reports:

- **Director’s Report** – Clark reported the summer camp program has been paused for 2020 in order to focus on larger educational priorities for the year. The report concerning admission fees is ready to send when DNR budget staff think the time is right. Clark noted that the Michigan History Foundation planning meeting was cancelled and has been rescheduled for March. Chester, who occupies one of the two seats to be held by commissioners on the Foundation Board, noted that the remaining seat is still open. He suggested that this topic be on the agenda for the next commission meeting.

Prior to the meeting, Clark shared the correspondence she received from the Buck family regarding the John Taylor historical marker. The family suggested they would attend the meeting in person to express their concerns. However, since no additional information was presented, no further action was taken at this time.

Business Updates – No updates were given.

Commissioner Comments – No commissioner comments were given.

Wagenaar moved to adjourn the meeting; the meeting adjourned at 12:48 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra S. Clark". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

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 structure 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 site(s) be delisted from the State Register of Historic Sites:

Site No.	Date Listed	Name	Location	Reason for Delisting
S475	1975	Stroh Brewery	Detroit, Wayne County	Structure demolished; records show the marker was salvaged in 2003 but it was not delisted at that time.

Michigan Historical Marker Application Synopses

Michigan Historical Commission

February 13, 2020

Deal Mansion

Applicant: Kathy Norton

Marker Location: 212 Maumee Street, Jonesville, Hillsdale County.

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

George Deal (b. 1863) and Minnie Johnson (b. 1868) married in 1888. George became a partner in his father's carriage factory in 1891, and it became the J.J. Deal and Son Carriage Factory. Construction on George and Minnie Deal's home began in 1901. The finished home included a ballroom on the third floor where the Deals held joint parties with their neighbors, the Grosvenors. George died in 1908 and Minnie sold the house in 1920.

The home contains several original interior details, including a stained glass window on the staircase, original tile on two interior fireplaces and built-in cabinetry on the first floor.

Staff does not recommend approval. This application lacks primary source information, making a historical narrative difficult to compile. Additionally, vinyl siding on the home lessens its historic character.

A marker for the J.J. Deal factory was erected in 2017. Its text is listed below.

J.J. Deal and Son Carriage Factory: Around 1865 blacksmith Jacob J. Deal began to build and repair carriages, wagons, sleighs and carts in Jonesville. He had a manufacturing complex on this site by 1884. Jacob's son, George, became a partner and manager in 1891, and the company was renamed J. J. Deal and Son. Using fire-resistant construction techniques, they built this factory in three phases between 1892 and 1909. When Jacob retired in 1908, George renamed the business Deal Buggy Company. During this time, the business began making automobiles under the name Deal Motor Vehicle Company. Its models included the Deal Model "R," which sold for \$1,250 and featured a thirty-horsepower engine, speedometer and wind shield. Jacob Deal died in 1914; the company closed the next year.

German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church

Applicant: Reverend Jessica Hahn

Marker Location: 69 Griswold Street, Hillsdale.

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

In 1849, the Reverend Wilhelm Hattstaedt founded the German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church. It formally organized under a constitution in 1854, led by the Reverend Phillip Trautmann. The constitution specifically noted the congregation's German identity and its intent to provide services in the German language exclusively. Construction on the church building began around 1854.

The church added improvements for its fiftieth anniversary in 1904. These included a new brass chandelier, steel ceiling tiles, a 1,050 pound bell, and electric lights. The church began offering select services in English in 1913. Like many ethnic churches, it held all its services in English

by the end of WWI. It became known by its shortened name, Trinity Lutheran Church, during the mid-twentieth century. A 1988 addition at the back of the church provided the congregation with more space and an accessible entrance.

Trinity Lutheran acquired the building next door, Lakeview School, in 1954. The school was built in 1907 and operated until the 1930s. The church renamed the building Luther Hall and began using it for classrooms, a meeting space, and an office space. From 1987 until 2002, Luther Hall housed the Hillsdale County Senior Center. In 2003, Trinity Lutheran established the King's Kupboard Food Pantry in the hall.

Trinity Lutheran is considered to be the oldest church building in the city of Hillsdale.

The historical name of Trinity Lutheran Church—the German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church—cannot fit on a small marker's title.

Recommend approval



Michigan Association for Justice

Applicant: Nate Pilon

Marker Location: 325 S Walnut Street, Lansing.

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

In 1945 attorney Samuel Charfoos founded a workers' compensation organization in Detroit. It became the Michigan Chapter of the newly-formed National Association of Claimants' Compensation Attorneys (NACCA). It was NACCA's first official chapter. The Michigan Chapter incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1961 and changed its name to the Michigan Trial Lawyers Association (MTLA) in 1966. MTLA moved to Lansing in 1970. It changed its name to the Michigan Association for Justice (MAJ) in 2007.

In addition to its workers' compensation efforts for those who have been injured on the job, MAJ's outreach programs have helped Michigan citizens. The People's Law School, established in 1977, educates citizens on their legal rights and responsibilities. MAJ launched a helmet safety

campaign called “Lids for Kids” in 1999, offering free helmets on “a mission to keep Michigan kids safe.”

Recommend approval.



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