

Elk River Heritage Preservation Commission Annual Report

(October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017)



The following is the annual report of the Elk River Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) for October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017. The report was prepared according to the guidelines outlined in 'Procedures for Applying for and Maintaining Certified Local Government Status (CLG).' The Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) administers CLG status for the National Park Service in Minnesota. An annual report is a requirement to maintain CLG status.



City of Elk River Certified Local Government 2017 Annual Report

Background

The Elk River Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) is a Certified Local Government (CLG) for the purposes of expanding local involvement and participation in historic preservation issues.

The CLG program is administered by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). A requirement of the CLG program is submission of an annual report to SHPO documenting the activities of the HPC for the previous Federal fiscal year, which runs October 1, 2016, to September 30, 2017.

The HPC consists of five Elk River residents appointed by the City Council. Each serve three-year terms beginning on the first day of March. The HPC shall include, if available, a member of the Sherburne County Historical Society.

Exhibits:

- A. HPC Members
- B. Annual HPC Certified Local Government Assurances Form
- C. Draft Historic Walking Tour Brochure

Analysis

The HPC held four regular meetings during the reporting period. All meetings were posted as public meetings and conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law (Minnesota Statutes 471.705). Minutes of each meeting are recorded and filed at City Hall and can be viewed on the city website.

2016 Projects

Ongoing Review of Development Proposals

The HPC reviews development proposals using archaeological modeling. Between October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017, there were no development proposals deemed to be a threat to historical sites or historical information.

History Fair Judging

Commissioner Mortensen, along with HPC staff liaison Zack Carlton and BrieAnna Simon participated in judging at the Salk Middle School History Fair.

Jackson Street Water Tower

The Jackson Street Water Tower (circa 1920) was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2012. Since that time, the HPC has worked to increase public awareness of this historical structure with a 3D model and printed materials of the tower's history at schools, environmental workshops, messaging on the city website and at city open house events.

The HPC utilized a CLG grant award from 2013 and hired Collaborative Design Group to complete a Condition Assessment of the tower. The report was completed in August 2015 and has been very helpful in preparing for the final goal of painting and repairing the water tower. The estimated cost to repair the structure was below previous

estimates received by the city. The reduced cost was a pleasant surprise as Elk River Municipal Utilities, the current owner of the tower, has earmarked money for tower repairs. That money will be used for matching funds in a future grant application.

The next phase of the project includes preparing a Restoration Analysis Report, which will consist of construction drawings for the actual restoration work. The city has again been working with Kodet Architectural Group, Ltd. to complete this work. An application for grant funding was completed to help with the costs of the restoration and the timing of the improvements will be based on grant receipt and timing.

Elk River Walking Tour

The HPC worked with students and faculty at St. Cloud State University to prepare a self-guided walking tour of historically significant locations in Elk River. Late fall 2014 the city hosted a presentation from St. Cloud State University students where they presented a number of different draft brochures. The HPC has been utilizing these to prepare a mobile brochure on the city's website.

The city continues to work on getting the walking tour on the city's website to increase the availability of the information. The city offered three guided walking tour facilitated by a member of the HPC. Despite the weather, each tour was well attended and received positive feedback. The is looking to offer more guided tours in 2018.

Oral Histories

Commissioner Mortensen continues to seek out additional residents willing to be interviewed for the oral histories project. The HPC is also in the early stages of expanding this program to encourage additional members of the community to not only be interviewed, but interview other residents.

37th Annual Statewide Historic Preservation Conference

In September 2017, HPC staff liaison BrieAnna Simon and Commissioner Mortensen attended the Annual Statewide Historic Preservation Conference in Hastings MN.

Houlton Farm Natural Area

The City of Elk River worked with the Trust for Public Land, the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, and the Friends of the Mississippi to acquire the Houlton-Olson family farm and add it to the city's park system as a conservation area.

The 335-acre riverfront property is located west of downtown near the Orono Dam and has been in the family since the 1870's. The park opened in the fall of 2016 and has been very popular. The HPC will look for opportunities to explore historical topics associated with the park.

2018 Proposed Projects

Preservation of Jackson Street Water Tower

The HPC plans to apply for the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage large grant by May 25, 2018 to assist with the restoration of the Jackson Street Water Tower. Matching funds are available, but the actual restoration will be based on specified grant timelines.

Oral Histories

The HPC will continue to look for additional opportunities to interview residents for the oral histories project.

History Fair Judging

The HPC has participated in judging at the Salk Middle School History Fair in the past, and members of the commission will again have an opportunity to volunteer as a judge for the fair in February 2018.

Educational Opportunities

HPC will continue to work with the Elk River Community Education Department and Parks and Recreation Department to incorporate educational opportunities into their programs. A historic tour could be coordinated with the Parks and Recreation Department. Elk River Community Education may be willing to host training to conduct oral histories in the community.

Exhibit A

Heritage Preservation Commission Roster as of September 30, 2014

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Exhibit B

Annual HPC Certified Local Government Assurances

Name of HPC: City of Elk River Heritage Preservation Commission

Fiscal Year: October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017

State of Minnesota
County of Sherburne
City of Elk River

1. I hereby certify that the Elk River, Minnesota Heritage Preservation Commission has adhered to the public participation provisions as stipulated under Section III.D of the "Minnesota Certified Local Government Procedures Manual" issued by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office.
2. I hereby certify that the Elk River, Minnesota Heritage Preservation Commission has adhered to the procedures of the State Archives Department of the Minnesota Historical Society, regarding commission records (see the State Archives publication "Preserving and Disposing of Government Records," pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 138.17, online at www.mnhs.org/preserve/records/recser.)

Witness my hand officially on November 6, 2017.

John J. Dietz, Mayor

Orono Cemetery is the oldest Elk River cemetery. It contains the graves of Civil War veterans and at least one War of 1812 veteran.



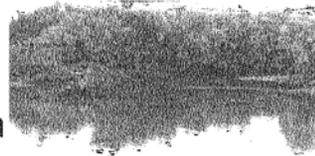
Union Church

The church is built in 1881 designed and constructed by W.F Chadbourn of Elk River. The church reproduces the traditional detailing of the existing church, while providing modern amenities



Rivers Edge Commons Park
Commons Park is the year-round hotspot for weddings, with the mighty Mississippi as a beautiful backdrop.

Orono Dam



The original dam was downstream from the present site and was a mere 6 feet high. It was built in 1851 by Ard Godfrey and was the source of power for his sawmill and gristmill



Handke Stadium; officially named Elk Hi Stadium, is an example of community spirit. WPA did the stonework in the 1930. The school building next to the stadium; now called the Handke Family Center, was built in 1930 and named after Robert Handke, a school superintendent.



Historic points to visit:

- i. Orono Cemetery
- ii. Mansur House
- iii. Orono Dam
- iv. Handke Stadium
- v. Union Congregation
- vi. Rivers Edge Park
- vii. Bank of Elk River
- viii. Jackson Street
- ix. Water Tower

Scan this for digital map



A 92-year-old *Water Tower* in Elk River has been named to the National Register of Historic Places.

The water tower was built in 1920 by the Minneapolis Steel and Machinery Co. as part of an effort to protect Elk River from fire. There was very limited fire protection in Elk River and several fires nearly wiped out the city's business district.

The *Baily's Point* is home to an active bald eagle's nest, and variety of other wildlife including deer, coyotes, turkeys, otters and foxes. It's so close to downtown but still feels as though it is crowded with wildlife. The city of Elk River closed on the purchase Nov. 20, buying the 26-acre boot-shaped peninsula from John and Nancy Babcock.

Thought to be the oldest existing building in Elk River, the *Mansur House* was built between 1857 and 1860. The home belonged to Charles Mansur, a Mexican War veteran and partner of Ard Godfrey, who built a sawmill near the site of the present-day Orono Dam. The home remained in the Mansur family for more than 100 years, until 1969.



Jackson Avenue used to be Highway 169. For years, the intersection of this road and Highway 10 was the only one with a stoplight in Elk River and on major travel weekends, traffic would back up half way to Anoka. Work on Highway 169 to bypass Elk River began in 1961 as well as Highway 101 between Rogers and Elk River began in 1968 which decongested the city.



In 1856 Willard L. Babcock, migrated to Santiago in Sherburne County from Vermont with his pregnant wife, a small child and a team of oxen. He was driven away from Santiago by warring Indians. He became a retail merchant, operating a general store in Elk River. *The Bank* of Elk River is indeed in a unique position as one of the few banks in the state more than 119 years old that still remains independently owned.

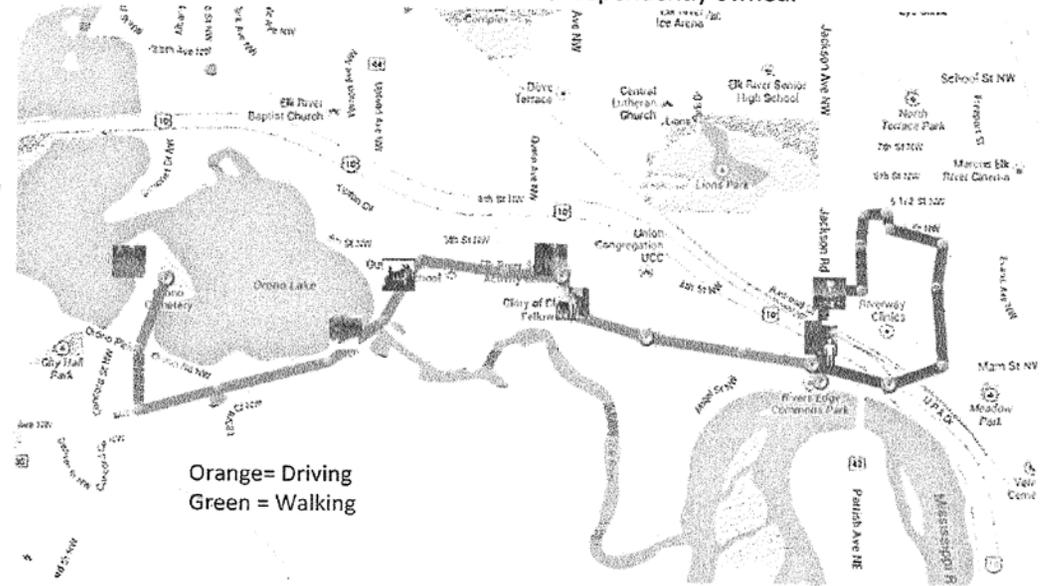


Exhibit D

Historic Walking Tour News Release

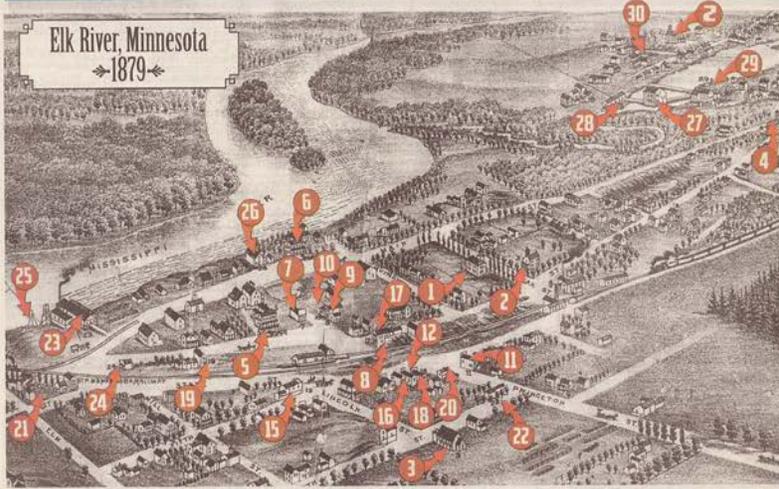
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Mainstreams

Elk River, Minnesota
1879



WALKING BACK IN TIME

Lance Lindberg led a tour that delved into the history of downtown Elk River

by Joni Astrup
Associate editor

Lance Lindberg spent his early years on the West Coast, before moving to Elk River with his family in 1962. "I came to Elk River and I never wanted to leave," he said Aug. 10, as he led a walking tour of the historic highlights of downtown Elk River.

Over the years he developed a deep interest in the area's history, and now serves on the Elk River Heritage Preservation Commission.

On last week's tour, Lindberg led people through downtown Elk River, west to the Handke Stadium, past a couple of historic churches, then on to Bailey Point Nature Preserve before ending back in the heart of downtown.

Lindberg said the original settlement in what is now Elk River was known as Orono. It was platted in 1855 west of the Orono dam. Lumber milling was the commerce that initially drove the development of the little village, followed by other mills such as flour.

Within a decade, Elk River was platted approximately a mile from Orono.

Elk River's downtown was originally on the north side of the railroad tracks and consisted of 18 to 20 buildings, Lindberg said. Fires, however, were a recurring problem.

"Downtown burned down two, maybe three times over there," Lindberg said of the original Elk River downtown.

That led to the establishment of a new downtown in its present location along the Mississippi River and south of the railroad tracks.

The oldest downtown building is the Sunshine Depot, which was originally a drugstore, Lindberg said.

The block of buildings on the west side of Jackson, between Main Street and Highway 10, is known as the Brick Block. Those structures date to the

early 1900s, Lindberg said. The Houlton building at the northwest corner of Jackson and Main, now home to Edward Jones, was built in 1903. Elk River Meats, 724 Main St., also was built about 1903, Lindberg said.

The water tower on Jackson Avenue was built in 1920 and improved fire protection.

The group then headed west along Main Street to the Handke Stadium at 1133 4th Street. Along the way they passed cement posts with iron rings in them. Lindberg said he often wondered about them as a kid. Turns out they are old hitching posts where people tied up their horses. Several are still visible along Main Street, including two in front of the Hitchin' Post Condominium.

The group paused at Handke Stadium. The site was a pond before being converted to a stadium in the 1920s. Lindberg said there was apparently a near-drowning in the pond and it was considered dangerous.

In the 1930s, a youth-corps-type government program built the stonework at the stadium.

High school football games were played in the stadium until the 1950s, he said.

The stadium also has been a kid magnet for all of its years.

For people who grew up in Elk River, for decades the stadium was the central part of being a kid, Lindberg said.

Continuing on to the Union Congregational Church, United Church of Christ at 1118 Fourth Street, Lindberg said many of the early Elk River settlers were New Englanders, and Union Church was the church that they formed. The church was established in the 1870s.

Down the street at 1326 Fourth Street is another historic church - Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. The congregation dates to 1859 and the church building to 1891.

The oldest building in Elk River, however, is a house, Lindberg said. That is located just west of the Orono Dam, overlooking Lake Orono.

The group then moved on to Bailey Point, located at 1 Morton Avenue, which has a rich history all its own. The area was once home to the Sherburne County Fairgrounds, a golf course and the high school football field. Lindberg said the Bailey Point area also was the site of two battles between the Dakota and the Ojibwa in 1772 and 1773.

In 2012, it came under city ownership and today it is known as Bailey Point Nature Preserve.



Lance Lindberg



The Houlton building at Jackson and Main dates to 1903.

KEY TO MAP

1. Courthouse
2. Public schools
3. Methodist church
4. Episcopal church
5. Sherburne House
6. Elk River House
7. Post office
8. General merchant
9. Furniture store
10. Sheriff's office, etc.
11. General merchants
12. Druggist
13. Hardware
14. Tailor
15. Newspaper office
16. Office
17. Law office
18. Doctor's office
19. Doctor's office
20. Harness shop
21. Carpenter and builder shop
22. Carpenter's shop
23. Elk River sawmill
24. Blacksmith shop
25. Ferry across Mississippi River
26. Livery stable
- 27 & 28. Elk River flouring mills and sawmill
29. Wagon and blacksmith shop
30. General merchandise, tin and hardware

