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.
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.

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**Exhibit A**

**Heritage Preservation Commission Roster as of September 30, 2014**
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 Ardl 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 boat-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