

Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission Minutes of Meeting, August 24, 1999

Present: Commissioners -

Kathryn Eckert, At-Large, National Parks/Historic Preservation
Reverend Robert Langseth, Houghton County Board of Commissioners
Larry Lankton, At-Large, National Parks/Historic Preservation
Paul Lehto, Calumet Township
Tom Nemacheck, State of Michigan

Absent: Clyde Raasio, Quincy/Franklin Townships
Vacant: Commissioner, Village of Calumet

National Park Service -

Lynn Bjorkman, KNHP Community Planner
Joseph Balachowski, KNHP Historical Architect
Frank Fiala, KNHP Superintendent
Al Hutchings, Associate Regional Director for Legislation & Policy

Recording Secretary -Lisa Dwyer

Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission was held, Tuesday, August 24, 1999, in Hancock, Michigan at the Finnish American Heritage Center.

Chairman Paul Lehto asked for a moment of silence in memory of John Vertin who recently passed away.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved with no additions or corrections.

Review of Minutes

The minutes were reviewed. A typographical error was corrected. The minutes were then approved unanimously.

Superintendent's Report

Frank Fiala spoke of the change in location of today's meeting from park headquarters in Calumet to the Finnish American Heritage Center in Hancock saying he hopes that by occasionally changing the location of the meeting, attendance of the general public will improve.

Fiala distributed a copy of the letter sent by the Advisory Commission to the Portage Health Systems Board of Directors notifying them of the Advisory Commission's dismay over the demolition of the historic Quincy Bath House. He distributed a copy of a letter sent by the City of Hancock to the Advisory Commission in response to that letter.

A copy of a letter from Ron Welton, of the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness Management Unit, was distributed. It refers to ten Harding ball mills at the White Pine Stamp Mill. Welton suggested that the park pursue the acquisition of this site. Larry Lankton said these ball mills are a key piece of early technology. He suggested that at least one be brought to the Copper County since there are none left here other than the foundations. Fiala tabled any action by the park pending further investigation explaining that White Pine is not within the park boundaries and suggested that the Advisory Commission investigate how the ball mills can be obtained. Lankton explained that Osceola Township is interested in the Quincy Dredge site including the Quincy Reclamation site which has the concrete pads for ball mills and it would be ideal to have these ball mills moved from White Pine to the reclamation site. Reverend Langseth suggested that the Advisory

Commission draft a letter to send to Welton expressing an interest in the mills. Lankton said he would draft the letter to be signed by Paul Lehto on behalf of the Advisory Commission.

A copy of a letter written by Advisory Commission member, Reverend Langseth, and sent to Michelle McManus, Governor Engler's Upper Peninsula representative, was distributed. It is an inquiry as to the status of a request made to Governor Engler, for state funding of the Advisory Commission. It also inquires about the status of a request for an Art, Cultural, and Quality of Life Grant for \$483,280 that is to help with the rehabilitation of St. Anne's Church, the location of the Keweenaw Heritage Center. Senator Koivisto notified Reverend Langseth that the governor has not taken action on either issue, yet.

Fiala said that park staff hosted a visit made by an Eastern Michigan University Historic Preservation class recently. The class toured the Calumet and Quincy units of the park.

A preservation architect has been engaged by the Calumet Theater and was at the theater recently to do some preliminary preservation planning. The park has received a proposal in preparation for a long-term general management plan for the theater and intends on supporting efforts to restore this important part of the park.

The making of the film that documents the production of The Children of the Keweenaw opera is expected to take about 18 months to produce. It should premier at the Calumet Theater during the Pine Mountain Music Festival in 2001.

The park also filmed the Central Mine reunion on July 25, which will be a part of the Library of Congress's Local Legacy program.

Fiala completed a report on the park's cultural resource preservation projects for the next fiscal year. Josef Balachowski will go to the NPS's Omaha office to help analyze and prioritize these projects.

The Quincy and Franklin Water Authority received a 1.6 million-dollar grant from Rural Development, for water improvement projects on Quincy Hill.

The play, Boomin' Copper, was canceled due to unexpected problems, according to Fiala. However, there has been a script rewrite and negotiations have been entered into with the Calumet Players in order to get their technical expertise and casting support.

A ceremony was held recently to celebrate the park's acquisition of the Union Building. The park has committed to entering into discussions with Keweenaw Heritage Center, Coppertown, the Village of Calumet, Calumet Township and the public in order to plan the eventual use of that building.

Congressman Bart Stupak recently informed Fiala that the request for property acquisition money of 1.7 million dollars will be going to the floor to be voted on and anticipates that it will carry. Stupak also said that legislation for the Advisory Commission to receive its operating power would go to the floor as well.

The park has entered into discussions with the Calumet School District regarding the future of the Morrison School that is slated for demolition. Fiala feels that the park will be able to acquire it from the school district through a conveyance.

New park employee, Brian Hoduski, will begin his position with KNHP as interpreter, on September 13.

Rodney Larsen, Administrative Officer trainee, will begin his position with KNHP sometime around Labor Day.

The NPS Midwest Regional Office cultural assessment team was in the area in July. A report has not come out yet, by the team.

Fiala distributed copies of a "Landmarks at Risk" report made by Bill Nelligan, Architectural Historian of the Midwest Support Office. Every two years a required report is submitted to Congress on the status of National Historic Landmarks. Both the Calumet Historic District and the Quincy Mining Company Historic District are considered to be threatened National Historic Landmarks.

Fiala also distributed copies of information regarding the First Avenue Project on Quincy Hill, which includes a letter sent from the City of Hancock to State Historic Preservation Officer, Brian Conway. The Hancock City Council voted to cancel the proposed First Avenue Project and withdrew all the plans. The City elected not to extend First Avenue as a part of the Memorandum of Agreement negotiations made with the park. Also, a copy of a resolution by the city was distributed that authorizes payment of \$55,000 from the city to Paul Tomasi as payment for release of the easement conditions that were placed on Tomasi Drive/Campus Drive. Even though the City of Hancock's easement was canceled, Mr. Tomasi still had an easement on the road through Quincy Development property on Quincy Hill and he is now exercising his easement and is putting the First Avenue extension in. Since this situation is a private matter now, the terms of the memorandum of agreement no longer apply and it appears that First Avenue extension will be built by a private party.

Fiala distributed a copy of a memo sent from the State Historic Preservation Office to the City of Hancock approving the color black for the new elevated steel water tank.

The next packet of material Fiala distributed included correspondence regarding the proposed PHS sign at the Intersection of U.S. 41 and Campus Drive where the Quincy Bath House foundation was located and minutes (prepared by PHS) taken at a meeting to discuss the sign issue between PHS and Fiala. There are misconceptions stated in the minutes as to the park's position regarding the sign issue, Fiala commented. According to the "no-affect" letter dated August 17, 1999, from the State Historic Preservation Office to Portage Health Systems, the sign issue is now closed and PHS is free to erect any kind of sign they choose. Fiala stated that the park is opposed to the sign in its present condition because it is incompatible and incongruous to the cultural landscape there.

Reverend Langseth suggested to Fiala, that if at all possible, would he send the commissioners information ahead of time regarding agenda items so the commissioners have time to "digest" the information before each meeting.

Fiala proposed that the Advisory Commission, hire a staff person to work part-time with the park on Advisory Commission matters. This person would work for and report to the commissioners as well as working closely with the park in order to carry out the responsibilities that the Advisory Commission would have once it has its operating powers.

Historical Architect's Report

Josef Balachowski has been working on the stabilization of the Blacksmith Shop and the Machine Shop. The Machine Shop is currently in "mothball status" until the next stabilization phase. Funding has been requested to get a roof on the Machine Shop sometime next summer. Balachowski also has been working on coordinating some site survey work for Michigan Tech's, School of Technology. He has been working on a design for a barrier free entry at St. Anne's as well as an elevator there. He is assisting with a grant request for some stabilization work at the U.P. Fireman's Museum. He met with the new owner of the Calumet Railroad Depot discussing roof and wall stabilization there. He assisted Fiala on some preliminary cost estimates for stabilization projects regarding the Cultural Resource Preservation Program. Some of these funding requests are for projects at the Union Building, Calumet Theater, the Powder House in Calumet, the Round House, and the Machine Shop.

Community Planner's Report

Lynn Bjorkman continues to monitor and facilitate the establishment of the Historic District Ordinance for the downtown district of Calumet. She is also working with Calumet Township's Historic District Ordinance Study

committee to consider an historic district in the core C&H industrial area there. She is continuing her ongoing research and survey activities of mining company housing in the area coordinating this project with a Master's student from the University of Wisconsin. She also presented public programs on the history of landscape design in U.P. mining districts recently.

Both Balachowski and Bjorkman worked at Isle Royale National Park documenting structures and assisting Isle Royale park staff with preservation work recently.

Associated Regional Director

Al Hutchings reported that NPS's Omaha Office is going through some reorganization, but the reorganization does not affect KNHP in any way.

Reports and Comments from the Commissioners

Tom Nemacheck recently attended one of the hearings conducted by the House Republican Caucus on Public Policy. Nemacheck testified at the hearing held at Sault St. Marie and spoke about cultural heritage projects in the Upper Peninsula. Nemacheck said he feels it is important for the commissioners to be present at these types of meetings in order to inform and publicize the importance of KNHP. These hearings do aid in directing policy on how Lansing appropriates funding. The House Committee will be reporting the results of these hearings at the state tourism conference in October. Fiala noted that he was not notified of the hearing and would investigate why he was not. Reverend Langseth recommended that the commissioners prepare a written addendum and send it to the Republican Caucus. Nemacheck said he would check on the closing date for submitting further testimony.

Kathryn Eckert suggested that the Advisory Commission contact Connie Binsfield, (past Lieutenant Governor of Michigan) and ask her to use her influence with Governor Engler in connection with the grant request for funding of the Keweenaw Heritage Center as well as the request for state funding of the Advisory Commission.

Michigan Secretary of State, Candice Miller, is planning on filming a series of six heritage tours of the state over the next year. The first filming is going to be of the Keweenaw and will take place sometime in September. Michigan State University is producing the tours, which will be aired over public television.

The Americana Foundation awarded modest grants in the area recently, according to Eckert. One was awarded to Keweenaw Heritage Center and the other to the Houghton County Historical Society for the acquisition of the Mary Chase Perry Stratton House in Hancock. The Foundation recently had its annual planning session and is considering holding a meeting in Calumet next summer.

Eckert said that the State Historic Preservation Office is holding its annual fall workshop in Lansing in September. The workshop is titled, "Preserving our Past through Creative Partnerships."

Larry Lankton spoke about the stained glass window restoration project going on at Keweenaw Heritage Center. The Heritage Center has entered into contracts to have all of the window restoration done. He added that there still is about a half a million dollars of work to be done in order to prepare the building to house a museum. The Heritage Center held an open house recently, which coincided with the Union Building acquisition ceremony. Approximately 150 people toured the Heritage Center.

Lankton said it is essential that there is coordination with the planning of what will be exhibited in the various park buildings in order to prevent duplication. He added that he feels there is a need for a "specific management plan" in order to focus on what the "big story is that we want to tell." He said there is a need to begin thinking about what the park is supposed to look like when "it is all put together." The General Management Plan did not set priorities for what should be saved and protected and what doesn't necessarily need to be saved and protected. A mechanism is needed to ascertain what the most important elements and resources are to the park.

Lankton asked what the status is of plans for the Quincy Smelter. Fiala said he heard that there was an easement issue as well as a platting issue but both have been resolved. He also heard that Franklin Township is supposed to take ownership of the smelter very soon.

Lankton said he feels that the open land across from Quincy No. 2 shaft down toward the Pay office is absolutely essential to the Quincy unit of the park. He strongly urges the acquisition of that land by the park to hold as vacant land and also as an archaeological site. In addition, he feels the overlook from that area offers the single best view of the Quincy historic site. Fiala said he has heard that some land has been sold by the Quincy Development Corporation for a housing development on Quincy Hill that will greatly impact the Quincy unit of the park.

Fiala commented on the concept of a partnership park. He said, based on the premise of a partnership park, it is the responsibility of partners of the park to agree to a common goal, which should be the development and preservation of the historic resources that are within this area. This needs to be done in order to tell the story of the Keweenaw copper mining era. Fiala stressed that it is not the park's responsibility to take in every single building. Instead, the park can identify key resources that can be used to leverage the private sector. He added that this is where the Advisory Commission becomes so important as a body with operating powers that would enable it to direct historic preservation within and around the park. Fiala said he wholeheartedly agrees with Lankton that priorities need to be set regarding the preservation of those critical key elements of the park.

Kathryn Eckert asked Fiala if Franklin Township would be organizing an historic district study committee in order to begin the process of developing an historic district ordinance. Fiala said that both Franklin and Quincy Township need to begin this process. Eckert stressed the need for the townships to begin now. Fiala suggested that the Advisory Commission send a letter to the townships suggesting that they begin this process.

Reverend Langseth expressed his concern for John Garber who resigned as a member of the Advisory Commission because of health reasons. He suggested that a letter should be sent from the Advisory Commission wishing Garber well.

Reverend Langseth said that the Advisory Commission needs to take a larger responsibility for what is going on regarding the park. He added that Frank Fiala, out of necessity and particularly within the last year, has been the "point person" and "been stuck out there taking a lot of the "heat" and the commissioners need to "ride shotgun" and begin taking some of the heat that Fiala has been shouldering.

Langseth said his plea follows Larry Lankton's suggestion regarding a specific plan for the park. We need to "decide what the specific tasks are that we want to accomplish, find the person who can help to do that, and then get the money to accomplish these dreams." Al Hutchings agreed that there is a need to determine what the story is that the park wants to tell, which would then determine what resources are important to the park story. Hutchings said that he would help by calling on interpretive planners from his office in Omaha to help begin the process of compiling an interpretive prospectus on what the park should look like when it is done. He said he feels there are people both here and from his office to collaborate on such a report.

Chairman's Report

Paul Lehto reported that Bill Schenk, NPS Midwest Field Director, was here recently for the rededication of the Ranger III, the acceptance of the keys to the Union Building, and the dedication ceremony of the Windigo Visitor's Center at Isle Royale National Park.

Lehto said that the Superior Boiler House smokestack stabilization project is on hold for now. The smokestack is taller than originally thought and the crane that Moyle Construction was going to use is not tall enough. Lehto added that hopefully another construction company would come forth with a minimal charge and a larger crane to do the stabilization of the stack.

Calumet Township is putting a project together for sidewalks and historic lighting on Red Jacket Road. When the plans are developed, Lehto said Fiala would have a chance to look at them as well as the State Historic reservation Office. Fiala added that it would be important to make sure the plans are appropriate since this is in the vicinity of the Warehouse, the library, and the Administration building and also is the approach into the Calumet area. Lehto mentioned many public and private dwellings had picket fences in the late 1800s and early 1900s which are gone now, but it would be nice to put some of the fences back up. Lankton agreed that the fences would be a nice embellishment.

Lehto expressed concern that KNHP has not been on Michigan road maps. Tom Nemacheck checked a recently published map and noted that it is on the map now.

Comment & Questions from the Public

Amy Wisti, of Congressman Bart Stupak's office, commented that it was an extreme pleasure for her to staff the visit of Stupak to the area last week for the rededication of the Ranger III. She added that Congressman Stupak also feels that a more specific plan is needed for the park. He feels that this could help him when requesting funding for park projects.

Diana Charles of Senator Levin's office was introduced. She said this is the first commission meeting she has attended and is impressed with the spirit of cooperation she sees here. She added that she is glad to hear that the Advisory Commission is going to take on more of the leadership of the park.

Reverend Langseth asked the representatives to convey to both Congressman Stupak and Senator Levin that the Advisory Commission is anxious to have its operating powers activated.

Glenn Anderson, City Manager of Hancock, asked Fiala how much of the requested funding to aid in park property acquisition he thinks will be approved for KNHP's budget. Al Hutchings responded that the range could be between \$700,000 or 1.2 to 1.7 million dollars. Fiala added that it could even go as high as 2.45 million dollars.

Sue Cone reminded people of the Concept Development Plan that was done in Calumet some years ago. She suggested that it is time to take a look at that plan again. She also expressed concern over the vacant position on the Advisory Commission because of John Garber's resignation due to health reasons and said that Garber needs to send a letter to the Village of Calumet notifying the village of his resignation as their representative to the Advisory Commission. This should be done in order to begin expediting the procedure to find a replacement for him.

Cone said she hopes the Advisory Commission will take an active role to let private property owners know of the importance of preserving land and buildings that are significant to the history of the area.

Steve Albee spoke of the Historical Heritage Plan that he helped to put together some years saying that this could help in making a "specific plan" for the park which Larry Lankton spoke of earlier.

Ed Yarbrough asked about the requested funding in the NPS's "Landmarks at Risk" report to Congress. After some discussion, Reverend Langseth made a motion to use the "Landmarks at Risk" reports to make formal notice to our state representatives to pursue the acquisition money requested by KNHP in order to purchase select tracts of property within the NHL districts of Calumet and Quincy. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Fiala said he would draft a letter to our representatives and it would go out under Paul Lehto's signature.

Jim Boyce suggested that a study be done to determine if a portion of U.S. 41 between Hancock and Calumet could be designated as a Michigan Heritage Corridor.

A member of the audience asked Fiala if progress has been made regarding identification of poor rock piles of historical significance in order to preserve them. Fiala said someone who is interested in assisting with this project has contacted him.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, October 26, 1999, at 8:30 a.m., at park headquarters in Calumet.

Submitted by:
Lisa A. Dwyer
Departmental Coordinator
Department of Social Sciences
Michigan Technological University
Houghton, MI 49931-1295

Phone: 906/487-2113
Fax: 906/487-2468