

LINCOLN LEGACY COMMITTEE  
FRIENDS CONFERENCE ROOM (215)  
CHAMPAIGN PUBLIC LIBRARY  
200 WEST GREEN STREET  
CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

4:30 P.M. WEDNESDAY November, 29 2023

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Barb Oehlschlaeger-Garvey (hereafter referred to as Barb OG) at 4:35 p.m. Ray Cunningham began recording the meeting.

2. Roll Call-Barb OG called roll. Present were: Barb OG, Barbara Wysocki, Adele Suslick, Ray Cunningham, Kay Grabow. Absent: Eric Thorsland, Pat Cain.

NB: It was reported that Ray Cunningham had contacted Ryan Ross, from the University of Illinois, to be an additional member of the committee and he had initially accepted. However, because of personal issues he later declined. It was also reported that Pat Cain would be taking the job at the Urbana Free Library as Archives Manager and thus would remain on the committee, we will have to be recruiting a representative from the Museum of the Grand Prairie.

3. Approval of Agenda/Addendum/Addenda

Kay Grabow moved approval of the agenda; Adele Suslick seconded. Through voice vote, the minutes were unanimously accepted.

4. Approval of Minutes

Barbara Wysocki moved approval of the minutes from September 27, 2023. Ray Cunningham seconded. Through voice vote, the minutes were unanimously accepted. Barbara Wysocki commented on the breadth and depth of the Lincoln related activities that we are involved in became evident from the minutes.

5. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

6. Old Business

a. General Updates (school tours)

Barbara Wysocki reported that there have been two tours this fall. A trip from Unity West, which came for the DAR flag display, was reported on in the previous meeting. The second group was a homeschool group: Barbara Wysocki reported that there were over 30 people including many parents and all ages of children. The parents were particularly interested in the content. Kay Grabow and Barb Wysocki commented how good the judge was with the students, including taking off her robe to put on a child.

Kay Grabow asked her replacement at Thomas Paine why they don't come to the courthouse. She said it was such trouble to get a bus it needed to be more than a one-hour trip. Kay Grabow wondered what we could pair with the visit. Barb OG said the logical pairings would be the Archives at the Urbana Free Library, the Champaign County History Museum, and the Museum of the Grand Prairie. Adele Suslick reported that it would be difficult for the history museum to accommodate an entire class of students. Barb OG reminded the committee that the Museum of the Grand Prairie exhibit was designed as a pair with the Courthouse exhibit, with the Courthouse being about Lincoln the lawyer and

LINCOLN LEGACY COMMITTEE  
 FRIENDS CONFERENCE ROOM (215)  
 CHAMPAIGN PUBLIC LIBRARY  
 200 WEST GREEN STREET  
 CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

the Museum of the Grand Prairie being all other things Lincoln. Kay Grabow and Ray Cunningham both commented on the size of the archives being an issue with hosting an entire class. Barb OG said it might be possible to encourage a public program in another location, e.g. the auditorium. We will have to see if the new management would be able to accommodate that.

Barb Wysocki asked when Pat Cain started his new job. Barb OG reported that his last program at the Museum of the Grand Prairie was December 10, hosting a first-person interpreter of Sojourner Truth, and his first day at the Archives will be December 11.

b. Update on the Courthouse 2026 project

Barbara Wysocki reported that she mailed the packets out to 20 governmental units regarding the 250<sup>th</sup>. She visited the Champaign, Urbana, and County offices and was able to have a conversation with Diane Marlin. She was interested and was happy to hear that we are focusing on the courthouse. She will, however, no longer be in office in 2026. Barb Wysocki is confident that Urbana and the courthouse will be on board for this event. Adele Suslick asked when the actual anniversary was. Barbara stated August 22, 2026 will be the anniversary. Barb Wysocki thought that Ms. Marlin might be persuasive with the other entities. She also reported that there have been no other responses to her mailings. Barb OG reminded Barb Wysocki to turn her receipts into Eric at the next available time, so that she wasn't out of pocket.

Barbara Wysocki said that while she was leaving the courthouse, she noticed the new African American Heritage trail signage. She contacted Angela Rivers and Barbara Suggs-Mason to compliment them on the design and content. Barb Wysocki said that the sign was positioned in a peculiar way, and she also communicated that to Angela. Ray Cunningham said the one in Homer is two-sided and oddly positioned as well. He also said he was not informed it was a 2-sided sign. There are six to eight signs being installed this year and another round will be installed next year. Ray Cunningham said the funding is in place for these signs. Wysocki said she may try to contact Dana Brenner about the placement. Cunningham said that the signs all are being dedicated individually so the courthouse sign may still have a different placement. Upcoming signs will be at Memorial Stadium, North First Street, Broadlands, Sidney. It was suggested that these signs may be a great source of information for future student projects. The student projects may also tie into the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and eventually the courthouse anniversary (2026 project). Kay Grabow thought that perhaps if we presented the teachers with a program to encourage students to write, someone like Ray Elliot. She also thought that it might be something the music teacher, Becky Park, at UHS would be interested in as she assisted with the Hesler portrait dedication.

c. Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Network Update-Annual Report

Barb OG presented the committee with this year's report from the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area to the Committee. Our accomplishments this year have been planning for the 2026 event at the courthouse, presentation of Lincoln interpreter Kevin Wood at the Museum of the Grand Prairie and the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Lincoln Lecture Series at the Museum of the Grand Prairie. Planning going forward will include continued work toward the 2026

LINCOLN LEGACY COMMITTEE  
 FRIENDS CONFERENCE ROOM (215)  
 CHAMPAIGN PUBLIC LIBRARY  
 200 WEST GREEN STREET  
 CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

celebration, continued work on the Courthouse brochure, and collaboration with the Champaign County Museums Network. Pat Cain prepared the report. Barb OG asked Barb Wysocki to get her the courthouse numbers to Barb OG for the entire year at her earliest possible convenience.

Barb OG also reported that the ALNHA is currently working on a traveling exhibit concerning the Underground Railroad and is interested in knowing what communities might be interested in hosting it. Kay Grabow asked if it would be interactive. Barb OG replied it would be interactive to some degree but that it would mostly be text and photographs. The size will be determined by transportation and housing restrictions, determined by the resources of smaller communities. Kay suggested that it would be good to have the exhibit in a space more accessible than the courthouse. The consensus was that we should express interest in being a community. Ray Cunningham suggested that Danville may be a good venue as well.

Barb OG also reported that the ALNHA is working on a project to place some signs regarding diversity as part of the Looking for Lincoln signage. A Union Pacific grant was secured for the project. Five to six signs will be made, ten topics have been floated. These include signs about Albert Cashier (a possible trans man), indigenous peoples, participants in the Underground Railroad, the Illinois Schools for the Blind and Deaf.

d. Bylaws update

There were no Bylaws updates.

e. Brochure update

Barb OG has now gone back to the printers for estimates on design work as well as printing after a long search for an independent graphic artist turned up no one.

7. New Business

a. Vote for open seat. There was no vote, as Ryan Ross withdrew his candidacy. Barb OG will send the white paper and other information. Barbara suggested that we reach out to Barbara Suggs-Mason or Angela Rivers. Ray Cunningham said he could do that.

b. Dues to CCMN. These were submitted in September. Barb OG will ask CCMN if these have been received.

c. Celebrating the 170th anniversary of Lincoln's "Lost Speech" re: Kansas Nebraska Act at courthouse

We discussed a celebration of the Kansas Nebraska Act speech at the courthouse. Barb Wysocki said the actual anniversary date is October 24. Barb OG suggested we apply to host a Lincoln program from the ALNHA, a grant program for an Abraham Lincoln interpreter. The Museum of the Grand Prairie has always received the grant but will likely not apply next year. Barb suggested we have a candlelight procession from Urbana High School. She questioned whether it would be special to have a candlelit meeting for Lincoln. Barb OG said it would probably drive home that this was an out of the ordinary event in 1854 and also that it was a different time.

LINCOLN LEGACY COMMITTEE  
FRIENDS CONFERENCE ROOM (215)  
CHAMPAIGN PUBLIC LIBRARY  
200 WEST GREEN STREET  
CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

We all discussed where in the courthouse this could be, and what the security concerns are. might be. Barb Wysocki and Barb OG had envisioned the central hall near the exhibit, Ray thought a courtroom might be a possibility.

Barb Wysocki said it was a three-hour speech, Barb OG said that interpreters are good at choosing excerpts. Cunningham said that it may be hard to engage an audience and hold attention. Barb OG said interpreters are also good at engaging and holding attention.

Kay Grabow thought it would be fun to get a few lawyers interested in dressing up to introduce Lincoln, that it would make a good show. Barb Wysocki said she would like to get the Bar Association involved, possibly as a sponsor. The Bar Association had in the past done events on May Day and some had expressed interest in returning to the

Barb OG reminded the committee we aren't meeting again until late January, so that if we are doing an event in the spring surrounding the placement of the African American Heritage Trail at the courthouse, we need to work on that first, and then work on an October event.

Regarding students: Kay Grabow suggested working with Mark Foley, Barb OG said that she knew someone who might be willing to work with us from Edison. Barb Wysocki thought we might want to contact the Urbana principal and work outward from there to get in touch with other high schools and special schools. Kay said possibly home school associations would be interested.

Adele Suslick suggested that there may be a way to interest the libraries in a project.

Barb OG asked if the group was interested in her contacting an interpreter for engagement. Adele Suslick said the Champaign County History Museum had engaged someone. Barb OG said that it was the same fellow, Kevin Wood, that she would be contacting and asking him to pencil us in for late October.

d. Nomination/election of a Secretary for the group-No secretary has yet been named.

e. Kent Tucker farewell. We were to have decided something by November 1, but didn't. Kay Grabow said that a bobble head can be made in the person's own image, and that one with a Cardinals uniform on would be a fun gift. She has seen them as going away gifts before. Barb O-G said she will look into getting one as the group agreed it was a good idea. It is possible we will also make a donation in his name somewhere.

8. Next year's meeting schedule-Barb OG asked the committee to put the following dates on their calendars. She will try to engage the Champaign Public Library rooms again, as everyone seemed to agree.

LINCOLN LEGACY COMMITTEE  
FRIENDS CONFERENCE ROOM (215)  
CHAMPAIGN PUBLIC LIBRARY  
200 WEST GREEN STREET  
CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

January 31, 2024

March 27, 2024

May 29, 2024

July 31, 2024

September 25, 2024

November 27, 2024

9. Adjournment-Ray Cunningham moved to adjourn. Kay Grabow seconded.