

**TOWN OF WESTPORT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Kennedy Administration Building
Community Meeting Room
5387 Mary Lake Road
Town of Westport, Wisconsin

Minutes – January 05, 2023

Members Present: Pichette, Moore, Werner, Hermanson, Wing, Will, Absent: none.

Public Present: Sharla Hanson, Tom Farley, Mary Anne Farley, Laura Place, Cathy Bloom, David Bloom, Carolyn Griffith, Dan O’Callaghan, Patricia McGinnis, Bob Heinemann, Robin Heinemann, Jim Capaul, Paula Moser, Roberta Baumann, Dennis Tande, Mary Manering, Peggy Whiteside, Bill von Rutenberg, Jim Maule, Patty Fanner, Ann Barncard, Jack von Rutenberg, Rowan Davidson, John Cuccia, Jenn Smith, Rebecca Forbes Wank, Shari Ming,

Meeting called to order at 6:12 pm

Public comment on matters not on the agenda: none.

Motion to approve minutes from December 01, 2022, made by Werner, second by Wills, motion approved unanimously.

Public Hearing: 5360 Westport Road (Hanson’s Tavern / Nau-Ti-Gal Property)
Application for Town Historical Designation:

Pichette opened public hearing at 6:14pm

Petitioner presentation: Sherri Hanson Lange applicant presented a summary of the application for Town designation of historical status for property at 5360 Westport Rd., formerly Nau-Ti-Gal and Hanson’s Tavern (previously). Applicant shared historic information with HPC members, which included a summary of early history (pre-dating Hanson’s Tavern), and included additional photos not previously included in application. Applicant reviewed the application summary, wherein various points of history were noted from her understanding, which included;

- Understood current structure to be original building, dating from ~1860, which has undergone modifications
- Noted 1898 political caucus (Republican), listed on campaign schedules of various politicians
- Shared additional context on Anna Hanson, who is believed to be the first known woman to operate a business in the area, who had a colorful and compelling history in relation to her alleged bootlegging, and operation of the tavern while raising 5 children.
- Noted additional alleged Prohibition era bootlegging operations, and Hanson’s as the unofficial Town hub of social activity, which drew people from beyond the Town given liquor laws at the time
- Applicant also noted social and recreational functions like sporting teams, fishing, bait,

boating and boat rentals

- Applicant noted that people saw the Westport sign (on building, during time as Hanson's Tavern) and said that "*was* Westport", noting the popular notion of "we're going out to Westport", which meant going to Hanson's

HPC chair opened the Hearing for questions from commissioners; Moore asked if any photos existed that predated their family ownership, Applicant was not aware of any additional that were not noted, but shared that many photos exist and they might have overlooked some.

Wills thanked the Applicant for her presentation, as did other HPC members.

A presentation was then made by Dan O'Callaghan appearing on behalf of the property owner Starboard, LLC;

O'Callaghan noted that the property owner is in support of the Town's historic preservation efforts, but with that are not in support of designation of site or structure. O'Callaghan noted, via owner's independently retained consultant's report (Legacy), significant architectural changes over time, and cited agreement with the Town consultant's report conclusion, that the interiors do not meet Town's designation for historical designation.

Rowan Davidson, representing the owner's consultant, was engaged by the owner during point of purchase. Davidson recognized that every building has stories and history but does not believe the structure meets the ordinance due to factor of "integrity". Davison noted that, designations at other levels often use the concept of "integrity", which he felt was lacking – Noting, building does not resemble Hanson's Tavern anymore, so by other designation standards, he felt this building would not be deemed historic. Davidson noted there are other ways to signify a historic property. Davidson thanked Hanson's for documenting the history, but ultimately recommended to HPC that application be rejected.

The HPC chair asked members if they had any additional questions, at which time Moore asked Davidson specifically about his review of Town's ordinance on historical designation, specially item 1, seen as 'cultural', of which Davidson noted he had.

After no further comments, HPC chair Pichette opened the hearing to public comments, of which there was one oral presentation, by local resident Jim Capaul. Capaul noted he was a lifelong resident of Town of Westport, having grown up across the street from Hanson's Tavern, and remembers it being the social hub, and the center of Westport, as was felt by many at the time. Capaul noted it was the first place he bought gasoline, and he believed it was the first place with self-serve gas in the area. Capaul noted that the historical importance of the site is not just the age of the building, noting he expects any building of this age to always have changes. He impressed upon the HPC and Town, that since we have a historical preservation commission, and if they are serious about preserving history, this site should be "at the top of the list". Capaul noted that not too much is left of what was Westport. Capaul said he would strongly encourage the Town move forward with the historical designation of the property and said, "this is a very high priority".

The HPC chair then opened the discussion for questions from the HPC Commissioners.

- Pichette asked about Capaul's recollection of pumping gas (ie; self-serve) – Capaul noted that was maybe in the late Fifties. Capaul recalled pumps being there until about the time the Hanson family sold the tavern.
- Wills asked if Capaul remembered if people would come from out of town and rent rooms at Hanson's – Capaul said he remembers people coming from out of town (Milwaukee).

- Additionally, Capaul felt that there were a lot of categories this site should be remembered for, noting that [Hanson's] "was there to serve the Town of Westport – You didn't go to Kwik Trip, you went to Hanson's Tavern"
- Capaul noted he grew up on Blue Bill Park Rd.

HPC chair Pichette then read in several comments submitted in writing. Comments read included;

Cathy Brown; Support. "How will the marina be affected? Very limited lake access for public use"

Jim Capaul: "Hanson's should be preserved. One of the last historical locations in Westport"

Carolyn Moynihan-Brodth; "Can the Township designate the site (or some of it) as a recreational site, a park or zoned for recreation without the building being designated historic or structure"

Rebecca Forbes Wank; Support. "I would like to see the property remain a commercial one, preferably a restaurant or bar."

Jim Maule: Support. "I do not wish to speak; I am opposed to the proposed apartment complex on the site of the Nau-Ti-Gal property. I hope that declaring the site a historical property is the only alternative. I hope the Westport Town Board will not allow the apartment project to proceed by refusing to change the zoning of the property."

Mary Anne Farley; Support.

Paula Moser; Support.

Mary Lee Miller; Oppose?. "Wants not to be changed to apts."

A member of the public asked, if the Town can designate this site for recreation without the building being designated historic? Pichette noted we cannot discuss it at this time, as the hearing is for historic preservation application review (only)

Other noted comments submitted in support of designation; Mary Lee Miller, Willis Brown ("does appear to be historic to area, place for boats, DNR"), Kathy Roan; "Support of it being historic"

Other noted comments submitted opposed to designation; Bill Von Rutenberg; "Nothing original remains", "...Hanson's should have documented when they sold.", Jack Von Rutenberg: "...Nothing historic, ...building should have been preserved at that time [under Hanson ownership], ...Two others were torn down"

Following no other public comments, Pichette closes Public Hearing at 6:52pm

Misc. matters not on the agenda: none

After the Chair related the purpose, the Commission then adjourned to closed session pursuant to Section 19.85(1)(g), Wis. Stats., to confer with legal counsel for the governmental body who is rendering oral or written advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved, regarding the Application for Designation of Westport's "Nau-Ti-Gal" Restaurant and related property as a Historic Structure/Property Located at 5360 Westport Road, Westport, WI, on a motion by Pichette, second Wing, by a unanimous roll call vote at 6:53 p.m. The Commission then moved to the Executive Meeting Room with its legal counsel and the Town Administrator.

After a lengthy discussion in closed session with legal counsel and the Town Administrator, the Commission reconvened in open session on a motion by Wing, second Hermanson, by a unanimous roll call vote at 7:58 p.m. The Commission then moved to the Community Meeting Room.

After further discussion, the Commission recommended that the Application for Designation of Westport's "Nau-Ti-Gal" Restaurant and related property as a Historic Structure/Property Located at 5360 Westport Road, Westport, WI, be approved based on the information presented and in the record, on a motion by Moore, second Will, using the written draft recommendation as presented by legal counsel in closed session with revisions as discussed to be approved by the Chair and Administrator, by a vote of 5-0-1 (Pichette abstained).

Motion to adjourn Wing, seconded Wills. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

The next HPC meeting is on February 2, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Moore, Commission Secretary