

**City of Merrill
Historic Preservation Committee
Wednesday, May 18, 2022
City Hall Common Council Chambers, 1004 East First Street**

Voting Members Present (5 of 5): Chairperson – Michael Caylor, Alderperson – Steve Sabatke, Elizabeth McCrank, William Heideman, Bea Lebel.

Others meeting attendees (either in-person or remotely) included: City Clerk – Lori Anderson- Malm, Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator – Darin Pagel, City Attorney – Tom Hayden, Pat Berg, Shari Wicke, Merrill Productions was present to videotape the meeting.

Call to order

Chairman Caylor called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

Consider approval of meeting minutes from April 20, 2022

Elizabeth McCrank motioned to approve the April 20, 2022 minutes. Alderman Sabatke seconded. Motion carried.

Update on uses of Legion Building

Elizabeth McCrank attended the last Parks and Recreation Committee meeting and reported the lower level of the Legion Building will be used for the summer recreation program. The building will be a place for rainy day use. There was not discussion regarding how this building would be used in the fall but Elizabeth said she would be willing to attend another of their meetings and report back.

Chairman Caylor mentioned the Boys and Girls Club wants to start a chapter in the fall. The committee discussed this option but realized there could be potential accessibility concerns.

Consider placement and wording of plaque on Legion Building

Building Inspector Pagel provided an example of a plaque. Typically residences have a round/oval plaque. Building Inspector Pagel provided a quote for an 11 x 8 oval plaque for reference.

Alderperson Sabatke referenced a non-lapsing fund to use for purchase of a plaque. City Clerk Anderson-Malm will check on this and provide this information at the June meeting.

Elizabeth McCrank mentioned wording for a residence is typically the family who preserved the residence however, in this case, the architect or Legion Post could be used on the plaque. The committee also discussed a square plaque versus an oval one to differentiate between a residence and other structure.

Update on news article about committee

Chairperson Caylor gave the article information to Foto News Editor, Tina Scott and is waiting for a response.

Update on city brand for signs

Chairman Caylor spoke with Marketing and Communications Chairperson Blake as well as Mayor Hass regarding choosing a logo. After the special joint Common Council and Marketing and Communications meeting scheduled for May 19th, there should be a clearer plan for a logo. After the logo is adopted, the memorial street signs can be ordered.

The committee talked about possible logo ideas including the old Merrill “patch” which was on every city uniform and had pine trees and the courthouse. Chairman Caylor said the “courthouse is the jewel of Merrill”. It is what everyone notices when they come to the city.

Update on letters for designated memorial streets

Chairman Caylor wrote letters regarding the five memorial street names informing the survivors, if there are survivors, of this committee’s actions and the process in place and inviting them, hopefully this summer, when the memorial street signs are unveiled. The five are: Lt. Robert F. Russell, Captain Elmer Krueger, Lt. Thomas Beckman, Hans von Kaltenborn and Riley Kurtz.

Discuss city involvement in recognition of the 175th Anniversary of the first settlers arriving in Jenny

Pat Berg from the Merrill Historical Society spoke about their ideas for the 175th Anniversary. A logo was developed with a tag line “175 years of community pride in the building of Merrill”. They have used this tag line as well as have an exhibit to commemorate this anniversary. The Historical Society has bricks from various buildings in the exhibit which represents the theme of “building of Merrill”. The Historical Society would like to see other organizations become involved and promote the anniversary.

The committee discussed various ways to celebrate the anniversary, such as a city proclamation and a possible weekend celebration.

Motion to refer this to the Marketing and Communications committee and keep this on the agenda for future reference. Motion by Elizabeth, seconded by Bea. Motion carried.

Reconsider prior Historic street nominations

Chairman Caylor spoke with Common Council President Russell and Mayor Hass regarding the street nominations. They wanted this committee to recognize all 10 names for historic street signs. The entire list includes: Lt. Robert F Russell, Mrs. Natalie Scribner, Captain Elmer Krueger, Lt. Thomas Beckman, Sgt Grant Dampier, Tiny Krueger, Andrew Warren, Hans von Kaltenborn, Sgt. Ryan Jopek and Riley Kurtz.

The ten street name choices along with biographies and the street designation locations:

Lt. Robert F. Russell, KIA WWII, decorated posthumously, one of only four Lincoln County servicemen who are noted as missing in action from WWII – 100 block South Court St.

Mrs. Natalie Scribner, the longest serving director of the T.B. Scott Free Library: holding that position from 1922 – 1948. Scribner shepherded the library through the Great Depression, during which time she expanded the collection, the circulation numbers and the services offered to the public. She was instrumental in the creation of the Wisconsin Valley Library Service that became the model for cooperative libraries and inter-library loan sharing throughout the state. She was committed to serving the surrounding community and played a role in expanding the library through satellite branches and rural delivery services at a time when access to the library was, for many people, the only access to post-elementary education – 100 block W 1st St

Captain Elmer Krueger. Elmer Krueger, Captain of the patrol of the Merrill Police Department. He was shot and mortally wounded in the line of duty on July 12, 1952. The location of the incident was on the north side of the Lincoln County Jail in the 1100 block of E 2nd St. A memorial nearby marks the location of the shooting which led to Krueger's death. The only Merrill Police Officer to be killed in the line of duty. Elmer Krueger Way - 1100 block of E 2nd St.

Lt. Thomas Beckman was a firefighter on the Merrill Fire Department. On January 3, 1978, Beckman was off duty when he responded to a house fire on Mill Street. While working the fire, Beckman was overcome by smoke and collapsed, later dying. He left behind a wife and two small children. Beckman was well known in central Wisconsin for his work educating firefighters and members of the public in fire service training, fire prevention and emergency care. Beckman was known as a trailblazer in modern fire techniques and his contributions to modern fire service. The 100 block of South Pier St is now the home to the Merrill Fire Department and likely be for our lifetimes making that block a natural location for the designation. Lt. Thomas Beckman Trail.

Sgt. Grant Dampier was mortally wounded in the line of duty while serving our country overseas as a part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Assigned to the 8th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, Fort Carson, CO. KIA 5-15-2006 while on combat patrol. Sgt. Grant Dampier Pass – proposed is Ruby St, alternate 300 block of N. Prospect St. – former home.

Clifford "Tiny" Krueger was a resident of Merrill who ran away with the circus and became known as the "Fat Boy" for the Seils-Sterling Circus. He did graduate from Merrill High School and from the former Merrill Business School. At one time, he ran a tavern known as "Tiny's Bar" at about 1204 E Main St. While in Merrill, Krueger served on the common council before being elected to the Wisconsin State Senate in 1947 at the age of 28. Krueger served until 1955 but was back in the Senate by 1957 and served until 1983 when he retired. While he was a Senator, Krueger was a champion of the north woods of Wisconsin, especially Merrill, and was known in Madison as a leader of the Republican Party, although he labeled himself as a progressive. This sign would

be placed on the block in which Krueger owned his tavern. Tiny Krueger Place – 1200 block of E Main St.

Andrew Warren bought a tract of land at the juncture of the Wisconsin and Prairie Rivers. He assembled a crew of workmen and built a sawmill and a dam. He also built log cabins to house the men. Jenny Bull Falls, later to be called Jenny, was born. The mill was eventually purchased by T.B. Scott and the T.B. Scott Lumber Company began. Under the new management team, led by Scott, the Scott mill became one of the largest and most important mills on the Wisconsin River. 100 block S. Mill St.

Hans von Kaltenborn was born in Milwaukee but raised in Merrill in the 700 block of E 1st Street. Jenny Towers, the high-rise apartment building from the Merrill Housing Authority, stands where his boyhood home stood. Kaltenborn ran away from home and joined the armed forces to fight in the Spanish American War and to provide stories for his hometown newspaper, the Merrill Advocate. Upon his return to the US, he landed a job with the Brooklyn Daily Eagle on the political beat and at the age of 24, enrolled as a special student at Harvard University. He began his radio career at WEAJ in New York in 1923 where he became the first newsman to offer commentary in addition to a simple report. He joined the Columbia Broadcasting Network (CBS) in 1927, and by 1936, was the first to provide a live account from a battlefield. He reported from Spain during the Spanish Civil War. A few months later, he became the first newsman to offer the very first live broadcast of a king's coronation when George VI came to the throne after his brother's abdication. In 1938, he remained inside of the CBS radio studio for 18 days to straight to report on the Munich Agreement. He later called it the first international crisis in which radio broadcasting participated intensively every step of the way. His fame was sufficient enough to gain him a role in the 1939 feature film, "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington", which starred Jimmy Stewart. In 1940, he moved to NBC Radio where he was given his own broadcast, "Kaltenborn Edits the War News". In 1944, he received the Alfred du Pont award for his "aggressive, independent and meritorious gathering, interpretation and presentation of the news". He made further appearances as himself in films such as "The Babe Ruth Story" (1949), and "The Day the Earth Stood Still" (1951). Although he semi-retired, Kaltenborn continued to provide commentary for the national political conventions of 1954. He also authored four books on his time in journalism. In 2011, Kaltenborn was elected to the Radio Hall of Fame. Hans von Kaltenborn is one of the most famous people to come from Merrill, WI but is not recognized anywhere within the city. Hans von Kaltenborn Byway – 700 block of E 1st St.

Sgt. Ryan Jopek was killed in action 08/01/2006 while serving overseas as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was 20 years old, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 127 Infantry Regiment, Wisconsin National Guard. He suffered injuries when an IED detonated near his convoy in Tikrit, Iraq. Sgt. Ryan Jopek Ave – 2000 block E Main St.

Riley Curtz – Riley's Route – will be in honor of Merrill Police Officer, Riley Kurtz who died while serving the city of Merrill. Kurtz died in January of 2022 at the age of 24, making him only the fourth active police officer to die while serving the city, and the youngest. The loss of Riley has a lasting impact on his family, his co-workers and the community he served. It would be most fitting to have the street that most MPD officers leave the station from for their daily beat to be named in honor of the officer who died a

premature death and whose impact will be felt by many for a lifetime. 100 block of N Court St.

A motion to reconsider and include all ten names for honorary street signs was made by Alderman Sabatke and seconded by Elizabeth McCrank. Motion carried.

Public Comment Period

There was no public comment.

Set date, time and location of next meeting

Wednesday, June 15, 2022 at 6:00 PM in the Common Council Chambers.

Adjournment

Motion by William Heideman, seconded by Bea Lebel to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:28 P.M.

Minutes prepared and submitted by: Lori Anderson-Malm, City Clerk