



Morgan County Historic Preservation Society
 P. O. Box 1377
 Martinsville, IN 46151
<http://www.mchps.org>

Winter 2010

PRESERVATION NEWS

PUBLIC INPUT MEETING FOR MARTINSVILLE'S DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION Dream big. Speak your mind. Stand up for downtown.

Monday, February 22, 2010 • 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
 Art Sanctuary (the former Methodist Church)
 corner of Sycamore and Pike Streets, Martinsville

The consulting team members will lead an information gathering session covering such topics as buildings, sidewalks, parking, signs, landscape improvements, and cost estimates for various aspects of downtown revitalization. Dreams big and small are wanted. Read more below.

Message from the President

Joanne Stuttgen (765) 349-1537
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A year ends and a new one begins. Old projects continue toward their inevitable conclusion, while new ones blossom into maturity. MCHPS Board members are hard at work making Morgan County a better place to live, work and play—in their roles as leaders in both MCHPS and Martinsville's new Main Street program, Rediscover Historic Martinsville.

It is simple to say that we are busy all the time. Why do we do it? Because we care. Because we are stubborn. Because there is a sense of lost time that must be quickly and efficiently made up. Take Grassyfork, for example. The building had been vacant and vandalized for at least six years before MCHPS seized control of the situation in October 2008 and became legal owners in March 2009. Take downtown Martinsville as another example. Its decline began many, many years ago, and today there is a strong sense that if something isn't done NOW, there may not be too much hope for its future.

Why are we involved? Why do we care? Why do we devote hours and hours of volunteer time to preservation? Because someone must. Must care. Must do something. Must advocate. Must push for something better. Must hope and dream.

How much do you care? Show it by attending the public

input session for the downtown revitalization plan on February 22 (see above and below). Show it by renewing your membership in MCHPS if you have not already done so. Show it by talking to your neighbors and friends about the good work being done by MCHPS and Rediscover Historic Martinsville and recruiting them as new members. There's much to learn and much to do to make our community a place where our children and grandchildren want to live.

Grassyfork Heritage

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As you know, the Board of Directors has reached an agreement to sell the historic Grassyfork building and rock gardens to Terry and Deb Bunton, MCHPS members who have long dreamed of restoring the building and gardens. This sale has several contingencies, many of which have successfully been met.

On January 21, the Martinsville Common Council approved the recommendation of the Plan Commission to rezone the property from its longtime agricultural zoning to Business 2. This will allow the Buntons to use the property for a banquet and event center. Rezoning marked the completion of the first critical step towards closing on the property.

In the intervening weeks, Terry Bunton has been pursuing cost estimates for various projects, from replacing the roof to installing electric and plumbing. The Board had set as one of the contingencies proof of financial resources to rehabilitate the building.

Stumbling blocks in a project as large as this one are to be expected, and MCHPS and the Buntons have surely had our share of them. The final huge hurdle to get over is a working, commercial grade sewer system. The current septic system is obsolete and does not meet commercial requirements. At this time there are two possible solutions.

The first option is to install a lift station and a holding tank on the Grassyfork property. The holding tank would retain solid and liquid waste, and then the lift station would emulsify the combined effluent and, by pressure, force the mixture through a 2" main installed on Ozark property to an existing manhole at the east edge of Shireman. This is viewed as a temporary solution for the next ten years or so, until city sewer is extended north up Morgan Street; however, it could operate indefinitely.

The second option may be the installation of a special septic tank in the field north of the entrance drive and close to Morgan Street. The size of the septic field would be determined by the Board of Health after a soil test.

Both options are being actively pursued, with cost, Ozark's cooperation, and space and distance being the most important factors in determining the preferred solution.

The purchase agreement with the Buntons specifies a closing date on or before March 1. The Board is, however, willing to adjust this date as necessary according to the Buntons' needs. However, it is our desire to close before March 26, or before the end of our one-year, no-interest period on the loan we received from Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. After the one-year mark, we will be required to pay interest at the rate of 4%.

Rediscover Historic Martinsville

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Downtown Revitalization Plan Begins

Are you concerned about vacant buildings, struggling retail businesses, and the overall deteriorated conditions in downtown Martinsville? Then here is a plan for you!

The City of Martinsville, in partnership with Rediscover Historic Martinsville, has received a \$50,000 grant from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs. This grant has been used to hire Odle McGuire Shook, an Indianapolis architectural and engineering firm, to research and prepare a downtown revitalization plan. The

project manager will be Ben Rawlins, a Martinsville resident. Merlin "Gene" King, another Martinsville resident and owner of Merlin King Construction, will also be part of the team.

The plan will include three parts: landscape analysis and improvements, building repairs and facelifts, and a retail and marketing study.

OPINIONS WANTED

Do you have an opinion about what downtown could or should be? Are there businesses that you would like to be able to shop at or eat at? Do you have ideas about sprucing up the square with flowers and other plantings?

It's time to speak up! What you have to say is important.

Everyone is invited to take part in a public discussion and information gathering session on Monday, February 22 at 6:00 p.m. at Art Sanctuary, the former Methodist Church at the corner of Sycamore and Pike Street in Martinsville.

The professional consulting team assembled by Odle McGuire Shook Corporation, under the direction of Martinsville resident Ben Rawlins, will be there to discuss buildings, signs, parking, flowers, shopping, how to get in and out of downtown from the highways, developing an image to market downtown, and public policy—in short, anything and everything related to improving downtown.

If you have something to say, say it! Downtown Martinsville depends on you. Downtown Martinsville matters. Come see why.

For more information, contact Sharyn Kersey in the office of the Mayor (765) 349-4928 or call Joanne Stuttgart at (765) 349-1537.

First Annual Valentine's Gala

On Saturday, February 13, more than 150 people gathered at Art Sanctuary for dinner, music, dancing and fellowship. The first annual Valentine's Gala fundraiser for Rediscover Historic Martinsville was a great success. The buffet dinner prepared by Water to Wine was delicious, and the music by the band Nostalgia featuring former MHS band director, Frank Battaglia, was excellent. All in all, it was a tremendous event that had many people expressing, "I can't believe this is Martinsville." If you missed out this year, what a shame. If you miss out next year, shame on you.

IT IS TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

All MCHPS memberships expired on December 31, 2009.

Thank you to those who have already renewed. If you have received an email or a notice with this newsletter, your membership has expired. Please print and fill out the membership form on the next page and promptly send it with appropriate payment to:

MCHPS
P. O. Box 1377
Martinsville, IN 46151

Failure to renew by March 1 will result in the termination of your membership and the loss of significant benefits, including your affiliate membership in Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana.

2010 Cabin Fever Garage Sale

Pam Badger (765) 318-9621
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This year, MCHPS will be partnering with Rediscover Historic Martinsville to put on our annual Cabin Fever Garage Sale. The sale will be held Saturday, March 6 from 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Martinsville Armory.

Join us for this always popular flea market and antiques spree. Rent a booth and sell your discarded treasures. Clean your house and drop off the things you no longer want cluttering your living space. Come and shop. Search for future family heirlooms among the items offered by area antiques dealers and other vendors. For more information about booth space or lending a helping hand,

contact Pam Badger. Remember! Vendors and volunteers get first picks from the available goods.

Veterans Building Feasibility Study

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MCHPS and the Morgan County Public Library Board of Trustees are partnering to pursue grant funding to prepare a feasibility study for the Veterans Building located at 75-77 E. Morgan Street in downtown Martinsville. The total project cost is estimated to be \$21,000. The estimate was prepared by MCHPS member Ben Rawlins, a landscape architect and partner in the Indianapolis architectural and engineering firm Odle McGuire Shook.

A request for federal preservation dollars in the amount of \$10,500 was submitted to the state historic preservation office in early October. The local cost share is also \$10,500. Historic Landmarks Foundation will contribute \$3,000 in the form of a grant; MCHPS will contribute \$5,400; and the Board of Trustees will contribute \$2,100.

We learned in January that our application has made the short list of projects recommended for funding. However, the state preservation office does not yet know how much funding it will receive from the federal government. As a result, we are still waiting to learn whether or not the Veterans Building project will be funded.

The Veterans Building is owned by the Morgan County Public Library Board of Trustees, which received it as a gift in 2002 on behalf of the local veterans organization. The Trustees are reluctant to invest in the building's repair and are contemplating donating it to another not-for-profit organization. At the same time, the Trustees are wondering if the building can provide for the expansion of library functions. In addition, the City of Martinsville and Rediscover Historic Martinsville (RHM), the new Main Street program, believe the building could provide for other downtown needs, such as public restrooms, office space for the Greater Martinsville Chamber of Commerce, and public meeting space.

News Briefs

Board of Directors

Wilbur Community Center • From Wilbur comes news that longtime president and Board member Randy Marsh has stepped down. "It was a tough decision to make," Randy says, "but I just didn't have the time. I'm working 70 hours a week and working on the Hall School project, too." "It's tough because I believe in preservation, and these are lifelong projects. "

Writes Donna Clymer of the WCC Board: " WCC formed in 2003, and Randy has been right there from the beginning. I would hate to even guess the number of hours he spent on the roof project alone, but it was phenomenal. He recruited volunteers that also gave hours and hours, but when all the workers moved on, Randy continued by himself right to the end. I would wake up early on Sunday mornings and see him over on that roof by himself and I would just pray for his safety. He no sooner finished the roof when he started the interior ceiling project , tearing out the old ceiling and decades of debris and putting up drywall, rewiring as he went. He's contributed to every project, advised us on every major move, and taken care of countless small problems along the way. He responds to any e-mail or phone call right away if it's a building problem. And he has advised me that even as a non-Board member, if I see a problem with the building, I can call him and he will stop over there and fix it. I cannot say enough about Randy's dedication to preservation."

Hall Civic Association • Randy Marsh reports that the annual Hall Dinner Theater held in November raised \$4,200 for the organization. However this income will be used, unexpectedly, to pay winter utility bills, which the school corporation is no longer covering since the Head Start program moved out of the building. One step forward, two steps back.

Fundraising (Tina Chafey) •

Morgan County Courthouse Hits the Big 150 • And you thought 50 was historic! In honor of the 150th anniversary of the completion of the Morgan County Courthouse, MCHPS has created a new Cat's Meow piece depicting the building as it looks today. Only a limited

2009-10 Board of Directors

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number of pieces were produced, so get yours before they are sold out. They are available at the Martinsville Candy Kitchen on the west side of the square in historic downtown Martinsville. Cost per piece is \$21.95 + tax. MCHPS members receive a 20% discount.

A Game Plan for Life by Coach John. This is an inspiring, easy-to-read book about the power of mentoring. Available at the Martinsville Candy Kitchen for \$25 + tax. MCHPS receive a 20% discount. Get this one quick if you're interested. The publisher has sold out once already, and we have been informed that the reprint will not even cover the current back orders. MCHPS will do its best to keep this book in stock.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM • MORGAN COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION SOCIETY			
Name:			
Street Address:			
Mailing Address (if different):			
Phone:		E-mail:	
Areas of special interest or expertise:			
Please check membership: new <input type="checkbox"/> renew <input type="checkbox"/>		For office use only	
		date rec:	exp:
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Student	Free	Thank you for your support. Memberships expire December 31. Memberships received after October 1 will be extended through the following year. Please mail completed form to: MCHPS P. O. Box 1377 Martinsville, IN 46151 For more information call (765) 342-0391 or (765) 349-1949 or see our website at http://www.mchps.org	
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