

LINCOLN LEGACY COMMITTEE
Busey Bank Conference Room
CHAMPAIGN PUBLIC LIBRARY
200 WEST GREEN STREET
CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS
4:30 P.M. WEDNESDAY July 31, 2024.

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:31 p.m.

2. Roll Call: Members present were: Barb Wysocki, Kay Grabow, Ray Cunningham, Eric Thorsland, Barb Oehlschlaeger-Garvey.

3. Approval of Agenda/Addendum/Addenda. Eric Thorsland moved to approve the agenda. Ray Cunningham seconded the motion. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes for meeting April 3, 2024. Kay Grabow approved the minutes from the Lincoln Legacy Committee meeting of May 15, 2024. Barb Wysocki seconded. Motion Carried.

5. Public Participation-there was no public participation. Barb Oehlschlaeger-Garvey

(Barb O-G) encouraged us all to introduce ourselves to Allyson Smerz and vice versa. Allyson will be joining us from the Illinois History and Lincoln Collections at the University of Illinois.

Pat Cain arrived at 4:38 p.m.

6. Old Business:

A. *No school tours* since the last meeting on April 3, 2024. Barb Wysocki reported that she had a call from a Memory Care organization that requested a tour of the Courthouse on September 12, 2024. The visit will coincide with the DAR flag display. Barb said it may be challenging for her and those who function as docents because it is a new audience. She will work with Theresa at the courthouse to arrange a courtroom visit.

B. *Museum Network*

Barb O-G reported that she went to the Champaign County Museums Network meeting this month. Most of the discussion was about Pride Fest, there was some discussion about creating an activity that could be used at multiple festivals and locations representative of each of the museums. Also, we were asked to provide information from the CCMN for the website.

Barb Wysocki reported that the first week of June is Museum Week and the CCMN has discussed doing something in the future to honor that. Barb Wysocki thinks it would be a good opportunity to tout our own accomplishments. The representative at the meeting from Spurlock said that over one hundred lawyers who had just been elevated to judgeships had visited Spurlock recently. This was an exception: they'd never been to a museum before. Perhaps Museum Week would be a way to raise awareness about local museums.

Kamyryn Suttinger arrived at 4:42 p.m.

C. Other

Ray Cunningham asked if we were looking for opportunities for outreach and might we want to participate in the Archives Bazaar. Pat Cain said that the Archives Bazaar will have a theme concerning railroads this year, and possibly a keynote speaker. Barb O-G said she would contact Sara Bennett at the Archives about the Bazaar as well as the website. Saturday October 19, 2024, is the date for the Bazaar.

Pat Cain reported that the appearance by Kevin Wood as Abraham Lincoln in June went well. He gave the program in both English and Spanish. The Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area was quite pleased with the outcome. They sent a photographer to the event at the Urbana Free Library, as well as to the Museum of the Grand Prairie to better publicize venues throughout the Heritage Area.

D. Lincoln's Kansas-Nebraska Act speech plans

1. Meeting with Courthouse Staff

Barb Wysocki, Barb O-G and Steve Beckett met earlier in July with the Courthouse staff to make them aware of the upcoming Kansas-Nebraska Act event. The staff was pleased that we went to the trouble of giving them a heads-up. They were very accommodating. The sheriff was out of the country at the time, but his staff was confident that everything we had planned would be fine. Barb O-G provided historical background about the Kansas-Nebraska act for the benefit of new attendees to the meeting. Barb Wysocki gave background to the local significance. Steve Beckett will be preparing a presentation for the day. Barb Wysocki said that it has the potential to shed some light on current issues, capitalizing on the wisdom of Abraham Lincoln. Barb Wysocki has arranged for a musical group to play tunes of the era. We'll move after the presentations and music to the front hall of the courthouse to place a wreath on the plaque which J.O. Cunningham placed as a commemorative marble plaque. The chief judge will do the wreath laying.

2. Program

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Barb O-G suggested that Barb O-G and Barb Wysocki should meet privately to get publicity going. Barb Wysocki said that Steve Beckett would be writing the Inside Out article for the News Gazette.

3. *Banners*

Barb O-G showed two different versions of the poster she created about the Kansas Nebraska act to the group. This poster will go in the courthouse. She agreed to send the copy via email to the committee. She said that she'd like to take the upper portion of the banner to be used as an invitation to the event. Ray Cunningham suggested that we make two banners, as they weren't that expensive. Barb O-G said that she thought it was a little too pink but that she hoped to be able to correct that. Adele Suslick suggested we should pick out the words Urbana with bolding to emphasize the localness. Barb O-G said she could italicize the words.

E. *Update on the Courthouse 2026 project*

Pat and Barb O-G had discussed previously that there are other possibilities of collaborations with organizations, such as libraries. Courthouse 2026 projects. We did discuss this project with the Courthouse staff in the meeting we had earlier in July. They were interested in helping us with future projects.

2026 will be the 20th anniversary of the exhibit's conception. Completion of the exhibit was a few years later. Barb O-G said we should probably meet with Taylor Studios to have them evaluate the exhibit technology. Eric said if we got any numbers, we should let him know. Kamryn Suttinger suggested that we may be able to make the exhibit more accessible through newer technologies, e.g., other languages with a QR code.

Adele Suslick arrived at 5:08

Barb Wysocki suggested we at least contact other groups to spur them to do something regarding 2026. Adele mentioned that the libraries have newsletters that might be useful in the effort. Barb O-G encouraged the group to think about broadening our scope. Discussion will continue after the 2024 event.

F. *AL National Heritage Network update*

Pat talked briefly about the Underground Railroad in Illinois Exhibit that the ALNHA is putting together. It opens in Springfield at the end of September. Pat is hoping that the Urbana Free Library will be able to host the exhibit in the fall of 2025. Pat would also like to work on a companion exhibit about Champaign County. Pat is also working on lesson plans coordinated with the UGRR exhibit. Adele asked how many artifacts are in the exhibit. Pat said that there were no

Barb Wysocki asked if the African American History Committee would be interested in this exhibit, particularly the companion local exhibit. Ray said he would ask.

G. *Suggested new members:*

Bernie Feeny is not interested in joining the group at this time. Allison Smerz is interested. We will vote on her nomination later in the meeting.

7. New Business

A. Clio tours-LFL signs in Champaign County

Barb O-G introduced the idea of using a free online website/app called Clio. Pat described how it works: it allows institutions to develop digital exhibits for cultural and historical points of interest. Walking tours, driving tours, can be developed. You can link videos, photos, audio. Barb O-G said she had envisioned doing that to connect the Looking for Lincoln signs. The website is <http://theclio.com>

B. Other Lincoln-related activities: No other activities were mentioned. Barb O-G nominated Allison Smerz for membership in the Lincoln Legacy Committee. Eric moved to elect Allison; Ray seconded. The committee voted in the affirmative, Allison Smerz is a new member of the committee.

8. Adjournment; Barb O-G moved to adjourn. Eric Thorsland seconded. Meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

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