

**Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) – Annual Conference, Sept. 12-14, Winona**  
(now under Administration and not connected with Historical Society)  
- notes of A. Thomas

**Introductory remarks:**

Amy Spong, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

- SHPO is thinking about updating their 2012-17 Preservation Plan in terms of what the state needs (plan is on the web)
- Will be coming to communities as part of their planning process
- Will identify people in the communities that they need to include in their feedback effort.
- They have hired a new Data Manager (Jim) Note: I talked to him a couple of times; he seems aware of problems and open to suggestions for improvement.

Mike Koop, Certified Local Government Coordinator

- Office is not located behind the state Capital in the Administrative Bldg.; on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- Next year's conference will be in St. Cloud; application for 2020 due end of 2019(2018?)

**Keynote: Dan Becker, Heritage Arts, Raleigh, NC**

Identified 3 critical factors to effective preservation programs

1. Leadership:
  - Includes the usual plans (with mission, strategic plans, objectives, tasks, etc.)
  - Plans should be achievable; not too impossible to achieve; follow through to establish credibility, stay in touch with elected officials.
  - We are serving two audiences: the government/elected officials and the public/applicants. *"Leadership is more and more found in non-profits".*
2. Stewardship:
  - Is the management of life and property considering the rights of others. *"The Commission shall prevent what is bad. Spend time on protection vs. design and review."*
  - *"We find our place in the middle of serving the public and meeting the standards." "The communities resources do not belong to the HPC"*
3. Partnership:
  - Is important to leverage resources: expertise of the public (the HPC) and the funding of the developers. *"Find the balance between."*
  - Historic districts are a partnership. It needs constant communication; keep your eye on the prize. Become *"solution oriented"*.
  - Tell stories about successes

Note: Dan was a major speaker at the National Main St. Conference I attended last summer in Baltimore. I just happened to spend a lunch hour with him. He is open, pleasant, good listener, bright and clearly "solution" oriented. Many people commented that his approach was refreshing.

**Concurrent Sessions I attended:**

**#1 Walking Tours 101: Making History Educational & Healthy**

Dustin Heckman, Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums  
(mnhistoryalliance@gmail.com)

Chris Schuelke, Executive Director, Otter Tail County Historical Society  
(cschuelke@otchs.org)

The Process

- Identify the potential topics for an area, e.g., architectural? some aspect of history? Think broadly, e.g., alleys, cemeteries focusing on themes, e.g., figures on tombstones, symbols on original buildings, etc.
- Research – Photograph every building on tour; identify architectural details (Field Guide to American Houses); go to local Historical Society and find out who owned the building and what businesses have been in it.

- Plan logistics (route; target audience in terms of age, tourist vs. local; length (1-2 hrs. is max; parking availability; one/multiple time offering; size limit (with microphone has had 87 people on a walk); charge (typical to charge \$7 for members, \$10 for non-members & children free); publicity plans (Facebook, website, flyers, newspapers).
- Use some interactive techniques, e.g., have individuals on the tour hold up photos when prompted or read a quote on a printed sheet given to individual.

**Tips:**

- Plan “story spots” when guide invites people to come up and read prepared written stories/quotes.
- Develop script; write more than you can use; walk the route using the script.
- Plan to have someone take photos so they can be used to advertise in future tours
- Consider making it into a podcast for a self-guided tour.
- Insurance & liability: get permission from owner of a church, cemetery, etc. Have people sign waivers.
- Oncell.com is a product that can be used for self guided tours; has a monthly fee.
- If on a tour in business district, a business may want to offer a discount coupon, e.g., cookie , ice cream, etc.
- If a book is relevant to the tour, have it available for purchase.
- Consider incorporating GIS story maps that would provide history of a house with the people, architecture, etc.

## **#2 Applying the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation** (Scott also attended this session)

Christopher Wand, Architect at Primus Companies in Cedar Rapids, IA

Wand’s project was a 1880 structure in downtown Wabasha that was successfully rehabbed using the Federal and state historic tax credits. He showed images of before and after. Little mention of specific standards they considered when rehabbing (at least that was my sense).

## **#3 Bigger Than a Breadbox: Preservation Principles for Successful Site Stewardship**

Barbara A.M. Howard, *Stonebridge Learning* (bhoweard@stonebridgelearning.com)

Note: Howard has worked for SHPO but has started her own business which includes consulting but also producing on-line courses on various parts of the Sec. of Interior Standards. (I can e-mail her if we want a PDF of presentation).

Howard outlined the three Preservation Principles: Know your property, Have a plan and Do no harm.

### **1. Know Your Property**

- Significant vents, people, architecture, information potential, i.e., what isn’t visible
- History of development: wt parts are original, when were others added, etc.
- Character: defining features for each period, spatial relationships, spaes, construction techniques, materials, finishes, craftsmanship (see Brief #17 Architectural Features)
- Condition: assessments completed, consult professional architects, contractors for help

### **2. Have a Plan (see Brief #46)**

- Talk to property owners. Obtain plans.
- Maintenance Plan (short & long term care)
- Historic Structure Report (HSR); not many places do it (see Brief #43)
- Cultural Landscape Report (CLR); have when property changes hands (see Brief #36)
- Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP); can work with Main St. Programs to help all property owners; hasn’t been done in MN that she knows of (she does a lot of work in Iowa).
- Obtain Community Planning Documents: Zoning, Economic Development, Preservation Plans, Disaster plans (are historic properties included?)

### 3. Do No Harm

- Need a stewardship team of experts, owners, friends of the project.(see #38 Preservation Brief)
- See *Overarching Guidance for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties*  
<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/by-topic.htm>
- Select the appropriate treatment approach of the four Sec. of Interior approaches: Preservation, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction or Restoration.
- Follow the standards and guidelines for each at  
<https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf>

### #4 Stump the Staff: Perplexing Issues for Preservationists

Dan Becker, Heritage Arts, Raleigh, NC (Keynote speaker)

Mike Koop, Certified Local Government Coordinator

Amy Spong, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Below are the questions raised by participants:

- Technology: To what extent do social media modes have a role in our work?  
Response: In governmental work need to be careful about open meeting laws, etc. Check the state manual on that.
- What else do we need to think of other than buildings, etc.  
Response: You can protect view sheds, e.g., prohibiting surrounding property from building structures higher than historical buildings such as churches, water towers, etc.; can be achieved in Comp Plan and LDC.
- Can we protect the old brick alleys?  
Response: Some towns have regulations in the LDC chapter on Transportation and connections to prevent “infill”. Other regs can be written to discourage removal of the bricks. Some towns protect the old stairways on the sides of buildings.
- Would the paint color of a building ever prevent a building obtaining historic designation?  
Response: Overall integrity is the point. The paint color alone would never be the deciding factor because that is changeable.
- Would an old building in prime condition we an easy designation as a national historic site?  
Response: It needs a context significance beyond being in prime condition.
- What can be done with a building that was designated as national historic building but is not maintained and is considered by some as a hazard?  
Response: No major bullet; do you have a demolition by neglect ordinance?
- Comment from Dan: Emphasis on relationship building is key; keep positive; keep the commission in front and not the staff.
- I asked for advice about educational materials for HPC members that would be on the web; Michael Koop asked me to contact him for links. I will provide to the Commission once I receive.