

Minutes

Lincoln Legacy Committee
Friends Conference Room 215, Champaign Public Library

January 29, 2025

1. Call to Order-Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call-Members present: Barb Oehlschlaeger-Garvey, Barb Wysocki, Ray Cunningham, Allyson Smerz, Kamryn Suttinger, Pat Cain, Adele Suslick, Kay Grabow. Absent: Eric Thorstland

3. Approval of Agenda Adele Suslick moved to approve the agenda. Kay Grabow seconded. Agenda approved unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes, Barb Wysocki moved to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2024 meeting. Pat Cain seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

5. Public Participation-There was no public

6. Old Business

A. General Updates

Kamryn Suttinger shared that on February 17, the Museum of the Grand Prairie has a Schools Out, Lincoln Legacy Program, from 1:00 to 2:00 pm, Lake of the Woods.

Adele Suslick said she had been doing research on Lincoln and would like to share that with all of us; and that she hoped that we would have something she could take back to the Champaign County History Museum for the 250th celebration. Barb O-G said we'd be happy to do that when our plan was more solidified.

Pat Cain attended the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area Steering Committee meeting, as did Kamryn. Pat stated that the Urbana Free Library would be hosting the ALNHA's Underground Railroad exhibit in 2026, January through March. He said that the LLC may be involved in the programming for the exhibit opening.

Pat Cain added that he sent out the Annual Report for 2024 for the ALNHA to all members of the LLC. This is an annual report of Lincoln related activities which helps the ALNHA justify their federal funding.

Pat also stated that he signed onto the ALNHA in a youth programming consultant role. ALNHA is trying to engage more young people in their message.

Barb O-G said she is working with the ALNHA on more signs of less-often told stories for the Looking for Lincoln wayside sign project.

Barb O-G also stated that she didn't encourage the committee to apply for a grant from ALNHA because she was on the review committee for those grants and saw it as a conflict of interest.

B. Memo regarding Exhibit Update

Barb Wysocki sought approval of a memo she wrote about the evaluation and renovation of the Lincoln exhibit in the courthouse. It is nearly 20 years old. We've had a good relationship with the county regarding maintenance. The technology may need updating. The proposal includes the notion that a small subcommittee of LLC would evaluate the exhibit and meet with Taylor Studios to proceed.

Barb O-G stated that she would happily form a subcommittee, she thought that the technology had been somewhat updated and that there was a good deal of experience in the room for evaluating the exhibit. She also noted that the public needs to be involved in the evaluation. Also, she pondered how do we celebrate the anniversary of the exhibit: via programming, or extension of the exhibit?

Ray Cunningham said he would serve on the committee. Ray suggested we needed to visit it. Pat said one of the things that could be looked at is accessibility standards. Kamryn said we could use a QR code to guide feedback.

Barb O-G stated that the exhibit should continue to serve all audiences.

Kamryn asked if the courthouse is a field trip destination. Barb Wysocki explained that the Lincoln exhibit is usually folded into a visit with the judge, a courtroom and sometimes some discussion of the exterior of the building and the clock tower. Barb stated that we've had a wide range of visitors over the years: grade school and high school students as well as memory care facility residents. Kamryn suggested we begin evaluations with folks who have used the exhibit.

Kay shared an experience she had with a teacher whose students were primarily African American children. The students were disturbed by the part of the exhibit presentation that had a noose in it. Kamryn said this highlighted the necessity of talking to diverse audiences.

Kay shared that there isn't a written lesson plan at the moment. Barb O-G said we should consider how we might remedy that.

Adele asked if we've ever done pop-up exhibits to take out to classrooms. Barb O-G said we have had pop up exhibits within the courthouse, but not to classrooms. This is because we don't have the cadre of volunteers to support this kind of effort.

Adele also suggested that at some point we should consider the resources of the Champaign Public Library.

A subcommittee of Barb O-G, Ray, Adele, and Kay were formed. A March 11, 2024 meeting at 1:30 p.m. was established. All were invited to join along.

C. Annual Report to the County Board

Barb O-G sought approval for the Annual Report to the County Board. Barb Wysocki wanted to add to the report in the last paragraph. Locally, because 2026 is the 150th anniversary of the older part of the courthouse, and the Lincoln exhibit is 20 years old, we should make sure we are aware of it. Barb Wysocki said we should also send it to the Champaign County Museums Network.

D. Publications and Exhibit

Allyson Smerz shared that her exhibit will be opening February 12, 2025 at the Illinois History and Lincoln Collection Reading Room. Main Library, Room 324. It is called "From Man to Myth: Lincoln's Evolving Image." February 17, 2:30-4:30 there will be an exhibit opening/ birthday party and an open house with additional materials from Lincoln's contemporaries. It doesn't have an end date yet.

E. CCMN Report

Barb Wysocki said that the annual retreat for CCMN will happen on the afternoon of February 10 at Parkland. The 2026 event will still be on the agenda at this retreat. Kamryn thinks that the Museum of the Grand Prairie will be doing something with local schools. She also stated that CCMN will do something with the arts.

F. 2026 Planning

Barb Wysocki thinks that any involvement from the cities will not happen. Barb O-G said we should develop our own event and continue to invite. Kamryn stated that she thought that a History Crawl would be something she'd be interested in doing. Adele noted that the Champaign County History Museum does walking tours which might be of some help.

7. New Business

8. Adjournment: Ray Cunningham moved to adjourn. Pat Cain seconded.

9. Upcoming Meetings- All Meetings at 4:00 p.m.

March 26, 2025 Friends Conference Room, Champaign Public Library

May 28, 2025, Busey Bank Meeting Room, Champaign Public Library

July 30, 2025 Busey Bank Meeting Room, Champaign Public Library

September 24, 2025 Busey Bank Meeting Room, Champaign Public Library

December 3, 2025, Busey Bank Meeting Room, Champaign Public Library