

Dodge County Independent News

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School named to national register; City of Kasson plans are unchanged

The city of Kasson's 1918 school has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service. The Minnesota Historical Societies' National Register Officer, Susan Roth, made the announcement.

The school's submitted nomination was researched and compiled by Dan Hoisington of Hoisington Preservation Consultants of Roseville, MN. The former school is one of 80 others in Minnesota on the national register.

Spencer Stevens, Kasson Alliance For Restoration (KARE) vice president, stated, "This is a beautiful Christmas present for the city of Kasson and all the citizens who attended the school". Other Kasson buildings on the National Register are the Eureka Hotel, former municipal building, limestone water tower and the former home of Jacob Leuthold Jr.

So how does this designation affect the city's plan to have the building taken down? It doesn't change any plans at all, according to city administrator Randy Lenth. "We disagree on the historic value of the building and plan to move forward," said Lenth.

The city administrator said he was a little surprised by the designation and insisted that it does not necessarily affect their ability to tear the structure down to make room for a new library/government center. It may create a few more hoops for the city to jump through in order to get to the point where the building can be taken down, he added.

The city of Kasson and KARE are set to testify in Dodge County District Court beginning Monday, February 11 before Judge Casey Christian. The court has set aside three days for testimony.

In June Judge Christian granted KARE a temporary injunction until February 11 to give them time to find a use for the building and research grant opportunities. KARE has been looking at ways to reuse the building as a historical resource.

KARE is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit historic preservation organization started by Spencer Stevens and Diane Berge-O'Brien. They now have several hundred members. Their mission is to preserve historic buildings, structures and properties to serve as landmarks of Kasson's heritage, along with being a source of education in the importance of historic preservation.



To many people the 1918 former Kasson school is of great historic significance and to others the building should come down to make room for a new library/government center. An Owatonna judge will determine the fate of the building February 11 when three days have been set aside for testimony in Dodge County District Court.