

KARE Email News, Vol. 2, No. 5, 04 March 2008: Kasson Historic Preservation News

Kasson Alliance for Restoration (KARE) Supporters:

It has been 3 weeks since representatives from the city council, city staff, KARE member/volunteers and legal council for both parties assembled at Kasson City Hall to explore common ground related to the historic Kasson School.

KARE volunteers continue to wait for a response to the January 7 letter which was provided to Mayor Tjosaas (a response was requested by Jan. 18). Some of you are new to this ENews so a copy of that letter is attached to this email. KARE is also waiting for other information that we requested from the city in December.

While we wait for that response, the cities' settlement proposal is being reviewed by numerous historic preservationists throughout the state. The Dec. 7 listing of the stately school on the National Register of Historic Places has drawn a lot of attention from Minnesota's preservation specialists. They are carefully reviewing the terms and providing KARE advice on how to respond. We will draft a response in due course and share it with all of you. Mean while we wait for the city to respond to our earlier inquiries.

Many of you have asked for a copy of the cities' proposal. We defer to the city, at this point in time, to provide that information to its citizens as it so chooses. We assume copies are available from city hall.

Other News:

1. Historic Preservation, Lion's Club Mtg, April 28, 2008, 6:00 PM: Bonnie McDonald, Executive Director of the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota (<http://www.mnpreservation.org>), will discuss Historic Preservation and the 1918 Kasson School. She will also discuss The Main St. Program which is a community-driven, comprehensive methodology used to revitalize older, traditional business districts throughout the United States. Please plan to attend at Digger's Ballroom, Kasson, MN (near the intersection of Hwy 14 & 57 and next door to the AmericInn). Social hour starts at 6:15 PM. More details on how to sign up will follow.

Over the coming months, KARE will be inviting historic preservation professionals to speak to numerous civic groups. If your group needs a speaker, please contact us.

2. Mo Rocca video: We invite you to view the Mo Rocca video that is posted on KARE's website at: <http://www.kassonalliance.org/news.htm>. You will find his presentation on preserving history informative. There is also a link there to the January 2008 issue of the **Finance and Commerce Newspaper** which featured an article on the school.

3. Feb. 11, 2008 Meeting Info: Many of you have called or emailed to ask which city council members KARE volunteers met with on Feb. 11. We are compelled at this time to clarify this. Mayor Tjosaas and Councilman Nelson were at City Hall. No one from KARE formally met with them due to the fact that they insist that all communications go thru their lawyer (we reported this to you last year). KARE members, on the other hand, are under no restrictions what so ever to meet with anyone from the city (there is no requirement to have a lawyer present).

4. KARE Funding Raising Event: KARE will be conducting a historic preservation celebration event sometime in the coming months with the support of local businesses and citizens. We will have more information on this soon so you can plan to attend.

In preparation for the possible trial, the significance of the historic school to both Kasson's and the State's history continues to be uncovered by dedicated researchers who are continuing to gather historical research. The trial, if necessary, is scheduled for August 18, 19 and 20 starting at 9:00 AM on Monday August 18 (Dodge County Court House, Mantorville, MN). The trial will focus on whether or not the school is a historic resource protected by Minnesota Law.

Your email questions, input and suggestions are welcome. We appreciate your continued support.

Thank you,

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Kasson, MN 55944
507-634-2679

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The Kasson Alliance for Restoration (KARE) is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization formed in January 2007. KARE's 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.

Note: The media is welcome to use all or portions of this announcement.

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January 7, 2008

Hand delivered

**Tim Tjosaas, Mayor
City of Kasson
401 5th Street S.E.
Kasson, MN 55944**

Honorable Mayor Tjosaas,

This letter serves as a formal request to the City Council to meet with members of the Kasson Alliance for Restoration (KARE) to discuss and pursue adaptive reuse options for the historic Kasson School. KARE has spoken with a number of developers, architects and historic preservation experts and would like to share that information with the council.

In addition, I request that the city partner with KARE volunteers to submit a reuse study grant application to the Minnesota Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The State Historic Preservation Office is encouraging KARE, in partnership with the city, to apply for a reuse study grant for the historic 1918 Kasson School. See the attached sheet for more information.

The aforementioned SHPO-assisted reuse study would explore the potential for reusing and preserving the historic school in considerable more detail than the cities' previous efforts. For example, the study would employ a professional reuse study investigator who would interview citizens, government officials, historic preservation developers, financial experts and other stakeholders. A professionally managed study, in concert with input from the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, the Minnesota Historical Society and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, would explore all reuse avenues. Combining this with the work KARE volunteers have already done will lead to a plan for financing, managing and maintaining the building that can be presented to the area's citizens for consideration.

The financial picture related to preserving the school has changed considerably since the school was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Register listing provides for many historic preservation funding streams that significantly increase the odds of finding an adaptive reuse. These funding mechanisms have proven successful in rehabilitating many schools in Minnesota to include schools in Red Wing, Cannon Falls, Little Falls, Brainerd, Winona and many others.

In summary, I encourage the city council to meet with KARE volunteers to discuss a partnership. A professionally managed reuse study, with input from the aforementioned stakeholders and experts, would provide a good base to start from. I welcome your leadership in assigning selected council members to a reuse study steering committee which would also include citizens. Kasson's citizens would gladly participate in a series of meetings where the interests and concerns of all sides could be explored in an effort to find common ground and understanding (avoiding further litigation). I welcome your leadership in furthering that cause and the proposals in this letter.

I request a response from you personally by close of business January 18, 2008.

Sincerely,

**John Buckingham
205 S. Mantorville, MN
Kasson, MN 55944**

**CF: Mark Anfinson, Attorney at Law
Dodge County Independent**

Minnesota Historical Society State Historic Preservation Office Co-Sponsored Building Reuse Studies

Introduction

Reuse studies of threatened historic properties explore new uses for them. While a study does not guarantee that a property will be saved, it assembles a team of experts and guides an orderly, informed process to decide the property's future. That process, adapted by the Minnesota SHPO from a National Trust model, is summarized below.

The SHPO may cosponsor a reuse study if the property meets these five criteria:

- The property must be threatened, vacant or underused.
- It must be listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- A unit of government, public agency or nonprofit organization must own it.
- The local sponsor must provide funding.
- The local sponsor must be willing to co-sponsor the study.

The Process

The reuse study process is locally initiated, independent, objective, analytical and inclusive. It typically unfolds in four phases over a period of months.

1. Startup

- Identify a local liaison to serve as a point person for the local sponsor (a city, agency or nonprofit organization).
- Hire a principal investigator (PI) to plan and conduct the study.
- Gather information including community demographics, market studies, planning and zoning information, site information, historical information, blueprints, photographs, historic structures reports, and development proposals.
- Assemble the team, which typically includes the PI, a preservation architect, development specialist and other specialists as required for study of the particular property and situation.
- Schedule on-site activities such as orientation tours, interviews and a public meeting.

2. On Site

- Tour the community and surrounding area to get a feel for unmet market needs, trends and potential tenants.
- Assess the building's condition and site, noting special features or problems, and begin to estimate rehab requirements.
- Conduct confidential interviews with community members representing many points of view. Goals:
 - to gauge public sentiment;
 - identify local issues that may affect the future of the property;
 - identify market opportunities that the property might serve and;
 - identify local resources to tap for rehabilitation.
- Hold a public meeting to hear from people not interviewed earlier. (At this point the team does not yet share its preliminary findings or opinions.)

3. Analysis/Synthesis

- Analyze the findings, identifying needs and opportunities.
- Form recommendations within the context of physical, economic and political constraints.
- Produce a final report for consideration by the community.

4. Implementation

Once the consultation is completed and the report issued, it is the responsibility of the community/local group to determine which recommendations can and should be implemented.

Reuse Study Funding

1. How much do reuse studies cost?

They range from \$5,000 to \$14,000. Grants from the Minnesota Historical Society of up to \$5,000 are available.

2. State Grants: Each year the Minnesota SHPO works with a number of partners on reuse studies for selected properties. Priority is given to projects in which a reuse study will likely reverse a threatening situation for an endangered property while increasing a community's awareness of the importance of its historic resources.

3. Grant Eligibility Criteria

- The property must be threatened, vacant or underused, and must be listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- The applicant must be a unit of government, public agency or nonprofit organization willing to host the reuse study team, facilitate the information-gathering process, and assist in the preparation and presentation of the report. Matching funds and/or services are required.
- The applicant must demonstrate an ability and commitment to implement recommendations made in the study.

4. How to apply for a grant

Letters requesting a reuse study matching grant may be submitted at any time during the year and will be reviewed as they are received. Letters of application should:

- address the review criteria listed above, and
- summarize information about the property to be examined, including ownership. Consent of the property owner is required to give reuse study team members access to the property.

Examples of schools that have been reused:

Examples of schools that have reused in Minnesota and nationwide, some of which used the aforementioned process, can be found at:

http://www.KassonAlliance.org/kassonschool_reuse-study.htm