



CITY OF REEDSBURG
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Historic Preservation Agenda
January 9, 2023
Reedsburg City Hall Council Chambers
5:00 PM

DUE TO THE RESTRICTIONS CAUSED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, SOME VOTING MEMBERS MAY BE PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE OR VIDEO CONFERENCE, AS PROVIDED BY THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE. [HTTPS://WWW.DOJ.STATE.WI.US/NEWS-RELEASES/OFFICE-OPEN-GOVERNMENT-ADVISORY-CORONAVIRUS-DISEASE-2019-COVID-19-AND-OPEN-MEETINGS](https://www.doj.state.wi.us/news-releases/office-open-government-advisory-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-and-open-meetings)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMON COUNCIL MAY ATTEND THIS MEETING TO GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT A SUBJECT OVER WHICH THE COMMON COUNCIL HAS DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY. IF A QUORUM OF THE COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDS THIS MEETING, NO ACTION WILL BE TAKEN BY THE COMMON COUNCIL AT THIS MEETING.

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

I. APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 12, 2022:

THE COMMITTEE WILL RECEIVE INFORMATION ON NON-AGENDA TOPICS BROUGHT BEFORE THE COMMITTEE BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC. THE COMMITTEE WILL NOT DISCUSS THESE TOPICS, AND WILL NOT TAKE ACTION ON ANY OF THEM AT THIS MEETING

I. GENERAL BUSINESS:

- A. Consider funding towards Ruminant / Harvest Park maintenance
- B. Consider recognition of Friends of the Ruminant
- C. Consider local art in public spaces
- D. Review local video history videos, website, grants, history room and historical signs

II. ADJOURN:



The City of Reedsburg does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admissions or access to, or treatment of or employment in, its programs or activities. Disability-related aids or services, including printed information in alternate formats, to enable persons with disabilities to participate in public meetings and programs are available by calling (608) 524-6404. To be able to meet the needs of a request for a different format contact the City Clerk-Treasurer at 134 S. Locust Street, Reedsburg, WI at least 48 hours prior to the commencement of the meeting so that any necessary arrangements can be made to accommodate each request.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Reedsburg, WI
December 12, 2022

Alder Jason Schulte called the meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission to order on Monday, December 12, 2022, at 5:00 PM at Reedsburg City Hall.

Present: Monica Liegel, Joan Martin, Lee Gnatzig, Orris Smith, Glen Slaats

Absent: Nancy Manion

Staff: Brian Duvalle

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Slaats, seconded by Smith to approve the 11/14/22 minutes.

Motion approved

Update on cleaning/maintenance of historic tombstones

Jodi Beyer gave an update on the stones she cleaned: Reed, Nott and Rathbun. Examples of future stones include Coddington, Jones, Dwinnell, Babb and Allen. Johnny Kuhls from Krause Monument stated he would like to display photos of these at his new location.

Consider renewal of the HPC website

Schulte stated that renewal is around \$300. A subcommittee should be set up to oversee operation of the website.

Motion by Gnatzig, seconded by Liegel to approve around \$300 for annual website renewal.

Motion approved

Consider local art in public spaces

Discussion held on possible maintenance fund for Ruminant. Slaats stated that the previous request was for a substantial amount of money. The HPC will address again in January.

Consider local video history videos & grants, history room, Certified Local Government status and historical signs

Discussion held on location for new Perry house plaque. The owner would like it under the current mail slot.

Motion by Gnatzig, seconded by Smith to adjourn at 5:51 PM.

Motion approved

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Duvalle
Planner/Building Inspector

Date: 1/4/2023
 To: Historical Preservation Commission
 From: Friends of Ruminant Group
 Submitted to Brian Duvalle via Email

Dear Brian,

We are forming a friends group to monitor the maintenance needs for Ruminant and to help raise some of the funds through continued private and public partnerships for necessary future maintenance and upkeep. We're interested in gauging the city's commitment to the preservation of Ruminant and have two questions for the Historical Preservation Commission:

- 1.) How does the Commission currently go about determining the need for the maintenance of its public art?
- 2.) What is the mechanism or process for how maintenance is funded?

History of Ruminant/Harvest Park

We refer members of the commission to the inside front cover of the Ruminant brochure for background. These brochures have been distributed to visitors on an ongoing basis by the Reedsburg Area Chamber of Commerce since 2014. Between special events and visitors to the Chamber, we estimate that over 100,000 people have visited Ruminant since it was installed.

Fundraising

Harvest Park featuring Ruminant was developed at a cost of \$135,000. Fundraising occurred in 4 phases over 6 years beginning in 2014 and concluding in 2020. City and county funding covered \$35,100 of this cost and private donations, both cash and in-kind, covered the \$100,000 balance. To extend the life of Ruminant, the artist made an additional \$14,000 in upgrades to Ruminant's stained glass panels, light boxes, and lighting between 2020 and 2022. Public funds covered \$10,000 of this, and private donations covered \$4,000.

Phase 1 (2014)

Re-outfitted Ruminant as permanent installation/Interpretive Signage/Concrete pad/Transport and installation/Initial landscaping

Phase 2 (2015)

Canopy Trees/Bench Pads/Stamped, colored concrete at the park entrance (south side)

Phase 3 (2016)

Sidewalks

Phase 4 (2019/20)

Screening landscaping on the north and west sides/2 Benches

Maintenance

Ruminant was dedicated to the City of Reedsburg in October of 2014. No formal agreement was then or has ever been established between Ruminant's stakeholders and the City of Reedsburg concerning a long-term plan for maintenance. Any maintenance occurring between 2014 and now, has been initiated by stakeholders through Reedsburg ArtsLink and undertaken in good faith with City of Reedsburg staff, namely Matt Scott, and the City Arts Committee prior to its dissolution. Currently, the city is responsible for mowing the lawn in Harvest Park and paying for the electricity to keep Ruminant lit. Since its inception, the Friends of Ruminant Group has organized volunteers and donors each spring to conduct landscaping maintenance.

While there's no immediate need, anticipated maintenance needs include upkeep of lighting equipment, re-painting, and eventual replacement of the combine's tires.

City recognition of Friends of Ruminant Group requested

Members of the Friends of Ruminant group would like to partner with the City to see to Ruminant's maintenance through the foreseeable future and would like to be recognized by the City as a group with a vested interest in its preservation. To that end, **we ask that at this or a future meeting, the commission take formal action to recognize the Friends of the Ruminant Group as such.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Friends of Ruminant Group

Jan Aslaksen (Main Contact)

Don Douglas, Jr.

Carolyn Kotchi-Aslaksen

Joann Mundth Douglas

Encl: Ruminant Brochure

» PRAISE FOR RUMINANT

Americans for the Arts, Public Art Network Year in Review Winner, 2013.

“A gentle, shocking, hallucinatory creation.”

Ralph Helmick, Public Art Network Year in Review Juror

“This monumental piece mashes up the histories of stained glass, comic books, and farm machinery to create a funny, expansive re-telling of the harvest narrative. The gleeful mixing of material and cultural references... adds up to something gloriously unexpected - work that at once respects & stretches its appropriated references and their attendant histories.”

Aaron Dysart, Walker Art Center's mnartists.blog

» ABOUT THE ARTIST

Typically incorporating backlit stained glass into sculptural installations, the award-winning, highly acclaimed artwork of Karl Unnasch adorns public spaces across North America. His work is created in a turn-of-the-century studio in rural Pilot Mound, Minnesota, not far from his family farm. Visit his website at www.karlunnasch.com.

REEDSBURG ARTSLINK

The Ruminant/Harvest Park project is a Reedsburg ArtsLink initiative. Reedsburg ArtsLink is a multi-disciplinary arts non-profit working to unify, enrich and enliven its community via the arts. For more information, visit our website, www.reedsburgartslink.org.



For more information contact The Reedsburg Area Chamber of Commerce, 240 Railroad St., Reedsburg, WI 53959.
Reedsburg.org • 608-524-2850



HARVEST PARK

265 Railroad St.,
Reedsburg, Wis.

» FEATURING RUMINANT

Harvest Park was created in honor of Reedsburg's agricultural heritage. It has been designed as a contemplative green space within Reedsburg's downtown campus where both residents and visitors can rest, relax and ruminate.

In addition to many generous private donations, the Ruminant/Harvest Park Project has been made possible with support from the Sauk County UW Extension Arts and Culture Committee and the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts, The Herbert Webb Trust, and the City of Reedsburg Arts Committee.



RUMINANT

THE GRAND MASTICATOR



PHOTO BY AARON DYSART

A TRIBUTE TO *Agriculture, Farming & Food* located in **HARVEST PARK**

REEDSBURG • WISCONSIN

~Best viewed after sunset~

RUMINANT

THE GRAND MASTICATOR

Harvest Park of downtown Reedsburg, Wisconsin is home to a one-of-a-kind work of art: *Ruminant* (The Grand Masticator), a harvesting combine clad in 34 agriculturally themed, backlit stained glass panels. Americans for the Arts selected *Ruminant* as one of the most compelling public art pieces for 2013.

A tribute to agriculture, farming and food, *Ruminant* is also an anthropomorphic beacon of contemplation and an intricate play on words and concepts. Its creator, artist Karl Unnasch explains: "Just as food goes through several chewings and other processes as it is picked and broken down by cattle, so does the harvest as it is gathered and processed by a combine, or art as it is pondered and enjoyed by its viewer. We are ruminants of visual language in the same manner as a cow is of its feed or a combine of its crop."

Originally a temporary installation along the Fermentation Fest's Farm/Art DTour in 2013, *Ruminant* resonated so strongly that a group of locals organized to acquire the piece for the City. A vacant lot was selected as a site and converted into what is now known as Harvest Park. *Ruminant* was publicly dedicated to the City in October 2014 and became an instant landmark.



PANEL ARTWORK



PANEL NARRATIVE

1. Batman and Robin in the Victory Garden During World Wars I and II, "Victory Gardens" were planted at private residences and public parks. They were viewed as a morale booster and played a significant role in the war effort. The cover of World's Finest No. 11 comic book in 1943 depicted Superman, Batman and Robin as "Victory Gardeners!"

2. Corn-Husk Doll A memorial to the days when toys were simple and lovingly crafted from castoffs at hand on the farm.

3. Mustached Corn-Chomper The "face" of the combine, a close-up of a mustached man chomping with gusto on a cob of corn.

4. Chew Comic book character Tony Chu is a police detective who is also a "cibopath": he has special empathic powers that are activated by chewing.

5. Raw Food Humor The rear chaff ejection casing is a billboard for "raw" food humor in simplified form. Agricultural puns and riddles based on light hearted farm, garden, and fermentation silliness here take the form of a set of cartoons in the mode of wordplay. One panel is a cartoon tribute to America's most famous farm-themed painting.

6. PacMan In the classic video game, the yellow PacMan chomp-chomps his way across the screen. This panel pays homage to a creative re-imagining of that game by painter Travis Pitts in a genre of visual art inspired by video games, both past and present.

7. Homage to Benton During the Great Depression, the "Works Progress Administration," a federal program, was created to ensure that artists would survive the tough economic climate. This panel pays homage to a WPA work by Midwestern artist Thomas Hart Benton.

8. Termite The ultimate chewer.

9. The Crayon Kid An affectionate reference to oral fixations in childhood.

10. Sloane's Tool Set The corn-head showcases a series of traditional hand-tools used by pioneers to carve out the wilderness of the Midwest, as illustrated by Eric Sloane in *A Museum of Early American Tools*.