

MEMORANDUM

TO: Michelle Doolan, Chair, Zoning & Land Regulation Committee

FROM: Rick Bernstein, Chair, ZLR Subcommittee on Cultural Resources

RE: Agenda item 2023 OA-049 - Cultural Resources, Dane County Comprehensive Plan

Date: November 27, 2023

I am the Chair of the Cultural Resources Subcommittee of the Zoning and Land Regulation Committee. I want to state my support for adopting the proposed changes to the Cultural Resources Section of the Dane County Comprehensive Plan. It's been many years since Dane County adopted the last version, and now is an opportune time to review how well the earlier version has worked and what can now be done to make improvements through revision.

I was selected to serve on this committee for two reasons. I am currently the Executive Director of the Dane County Historical Society, a position I have held since 2020. Before I retired, I worked for nearly 30 years with the Wisconsin Historical Society, much of that time as a Preservation Planner assisting communities statewide in developing the cultural resources sections of their comprehensive plans. During that time, I also edited a pamphlet, [*A Smart Growth Guide to Cultural Resource Planning*](#).

We decided to retain much of the earlier version of Dane County's Comprehensive Plan. Almost all the goals were laudable and well worth continuing to pursue. We often updated and revised the Plan to reflect current-day language and more tightly define some goals and strategies.

The most significant new suggestion is the establishment of a Dane County Heritage Preservation Commission. The establishment of such a commission would provide an "under-the-tent" advocate for cultural resources that would help keep the County's focus on accomplishing many of the goals and strategies outlined in the Plan.

The other main addition is to focus the County's attention on assisting local townships that want to preserve historic resources within their jurisdictions and develop their own historic preservation program.

For those communities who choose to do so, the County Planning Department, in concert with the Wisconsin Historical Society, would assist towns in becoming Certified Local Governments, who could then apply directly for funding from the Wisconsin Historical Society for various historic preservation activities.

In closing, I would like to thank Dane County for the honor of serving on this committee. In addition, working with my fellow board members and the Dane County planning staff was a pleasure and a privilege that I thoroughly enjoyed.