

Minutes

Lincoln Legacy Committee
Busey Bank Conference Room, 220 Champaign Public Library

May 28, 2025

1. Call to Order-Meeting was called to order at 4:06 pm.

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

3. Approval of Agenda Eric Thorsland moved to approve the agenda; Adele Suslick seconded. Agenda approved unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes, March 26 2025 meeting. Barb Wysocki moved to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2025 meeting; Pat Cain seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

Ray Cunningham arrived at 4:10 p.m.

5. Public Participation: Barb Oehlschlaeger-Garvey had been in communication with Brian Adams who is proposing a Looking for Lincoln sign near the Royer Hotel (formerly Lincoln Hotel and Jumer's Castle Lodge). Brian sent a proposal through Barb O-G to the committee. The committee agreed to support the development of the sign.

6. Old Business

A. General Updates

Barb O-G reported that she visited the Lincoln Exhibit at the Illinois History and Lincoln Collections was a great exhibit and Barb O-G encouraged the committee to visit. IHLC is located at 324 Main Library at the University of Illinois, 1-5 Monday through Friday.

Pat Cain reported that progress on the Underground Railroad exhibit was going well. The organizing committee for the exhibit is deciding on programming. After they finalize plans, other community partners, including the LLC will be invited to collaborate.

Barb O-G and several committee members attended the Looking for Lincoln (LFL) Coalition Listening Session the previous week. Barb O-G asked for reactions to the meeting. Kamryn Suttinger said they did a lot of talking, Barb Wysocki said there was more talking than listening. Barb Wysocki said they talked about how Lincoln sites can engage young people. School programs determine the student groups who visit sites and that is the primary source of engagement. Wysocki said she thought that the LFL found the solution to be turning Lincoln into a comic character. A lot of people were excited about a Lincoln bobble-head. It's a situation that merits more serious discussion than it got, said Wysocki.

Barb Wysocki wished for more time to talk about collaborations between our historical organizations, especially through the CCMN. She thinks Champaign County is somewhat unique in these collaborations. LFL did say they had been reauthorized for the next 15 years, but the funding was somewhat tenuous at the moment. Ray Cunningham said he agreed it was more of a listening session for us. Kamryn Suttinger took the approach that the bobble head was akin to Funko Pop

which is quite popular among younger people. She expressed that it's a way to connect with them, and that we need to study how to be a bit less serious about the way we convey what's important. Pat agreed that there were many approaches, through the bobble head, through the Flat Lincoln, through TikTok, that draw people into history and serve as a stepping stone to more serious topics.

Magic Treehouse Books were Allyson's entry into history. She agreed that they were her first interaction with history and then she was able to branch out. Barb O-G commented that one third of the team that was present at the Listening session was the marketing manager for LFL, and that he presented a lot of the content.

Adele asked if it would be appropriate to do something in the basement of the Champaign Public Library to celebrate the 250th. Barb O-G noted that the Urbana Library also has specific times for teens-Teen Open Lab. Barb O-G asked Adele to come up with a proposal. Kay Grabow remembered when she taught her students to do a Claymation movie of a Lincoln story. Adele suggested a child's activity that might engage students-decorating their own Lincoln hat. Kay suggested that we have a kid's activity. Barb Wysocki recalled that a student's response to COVID art exhibit was created as a collaboration within the CCMN and that the 250th will be beginning another project.

B. Brochure Update:

The brochure has been approved. Barb O-G removed the cell phone information. Allyson said add an 's' to IHLC. Barb Wysocki thought that the Lincoln Exhibit should be singular on the back side. Barb O-G pointed out that the Lincoln exhibits were developed as a pair, that the IMLS funding for the exhibit was applied for through the Museum of the Grand Prairie (MGP) as the eligible entity. Barb Wysocki said that the county didn't have any input into the MGP's exhibit. Barb O-G stated that the exhibit plans, bubble charts, text, and design of the MGP exhibit were all reviewed by this committee, a committee of the County Board. Pat corrected the hours for the Urbana Free Library. Barb O-G said she would make those corrections and print 500 brochures.

C. CCMN Report

Barb Wysocki said Perry Morris asked if the LLC wanted a timeslot in the News-Gazette Inside Out rotation. Barb W and Barb O-G were concerned that there might not be enough content to provide. Barb O-G said we could promote Lincoln and not necessarily our own projects. Pat Cain said we probably only would have to do 2 or 3 per year. After much discussion we decided to ask for a regular slot. For example, we could have promoted Allyson's Illinois History and Lincoln Collections exhibit. Allyson agreed to do an article.

D. 2026 planning:

Barb Wysocki reported that the CCMN has created a community art project, akin to the Art in the Time of COVID exhibit created in 2021. The committee continues to discuss the 125th anniversary of the courthouse. Barb O-G said that we have several items on the docket for next year: Hopefully, we can participate in the Underground Railroad exhibit, we can promote the possible new sign at the Royer hotel, and we will do some anniversary of the courthouse. That seems to be a full calendar for the Lincoln Legacy Committee for 2026.

Barb Wysocki asked about the dedication of the Bennett building. Eric said that there would be no county funding for the dedication.

7. New Business

Social media:

Barb O-G reported that she was reviving the LLC Facebook and Instagram pages.

Future meetings:

Rescheduling the September meeting. Barb O-G asked if whether to move the meeting to September 10 or October 15. Ray Cunningham and Barb Wysocki and the group agreed to a reschedule for October 15.

Eric Thorsland reminded the committee that Barb O-G would be presenting a brief summary of our activities to the County Board on June 10, 6:30 pm. Any and all are invited to the

8. Adjournment: Ray Cunningham moved to adjourn. Barb Wysocki seconded. Meeting adjourned.

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

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

September 24, 2025 Busey Bank Meeting Room, Champaign Public Library (rescheduled to October 15).

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