

Minutes

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

July 30, 2025

1. Call to Order-Meeting was called to order at 4:09 pm.

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

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

4. Approval of Minutes, May 28, 2025 meeting. Allyson Smerz moved to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2025 meeting; Kay Grabow seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

5. Public Participation

Barb O-G apologized to Brian Adams and the group for giving Brian the wrong details about the last meeting.

Brian Adams then spoke to the group about the proposed Looking for Lincoln sign regarding the Kerr Tavern where Lincoln stayed that had been on the site of the now Royer, once Urbana Lincoln, Hotel. Brian said his interest came from his interest in the architect Joseph Royer. The Kerr Tavern was built in 1850, a block and a half away from the courthouse. Lincoln stayed there—became friends with the family. Where the food court is now, that was the entrance to the Kerr Tavern was. The Kerr family wrote a good deal about their connections with Lincoln, now residing in the Champaign County Historical Archives. Brian noted that Lincoln liked the Kerr's biscuits, and when they opened the oven to bake them a cat jumped out. The hotel was also called Union Hotel. The 1858 and 1869 maps show a hotel on the site. The Sanborn maps show a well on the corner of the street. One of Kerr's accounts mentions the well. 1900 article Champaign Daily News notes when the house was torn down.

Barb O-G assured Brian that the committee is in favor of this proposal if we can find funding. Barb O-G said she would collaborate with him to secure said funding. Barb described the Looking for Lincoln funding situation at the moment. The current sign cost without installation is 2887 dollars, 4900 dollars with installation. We will start with the hotel to see if they have interest in funding. Brian has talked to the marketing person already because of the Royer connection.

Brian asked how to decide where they will be placed. We will work with Hilton if they'd like on their property, the municipality if it will be in Urbana right-of-way. Adele was concerned that Hilton may take the sign down at some point. Barb recounted the signs in the county and noted that they are all still in good condition and in their original places. Brian agreed to send his materials to the committee via email.

6. Old Business

A. General Updates

- Barb O-G congratulated Allyson Smerz on her article about the Illinois History and Lincoln Collections for the Inside Out Article in the News-Gazette. Allyson that it generated interest in her exhibit. The exhibit is still up and hasn't had an end date assigned yet.
- Barb O-G asked Adele if she had any news about the proposal to use the maker's space in the basement of the Champaign Public Library for a Lincoln program of some sort. Adele said she did ask, and the staff was uninterested in Lincoln, but did want something to commemorate their 150th anniversary next year. Adele then took that opportunity to the Champaign County History Museum. They will be providing that program.

Barb O-G then asked if we still wanted to do anything for grade schoolers in any other venue. She said she thought we needed to have a partnering institution. She also emphasized that our mission is to celebrate the legacy of Lincoln although some of our events seem to overlap with other missions. Barb O-G suggested talking to Kamryn Suttinger, because the Museum of the Grand Prairie has often celebrated Lincoln's birthday with activities for children in the past. Eric suggested something that tied the courthouse to children, like an Advent calendar, which could be moved from place to place.

Barb O-G suggested that Adele convene a meeting of the four or five educators on the committee to discuss the possibilities of programming for grade-school children. She will send the email addresses to Adele.

- Barb asked if we had a date for the next Inside Out. Allyson didn't know. Barb O-G said she's email Perry.

B. Brochure

- Barb O-G distributed the brochures. They will go to Museum of the Grand Prairie, the Champaign County Historical Archives, the Illinois History and Lincoln Collections, the Champaign County Board, Barb Oehlschlaeger-Garvey, and Barb Wysocki. A few additional ones will be left over.

C. CCMN Report

- No report at this meeting as Barb Wysocki is absent.

D. 2026 planning:

- Three activities for next year are: celebrating the courthouse, the Looking for Lincoln sign, and supporting the Underground Railroad Exhibit at the Urbana Free Library.
- The Courthouse celebration will be discussed in more depth at the October meeting. Barb O-G thinks the courthouse staff should be included and would like to do some sort of exhibit as well. It is probable that Barb Wysocki is more interested in an event. Kay Grabow asked about the space in the Bennett building. Eric described the space. Kay suggested that there may be an opportunity at the Bennett building for exhibit space. Eric said that at the moment there is no facilities director, so it would be difficult to propose something now.

Eric left the meeting at 5:10 p.m.

E. Archives Bazaar

Archives Bazaar is on September 20. Last year we took the Kansas-Nebraska Act banner and some railroad content to the Bazaar last year. The theme this year is *Bizarre Bazaar*. Barb O-G will provide content and Barb W will be there. Kay Grabow agreed to be at the bazaar, the hours are 1 to 4 pm.

F. Contacting Taylor Studios

Barb O-G hopes to contact Taylor before the next meeting. She'll set up a meeting and see if there is anyone available.

7. New Business

A. Website-There are some costs involved in a website. We will have to pay for a domain name, and then we will also have to pay for webhosting. These are recurring costs which we haven't had before. We may be able to host content on the county server; Eric will have to find out.

8. Adjournment: Barb adjourned the meeting.

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

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

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