

Report of the Gilbert 125 Group Meeting

Convened at 7 pm on September 23, 2003

Gilbert City Hall; Gilbert, Iowa

Nine persons gathered at City Hall at 7 pm on Tuesday, September 23, for the fifth meeting of the G125 group that is planning a celebration for Gilbert's 125th anniversary on July 30-31, 2004. To date there are a total of 18 people who have participated in the planning meetings. Those who attended the September meeting were Mary Dodds, Helen Gunderson, Lisa Heddens, Lynn Henn, Jake Kroehling, Joy Leister, Jon Popp, Lisa Sporrer, and Cindy Wirth. Other planners include: Mike Adams, Margot Eness, Bob Jaquis, Kurt Jensen, Danielle Kroehling, Gary Selof, Gwen Thompson, Randy Thompson, and Greg Wirth. To open the meeting, each person introduced him or herself.

G125 Relationship with the City of Gilbert

The discussion moved to an update of the city council's position in relation to supporting the project. Lynn Henn is a city council member who attended two G125 meetings last spring. Jon Popp is also a city council member; however, this was his first time at a G125 meeting. Lynn reported that the Gilbert's parks and recreation commission was taking the lead in the matter. The group then asked Joy Leister, the new parks and rec chairperson, to report on the commission's progress.

Joy is an active member of the G125 group and had agreed at its July 16 meeting to convene the inactive parks and rec commission and encourage it to discuss the potential of being a link between the G125 group and the city. The commission met once in August and again in September to discuss the matter. Joy said that the parks and rec members were unanimously excited about the G125 event and willing for the commission to be the liaison to the G125 group and use some of its budgeted city funds to support the celebration. The G125 group recognized that the commission's support was important for the G125 group being able to link to the city and move forward.

Leadership for the G125 Group

The G125 group had been aware that the mayor and some city council members would like it to select a chairperson. Joy reported that the parks and rec commission also felt it would be helpful for the G125 group to select a chairperson. Helen Gunderson, who has been convening the G125 group, had sent a letter to G125 members and other interested persons in preparation for the meeting and listed various potential leadership configurations. One likely candidate to be a leader for the group, Cindy Wirth, mentioned that Gilbert Mayor Bob Jaquis had talked to her in recent days and proposed that he and Cindy be co-chairpersons for the G125 celebration. Cindy had told the mayor she would sleep on the idea and wait to make up her mind.

There was some discussion to clarify what the mayor's and Cindy's respective roles would be and discern if the group approved of their being the co-chairs. Cindy explained that she would actually be the more active chairperson in terms of doing the organizational work while the mayor would be someone she could turn to for advice and that he could navigate G125 business through the city council. She also said that the mayor had suggested that some of the work could be done via executive committee meetings in which not all of the G125 members or other event organizers would have to be present. For the record, the mayor attended the first meeting of the G125 group that was held on March 6 but has not been at subsequent meetings.

Mary Dodds asked Cindy if she was willing to accept the mayor's offer to be co-chairs. Cindy voiced some reservations, including the fact that she had no experience in organizing a major celebration. However, she knew that leadership was a key issue for the success of the celebration and was willing to step forward and do the job, knowing she had the support of the G125 members, mayor, and city council as evidenced by the presence of council members Lynn Henn and Jon Popp. There was a general consensus among the group that the mayor and Cindy be authorized to be co-chairs for the celebration.

Helen asked Lynn and Jon of the city council and Joy of the parks and rec commission whether Cindy should report to the parks and rec commission and have it carry requests to the city council or if Cindy should go directly to the city council to discuss G125 concerns. Lynn and Jon advised that Cindy report directly to the council.

Celebration Schedule

There was also a general consensus that the celebration will begin on Friday, July 30, with a meal, live music, and other festivities that evening. Jon Popp, who is also a member of the Lion's Club, said that his organization planned to host a pancake breakfast on Saturday from 7–11 am. There will also be a parade on Saturday morning and food, live music, and various other activities for adults and youth during the day, including cemetery walks and other events offered by the school history club. The G125 celebration would officially end at 5:00 pm, giving high school alumni a chance to get to their reunion banquet at the Starlite restaurant in Ames. No G125 activities will be planned for Sunday; however, the local churches may choose ways to tie their Sunday morning worship services and other activities in with the anniversary theme and accommodate visitors who are home for the G125 celebration and the Gilbert high school all-class reunion.

Logo for Event

Lisa Heddens, who was attending her first G125 meeting, suggested that the group have a logo for the event. Helen told about discussions she had held with Jo Meyers Walker and Lisa Sporrer regarding artwork for the event. Jo and Lisa have obtained the brick bank building on Main Street. Jo will have her artist's studio in the back half of the building, and Lisa will have a coffee shop in the front half. Both women are very community minded and excited about being involved in making the G125 celebration a success.

Helen explained that Jo would be willing to create a design for the event and that Jo and Lisa were willing to market T-shirts with the design. She further explained how this would save the group the energy of having to recruit artists, solicit designs, judge among them, pay the artists fairly, and be involved in procuring and marketing the T-shirts. Lisa, who was also attending her first G125 meeting, then told some about what Jo and she had in mind for their business and for the logo. The design would consist of images from historical photos reproduced in a colorful, spunky motif. There was a general consensus among the group to accept Jo and Lisa's offer to create and market T-shirts and to authorize them to move ahead. Lisa said that Jo would create a couple of designs and bring them to the group for a final decision. The group could also use the design in public relations materials for the celebration. Lynn Henn also reminded the group that it could sell G125 buttons as a fund- raising activity.

Iowa Events Center Project

Helen reported that Nancy Peterson, who is the advisor for the school history club, had talked at a recent city council meeting about a unique project that the Iowa Events Center is sponsoring. The center has asked each school district and its community to work collaboratively to create an interactive display about their area that could be viewed on computers at its Hall of Pride. Apparently, a visitor to the center could walk up to a computer kiosk, type in the name of Gilbert, and learn about its history and current school and community life. Rhonda Ostrem is the coordinator for the Gilbert project, and Helen is willing to work with her.

School History Club Project

Helen said she had received an email from Nancy in followup to the last G125 meeting. As a reminder, Nancy had met with the G125 group and explained some projects that the school's history club intends to

undertake. The club members will be doing archeological digs at two abandoned pioneer towns, Bloomington and Zenorville. They will also be conducting cemetery walks, which are a genre of drama in the local cemetery. In her letter, Nancy said that the history club has 94 members and that half of them are interested in participating in history projects for the G125 celebration. Nancy also wondered about bus arrangements to take visitors to the various sites. Helen said that one possibility would be to have horses and wagons to escort people to the Gilbert cemetery. She knew of a draft horse club from the Clarion area that might be helpful. Jake Kroehling also thought he knew of some draft horse owners the Napier area and Hamilton County who could be helpful.

Fire Department Meal

Lisa Heddens is on the board of the fire department and says it would like to host a meal for the G125 celebration. However, the department has not yet decided just what kind of meal it would like to do. She said she would discuss the matter with the board at its next meeting.

Dignitaries and Post Marks

Lisa Heddens is also the state representative from our area and will invite various dignitaries to the G125 celebration. Lisa also said that she could arrange for a proclamation by the state government to declare a Gilbert day. Also, the local postmaster has said that she could arrange with the postal service to have a special stamp to cancel letters going out of Gilbert on July 31.

More about Leadership

The group talked about other leadership roles within the group, and some of the members agreed to be coordinators for various aspects of the celebration. The group also talked about the need to reach out to groups such as Beta Sigma Phi and various individuals to see if they would be willing to take on some coordinator roles.

Chairpersons: Cindy Wirth and Bob Jaquis

Treasurer: Kurt Jensen

Secretary: (Cindy will ask Danielle Kroehling)

Arts and culture coordinators: Joy Leister and Lisa Sporrer

Public relations coordinators: Danielle Kroehling and Helen Gunderson

Advisor for school history club projects: Nancy Peterson

Liaisons to GHS reunion committee: Mary Dodds, Margot Enness, and Gwen Thompson

Liaison to the fire department: Lisa Heddens

Liaison for inviting dignitaries: Lisa Heddens

Meal coordinators:

Parade coordinators:

Youth activities coordinators:

Arts and Culture

Helen suggested that arts and culture coordinators would need to proceed in a timely fashion in order to line up live music for the celebration. There was discussion regarding whether the G125 group as a whole should discuss music and envision what it wanted for the event, then have the coordinators implement those ideas, or if the coordinators should initiate the planning process. There was a general consensus among the group that the coordinators be authorized to meet separately from the G125 group, create a vision of what they would like for music for the celebration, conduct some research, prepare a plan, create a budget, and bring a preliminary proposal back to the entire group.

Next Meetings

Lisa Heddens noted that it would be important for the group to set a time-line, working backward from the celebration date. Although no time-line was developed at the meeting, the group concurred that it was an important thing to do. The group also realized that nine months was not a very long time to plan the event. Therefore, it decided to meet twice in October, considering that it would be lucky to meet once in November, and that it had previously agreed to not meet in December. So the group decided on the following dates:

Thursday, October 16
Tuesday, October 28
Thursday, November 13

The group decided to meet at 7:00 pm; however, there is the possibility that the time will shift to 7:30 pm to accommodate the work and family schedules of some of the members.

Organizational Housekeeping Details

Helen suggested that it would be wise for G125 group to ask the city council to pass a motion officially defining the city's support for the work of the G125 group rather than having a simple word of mouth agreement. Helen also suggested that even though the G125 group was not an official government organization that it should try to keep communications open by posting agendas and preparing reports of meetings.¹ Cindy said she would ask Danielle Kroehling if she would be willing to be the secretary for the group.

The meeting adjourned.

Report prepared by Helen D. Gunderson, meeting convener.

1 Note: if the G125 group works under the auspices of the city, even if informally, there may be specific language in the city or state municipal code that dictates rules for agendas and minutes.