The Hiawatha History Committee met at the Hiawatha City Hall in Conference Room D with Edie Wheeler as Chair calling the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M. Members present: Pat Semelroth, Bev Daws, Sandy Brewer, Dick Larson, Don Earll and Jerry Seifried. Guests: Sister Betty and Sister Joanne from Prairiewoods.

The History Committee interviewed Sister Betty and Sister Joanne from Prairiewoods before the business meeting. Highlights of the interview include the following information:

* Prairiewoods derives from the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in La Crosse, Wisconsin.
* The Louis Trzil family owned the land where Prairiewoods is located now, Franciscian Sisters bought the property in 1961-1962.
* The Prairiewoods land has 72 acres with 27 being tillable, the rest is wooded area.
* Prairiewoods is subsidized by religious community in La Crosse and they charge for rental of retreat rooms and conference rooms.
* 20 acres of the Prairiewoods land was sold to Discovery Living.
* When Prairiewoods first got the land Boyson Road was a trail called Rabbit Run.
* Prairiewoods opened in 1996.
* The purpose of opening Prairiewoods was for people to be able to enjoy nature and retreats.
* Prairiewoods believes in keeping natural spaces on the earth because being in nature is very healing.
* The retreats are connected to taking care of the earth.
* Prairiewoods does a lot of recycling and composting.
* Prairie burns are done every 3 years.
* Prairiewoods has over 100 solar panels that provide about 45% of the energy for the main building. I-Renew helped with the solar panels and they gave training on how to install.
* Trees Forever showed prairiewoods how to plant trees.
* Prairiewoods has a hoop house where they can start plants early for the garden. They partner with the food bank to take care of the garden and half of the food goes to the food bank.
* The Prairiewoods building was constructed where it is least evasive to the trees.
* The area across from Dry Creek was left as a natural habitat.
* Prairiewoods is Leed certified as an educational building.
* Prairiewoods can house 35 people and they have two straw bail hermitages used for longer stays where people can make their own meals.
* Prairiewoods offers services such as massage therapy, spiritual direction and ecological programs.
* Prairiewoods has a labyrinth in the woods made out of sand and brick.
* Prairiewoods has a cosmic walk with signs on the trail that tells a story of 13 billion years.
* Prairiewoods has 17 full-time staff and three sisters live in residence on the property.
* July 2016 marks the 20 year anniversary for Prairiewoods.
* Prairiewoods will be holding the native flute festival this year.

Business:

Jerry Seifried moved the approval of the agenda, seconded by Pat Semelroth. Motion carried. Dick Larson moved the approval of the March 9, 2015 meeting minutes, seconded by Jerry Seifried. Motion carried*.*

**Update on Interviews**

Upcoming interviews:

* Zion Church and St. Elizabeth Church
* Brian Fanton from the Coin Shop.
* Buffalo Cemetery and Shiloh Cemetery

Edie Wheeler mentioned Bev and Edie could do the interview about Hope Church because they know the history.

**Hiawatha Insight Articles**

* June newsletter – oil pull tractor
* July newsletter – Prairiewoods land

**Special Presentation by Dick Larson**

Dick Larson shared photos from his dad’s army unit at the end of World War I. Everyone enjoyed the presentation and the pictures shared by Dick.

The next History Committee meeting is June 8, 2015 at 1:30 p.m.

Jerry Seifried moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:50 p.m., seconded by Pat Semelroth. Motion carried.

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Edie Wheeler, Chair