



Ed Bemis House Gets a 'New Lease on Life'

A year ago Western Welcome Week Executive Director Cindy Hathaway read the Historic Littleton newsletter which outlined the plight of the neglected Edwin Bemis House and she decided to take action.

After getting the green light from her board of directors, Hathaway called the city of Littleton and talked with Deputy City Manager Phil Cortese and then Mayor John Ostermiller.

Her idea was for the City of Littleton to lease the house to Western Welcome Week Inc., the non-profit organization which runs Littleton's annual WWW celebration in August.

In exchange, WWW would restore the home and return it to a community use. "Our goal is to get it back the way it was," says Hathaway, using volunteer help and donated ser-

vices.

After hours of talks, contract negotiations, and action by the Littleton City Council, the Ed Bemis House now has a "new lease on life," with the signing of a lease allowing WWW to rent the house for 15 years as its headquarters. Hathaway has already moved her office into the house, which has been thoroughly cleaned.

The lease includes a clause that Historic Littleton Inc. will be allowed to use Bemis House as its mailing address and for record storage and meetings.

The HLI board recently hired preservation consultant Christy Fockler to survey the home and develop a

plan to restore the interior. The

Bemis House has been locally landmarked, so any exterior renovations have to be approved by the Historical Preservation Board. South Suburban Parks and Recreation will maintain the yard.

"Our first priority is to get the outside looking nice," Hathaway said. "Some of the trees are decayed and
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HLI Board members discuss the restoration of the neglected Ed Bemis



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will have to be removed. We will do some more planting.”

Getting the interior walls patched and painted, refinishing the trim boards, and replacing the roof are other priorities.

The WWW board and volunteers have already spent a work-day cleaning up the yard. Hathaway said that a dozen neighbors came by to see what was going on. “They are so glad to see us moving in,” she said.

When Ed Bemis died in 1978, his will stipulated that his home be incorporated as part of Sterne Park. Because the City of Littleton

and South Suburban weren’t able to decide on an appropriate use for the home, the house was rented to a caretaker of the park and his family for over 20 years.

The City of Littleton put out an official Request for Proposals for the Renovation and Use of Bemis House in 2004, but no one responded until Hathaway read about it in the HLI newsletter.

“It all started with your newsletter,” she said.

The Edwin Bemis House has been incorporated into the master plan for Sterne Park. It is not open to the public at this time.



Leaded glass doors in Bemis House are missing panes and boarded up.

Bemis House Open for Viewing May 13

The Edwin Bemis house, located at 5890 S. Bemis Street, will be open for public viewing on Saturday, May 13 from 3-5 p.m.

Historic Littleton Inc. is sponsoring an open house to raise funds for the restoration of the home. This is a chance to view the residence before it

is renovated. Refreshments will be served.

Cost for the tour of the Bemis house and yard will be \$10 per person or \$15 per couple. The cost for HLI members is \$8 per person or \$12 per couple. Children under 12 are \$2.50.

All the money raised

from the open house will be used to help fund restoration of the home.

This event is part of National Historic Preservation Month.

The Historic Littleton Inc. newsletter is published quarterly for members of HLI as part of their membership contribution. Send comments to P.O. Box 1004, Littleton, 80160-1004.

The Board of Directors of Historic Littleton Inc. includes:

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Historic Littleton Inc. is dedicated to preserving the historical and architectural heritage of the greater Littleton area through advocacy and education.

HLI CALENDAR

May 13—Ed Bemis House Open House, 3—5 p.m.

September 6—Annual Meeting and Lecture at Littleton Historical Museum, 7 p.m.

(More information will be in the next newsletter.)

It's Time to Renew Your Historic Littleton Inc. Membership for 2006!

Since October, 2000, Historic Littleton Inc. has been active in fostering a positive spirit towards historic preservation in Littleton. Historic Littleton members receive a periodic newsletter, are invited to participate in special tours and activities, and are directly involved in promoting historic preservation in the greater Littleton area.

In 2006, HLI will move its office to the Edwin Bemis house at 5890 S. Bemis Street. We look forward to working together with Western Welcome Week, Inc. to help restore the home of Edwin Bemis to its former appearance. This partnership is especially appropriate since Ed Bemis was the founder of the Littleton Historical Society and brought legendary editor Houstoun Waring, who founded Western Welcome Week, to Littleton. Our annual meeting on Sept. 6 will explore the Littleton/Bemis connection.

We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events and thank you for your support!

Sincerely, The Board of Directors of Historic Littleton Inc.

Rebecca Kast, President; Joe Racine, Vice President; Sonya Ellingboe, Secretary; Ron Richards, Treasurer; and Directors Karen Arras, Jack Ballard, Charlie Carroll, Lorena Donohue, Barb Eaton, Vern

Members of Historic Littleton, Inc. need to renew their memberships for 2006.
Please send your \$25 membership fee to:

Historic Littleton Inc.
P.O. Box 1004
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I'd like to help with: Membership Committee
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