

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
January 2, 2021

The Historic Preservation Commission met via Zoom on Saturday, January 2, 2021 at 9:15 a.m. Members present on Zoom were Leah Rogers, Janet Budack, Donnie Moore, Suzette Astley, Duane Eash, Mary Evans, Grace Chamberlain, Ed Sauter, Angie Bauman Power, and Guy Booth. Also present were Scott Ladwig and from Cornell College, and Brian Latham from CWBR Architects.

Upon motion duly seconded, The Minutes of the meeting of December 16, 2020 were approved.

Scott Ladwig from Cornell and Brian Latham from CWBR Architects gave a presentation on renovations that will begin at College Hall on the Cornell campus. The major change to the exterior will be the adding of a ramp on the west entrance to the building, which will comply with ADA standards. There will be substantial change in the interior of the building, as a new HVAC system will be installed. There will also be updating of classrooms and bathroom areas. The total project costs are estimated to be \$3.5 Million. It is hoped the project will begin in March of this year and be completed by September. The architectural firm had a photo scan of College Hall, both the interior and exterior. It gives a unique view of the building as it exists at this time. It is possible that this photo scan can be made available to HPC so it can be part of our material on our website, and in our archives. It is the intent of the renovation to retain the historic nature of the building, but to blend in modern academic technology for the benefit of the students.

Under old business, Leah reported that Susan Hargus has found information regarding the plaques that were ordered for the downtown historic district. This information was sent to Caroline Kelly, as she would like to have a plaque for her home showing that it is now on the historic register. HPC will be willing to assist in getting the plaques ordered for any owners of buildings that have recently come onto the historic register.

Leah reported that Cornell College wants to withdraw from their participation in the audio tour project which was completed several years ago. This seems to be of financial concern to the college. Both CDG and HPC feel it is a valuable historic presentation for the community, and feel that Cornell's share of the financial cost can be picked up at this time by CDG and HPC. Ed Sauter moved and Guy Booth seconded a motion to pay up to \$250 from this year's budget to help replace the Cornell share of the expense. It was further discussed that the audio tour may be available online. This could be highlighted so people have greater access to it. Grace feels that there are other ways, including facebook, that can have this material available and perhaps at less expense. There are other IT approaches that could be tried.

Under new business, the Commission feels that it is important to update the timeline regarding the history of Mount Vernon. Dick Thomas has shepherded the timeline over the years, but it appears there has been no update since 2008. Each of the commissioners should consider events of the past twelve years that should be added to the timeline. This could include

new construction or other major events in the community. We should try to get these suggestions pulled together within the next month or so.

Leah and Mary both discussed what might be planned for the 175th anniversary of the town. It was suggested that we focus on using the cemetery project as an emphasis for the 175th anniversary. This will highlight an important history of the community and can serve as a project that will allow more information about the past residents of the city.

Leah indicated that our annual report will be due before too long and each member of the Commission should submit information regarding any training sessions that were attended during the past year. Leah also gave a report on an issue regarding the potential removal of a tree in the city parking at Sarah Richardson's house. Sarah is very concerned that the loss of a large maple tree could impact the recent designation of her house being placed on the national registry of historic places. Beyond that, the tree is important to the ambiance of the property and important because of the landscaping that has been completed by Sarah. Sarah and Guy Booth met with the city administrator and council person, Deb Herman to discuss the possibility of saving the tree, rather than having the city remove the tree. The city arborist and an arborist hired by Sarah will meet in hopes that the recent tree repair will show that the tree is viable.

Mary Evans indicated she received an email from a woman in Russia who threatened to sue our commission over the improper use of a photograph. The photograph is of a crowd scene at a Chalk the Walk celebration. Mary checked into this and found that this threat is something that happens on the internet nowadays and should be disregarded.

The next meeting of the Commission will be via Zoom on January 13 if there are any items that need to be addressed at that time.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary