

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
January 7, 2022

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall, and also via Zoom on Saturday, January 7, 2023 at 8:30 a.m. Commissioners present at City Hall were Suzette Astley, Wade Squiers, Mike Guerber, Duane Eash, Matt Ruff, Sherry Brayton, and Guy Booth. Attending via Zoom was Janet Budack. Guests at the meeting were Tom Wieseler, Mayor of Mount Vernon, and representatives of Poly Vinyl Roofing. Nathan Countryman from The Sun also was present via Zoom.

Mayor Tom Wieseler attending the meeting as he wanted to have an opportunity to visit with the Commission and show the support the City has for the work of the Commission. This may have been the first official visit to the Commission by a sitting Mayor.

Minutes of the December 14 meeting were approved.

The design review agenda item concerns a building at 100 1st St SE. The building is in the commercial district. The building has been purchased recently by the Raupp-Smith family. The building is known as the Sing-a-long building.

The application relates to the installation of a new roof by Poly Vinyl Roofing Company. It will be a white poly vinyl membrane coating that will be placed on the roof. The contractor gave a good history of the building. This was formerly known as the IE Building. A fire destroyed the third story of the building and it was removed. Evidently, the reconstruction did not adequately protect the building and there has been some deterioration. The old roof had substantial leaks along the walls. The building is being stabilized and the roof structure, where it meets the walls, will be greatly improved. There is also work on the roof on the lower level of the building. Everything will be completed so it is matching throughout the structure. The contractor gave a review of what additional work needs to be done. The south portion of the building had an addition on it. The addition was unstable and had to be removed. The removal of the additional buildings then exposed other structural damage in the main building. All of this will be repaired and restored as the project continues. There will be a separate application for building permit and approval in the future.

Upon motion made by Wade Squiers, seconded by Guy Booth, a certificate of no material effect was approved. The application has been designated for the roof and the repair work along the edges of the roof.

Under new business, there was discussion regarding the preparation of a list of historic Mount Vernon structures outside of established historic districts. This issue has arisen because of the interpretation of the demolition ordinance. To fall within the jurisdiction of HPC, there needs to be a list that describes the inventory of structures that may have historical significance. This is needed pursuant to Chapter 153.04(4) of the Demolition Ordinance. Suzette has researched the records of the Linn County Assessor's office to identify buildings that, because of their age, should be considered to potentially have historic significance. Therefore, an inventory of historic places in Mount Vernon has been prepared. There was some discussion as to any particular time period, but it was decided that the list of structures with potential historic

significance does not need to be defined only in terms of the age of the building. Guy Booth and Duane Eash moved that the Commission adopt a local inventory of historic places to be set forth in a document entitled "The Mount Vernon, Iowa Local Inventory of Historic Places," as may be amended. After further discussion, the motion carried.

Suzette will complete the listing of structures to be on the local inventory and this document will be provided to Mount Vernon City Hall and to the Linn County Building Dept.

There was also discussion regarding the form that is used as an application for the demolition permit. Suzette has prepared a form and it was discussed. Upon motion made and carried, Suzette will present the application form to the City of Mount Vernon and recommend its adoption as part of the permitting process.

The Commission reviewed a document that has been put together by Suzette as a result of our discussion on the use of substitute, non-historic materials in the historic districts. This has arisen because of concern about the use of vinyl/PVC materials that do not resemble historic materials, and because these substitute non-historic materials may cause damage to other older, natural materials. It was decided that the adoption of a statement regarding the use of substitute materials in historic districts should be approved, and that the information be disseminated. Suzette will check with West to see if this statement can be published in the next historic preservation newsletter that is sent out.

A final discussion regarding new features in historic districts related to the use of solar panels. A statement has been prepared by Suzette to describe the Commission's position on the type of material used and the placement of solar panels to structures in the historic district. The intent of the Commission is to have solar panels be available to historic properties, but to have the least visual impact as possible. This would require unobtrusive panels and material that is used to install the panels. The statement regarding the installation of solar panels met the approval of the Commission. Upon motion by Matt Ruff and seconded by Wade Squiers, the solar panels statement was approved.

Suzette raised a question regarding the possibility of having additional historic preservation workshops starting this spring. One suggestion would be for a historic gardening workshop. We could use a master gardener to explain and promote the gardening that would be typical of the time periods of our historic districts. It was also discussed that a workshop on historic painting would be timely. Duane Eash and Wade Squiers will work on developing a program that could be presented. Each of these programs would be open to other historic preservation groups and would count toward the continuing education requirements of the Historic Preservation Commission. Suzette indicated that the Preserve Iowa Summit will be held June 1st through 3rd in Sioux City, Iowa. Persons who have attended in the past have felt they are extremely interesting and provide great information. The Commission is willing to pay the registration fee, and help toward the expenses if any members are interested in attending.

Suzette also announced that we are moving ahead to get the kiosk replaced. There is a grant proposal that has been submitted on behalf of Mount Vernon, Lisbon and Cedar Rapids to help defray the expenses of the repair work. Our Commission is contributing toward the repair, along with the City. The grant proposal would provide approximately \$1,500 to the Mount Vernon part of the project.

Shane Amundsen, who resides in the Ash Park Historic District attended a recent City Council meeting and was quite negative in his comments regarding the Mount Vernon Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Amundsen owns a vacant lot that he had intended to sell to Eric Gutschmidt as noted in the Minutes from the meeting of December 3. Suzette attended the City Council meeting and suggested Mr. Amundsen did make some inaccurate statements about the responsibilities of the Commission, and especially was able to correct the observation that the Commission was opposed to the proposed new construction presented by Mr. Gutschmidt. A formal application and building permit with required detail had not been presented, therefore the Commission was not able to act on the proposal.

Suzette announced that Grace Chamberlin Rowray has submitted her resignation from the Commission. Grace has been extremely busy, not only with her full-time employment at Cornell, but in raising two very young children. The Commission greatly appreciates the help that Grace has provided, especially in the area of social media and archive development. We hope she will be able to rejoin the Commission in the future as her time constraints change.

Upon motion made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary