

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
October 7, 2023

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall on Saturday, October 7, 2023 at 8:30 a.m. Commissioners present at City Hall were Sherry Brayton, Mike Guerber, Suzette Astley, Wade Squiers, Donnie Moore, and Guy Booth. Edith Dawson was present via Zoom. Guests included Mike Schulte and Jen Juhl. Also present was Nathan Countryman from the Mount Vernon Sun.

Minutes of the meeting of the August 30, 2023 meeting were approved.

There are two design review items on the agenda. The first design review is presented by Jen Juhl, who is opening a bakery in the historic district. The bakery is known as the White Tree Bakery. The design review request is to approve the signage for the building. The proposed sign is white letters showing the name of the bakery. She will also be using white vinyl letters that will be attached to the windows identifying the bakery. The letters conform to the Mount Vernon Sign Ordinance. Upon motion made by Wade Squiers, seconded by Sherry Brayton, a certificate of appropriateness was approved.

The second design review comes from Chameleons. The new owner, Matt Gunderson, has hired Nesper Sign Company to design new signage for the restaurant. Mike Schulte of Nesper Signs was present on behalf of the owner. They propose a projection sign that is at the front of the building identifying the business. There is also a sign on the front door, which identifies the business, as well as the hours of operation. Finally, there is a sign that will be attached to the building that gives notice of patio seating in the back. This sign will be attached to the building, so it must be attached in the mortar, rather than the bricks. Guy Booth made a motion for approval of a certificate of appropriateness. This was seconded by Wade Squiers. The motion carried.

Sue gave a report on the City Council meeting that she, Guy and Duane attended on October 2. The purpose of our place on the agenda was to request funding for a new design guideline booklet. It is anticipated that to produce a new booklet, it will be an expense of \$16,000. In order to get this project under way, we have proposed sending out a request for proposal to firms that do this type of work. The City Council indicated that they support what HPC is proposing, but a final decision can not be made until the budget review process begins in January, 2024. As the process begins, the Commission can send out the RFP so we can determine if a firm can be hired to complete the work. It was also decided to see if whoever is hired will be able to incorporate portions of our current design guideline book, which has a number of drawings that have been made by Ed Sauter, who prepared the first book. We will review the City Council Minutes to make sure we understand what the Council approved at the meeting. There was good support for the proposal.

The Commission had a discussion regarding providing notice to owners of property in the historic districts. Sue has prepared a brochure that can be sent to each property owner so they are more familiar with the benefit of being in the historic district and what responsibilities a person has regarding the use or repair of the property. There are a number of envelopes that need to be addressed and sent out and these will be done by the members of the Commission.

The Commission discussed the proposed revision of the application for a certificate of appropriateness. Sue has put in a lot of work drafting the document. It is in great form. There were two suggestions regarding change of language. Sue will incorporate these into the proposed new application and will then submit it to the City Council. Upon motion of Wade Squiers, seconded by Donnie Moore, the revised application form was approved.

Guy gave a brief report on the status of the Mount Vernon Cemetery project. He will follow up with the City to determine if they would be establishing a trust for the cemetery.

Sue indicates there have been several inquiries about material for the Commission's archives. Joe and Pam Burkhart, who live in Florida, called to say they have a number of glass negatives of pictures of Mount Vernon and the surrounding area. They want to donate the glass negatives to the Commission. However, they live in Florida and it would be expensive and perhaps dangerous to try to ship the negatives. It is believed one of their children will be in Florida and will be able to drive the negatives back so they can become part of our archives. Also, Sue has explored how we might be able to make sure they are preserved, and that the negatives can be printed so we have a paper copy of the photographs.

Bob Campagna, a highly-regarded photographer from Mount Vernon, has taken numerous photographs of the City through the course of his career. He is starting to sort through his collection and wants to donate pictures, photographs, and/or negatives to the Commission. This will be a two-year project for Bob.

Finally, Amy White, who prepared the script for the play, Treasurers, will be donating the script and her original notes to the Commission's archives. Edith Dawson volunteered to help put some of the photographs that are referred to on to the HPC website.

It was noted that the Lincoln Highway interpretive kiosk has now been put in place at the park that is at the foot of the Parker Truss Bridge on the west side of town. The parking area near the pumping station is a good place to be able to park and to read the information on the sign. A specific dedication of the kiosk is not planned, but we will put information on Facebook, and the Mount Vernon Sun will indicate that the kiosk is now in place. The kiosk was funded through Linn County, as many of these informational kiosks were damaged in the derecho. The question arose as to what should happen to the old kiosk sign. Because the new one contains the same information, there is probably no reason to try to preserve and put the old sign into storage. The Commission feels this is not a sign that would have historical significance so that it should be in the archives.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary