

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
March 17, 2021

The Historic Preservation Commission met via Zoom on Wednesday, March 17, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. Members present on Zoom were Leah Rogers, Mary Evans, Grace Chamberlain, Ed Sauter, Suzette Astley, Duane Eash, Janet Budack, Donnie Moore and Guy Booth. There were no guests present.

The Minutes of the meeting of March 6, 2021 were approved.

There were no design review requests on the agenda.

Under old business, Grace Chamberlain and Ed Sauter gave a report on their research into the audio tour of the historic districts, which has been in existence for several years. The Commission was concerned that the audio tour was seldom used, and seemed to have an inordinate expense for the amount of usage. Grace Chamberlain has worked with the company that provided the audio tour platform. This is Oncell. Grace learned that there were a number of features to the audio tour that have not been used. It was determined how the tour could be more accessible and more easily used by the public. The company also suggested providing increased awareness as to the availability of the tour, and suggested that the commission publish features about historic buildings and directions for access to the tour. Grace indicates the company can provide feedback metrics that will allow us to measure the usage of the tour. Grace indicates that with this additional information, Cornell College feels that the annual fee of \$500 for the college, for HPC, and for the City does seem reasonable. Upon motion made by Donnie Moore, seconded by Mary Evans, it was agreed that HPC will continue to contribute \$500 per year for participation in the audio tour platform. The motion also approves the sponsoring of ads 6 times per year at a cost of \$70 per ad to help educate the public about the audio tour that is available. The motion was approved.

Mary also gave a report on the walking tour organized by Linn County History Society which is scheduled for June 22 at approximately 5:00 p.m. The tour will start on the Cornell campus where Suzette Astley will be the leader. The tour will continue to Bracket House where Mrs. Stoner and Mrs. Driscoll will give a history of Bracket House. From there, the tour will travel to downtown Mount Vernon, where Ed Sauter and Janet Budack will lead the tour and provide a history of the community. We will have people dressed in period costume to help conduct the tour. Also, this will be a good time to show the projects that have been completed in the downtown area, and by various owners of properties and businesses.

Leah announced that she has notified the Mount Vernon City Council that there is an opening for a new commissioner. The City Council will post information about the opening.

Leah provided information to the Commission regarding her research to find in a company that is able to do a cemetery assessment. The Commission is committed to working on a preservation and maintenance project for the city cemetery. Leah has identified Mr. John Heider, owner of R.I.P., Ltd that has excellent background and experience in providing a review and assessment of cemeteries. His company also does maintenance and preservation work. He

has been recognized by many organizations, including the State of Iowa Association for Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries. Mr. Heider can do an assessment of the cemetery for an approximate cost of \$1,470. Leah reported that there are sufficient funds in the budget to cover the cost of this assessment, even if we split the payments into two fiscal years. Guy Booth suggested that the anticipated partnering with the American Legion Post should result in the Post helping with the cost of this assessment, and he will get information regarding the need for the assessment and for the sharing of costs to the Post. Upon motion by Janet Budack, seconded by Suzette Astley, it was determined that we move ahead to hire R.I.P., Ltd to do the cemetery assessment. The motion carried.

Mary Evans gave a report regarding plans for a 175th anniversary pageant in the year 2022. Joe Jennison and Amy White have indicated an interest in preparing the script for the pageant. Mary suggested that it would be appropriate to offer a stipend to Joe and Amy for the work they would be doing in preparing the scripts for the pageant. It was discussed to provide a stipend in the amount of \$1,000 to be shared by Joe and Amy. Because this pageant will not be presented until 2022, it was determined that one-half of the amount of the stipend can be taken from the current fiscal year budget and \$500 from next year's budget. A motion made by Suzette Astley, seconded by Ed Sauter was made to provide the stipend as mentioned above. The motion carried.

Under new business, Mary Evans indicated that because of personal commitments, she will need to step back from the work she has done, both as the coordinator of archives and the coordinator of the website. She described the duties of these positions to see which commission members may be interested in taking over the work that needs to be done. Duane Eash and Donnie Moore both indicated an interest in helping with the website. Janet Budack and Grace Chamberlain also will be providing assistance. These commissioners will also be able to help with the posting and labeling of materials on the website, and to use on our website technician to get the work completed. When the archives are ready to be moved to the new archive room, all of the members will be notified of the date so we can share the burden of transferring the archives from the basement to the new archive room located on the main floor of City Hall.

Finally, Mary has been instrumental in watching the budget of the Commission to make sure funds are available and in what amount. Leah volunteered to keep track of the bank account and the budget.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m. The next meeting will be April 3, 2021 at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary