

MINUTES  
OF  
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
March 5, 2022

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall, and via Zoom on Saturday, March 5, 2022. Commissioners present at City Hall were Suzette Astley, Mary Evans, Duane Eash, Donnie Moore and Guy Booth. Attending via Zoom were Janet Budack and Leah Rogers. Also attending via Zoom was Edith Dawson. Visitors at the meeting were Scott Ladwig, Jim Evans and Nathan Countryman.

The Minutes of the February 5, 2022 meeting were approved.

There were no design review items on the agenda.

Scott Ladwig attended the meeting and it was announced that he will be the liaison between the Commission and Cornell College. This should work well for both organizations, as Scott is head of the physical plant of the college and is involved in both short-term and long-term planning for the college facilities. Scott mentioned he looks forward to serving in this capacity, and will be open to questions, and some discussions whenever issues come up. Suzette welcomed him into this position and feels he is the right person to be dealing, both with the Commission, and the college and we look forward to that relationship.

Suzette reported that the Mount Vernon-Lisbon Community Development Group has determined that they will use this year's Heritage Days celebration in Mount Vernon as a birthday party for the community. This recognizes the 175 years of the city's history. The CDG has asked the Poet Lariat to prepare a poem commemorating the occasion. Joe feels it would be a good idea to have people think of important occasions in the history of the community that may be mentioned in the work that will be completed by the poet Lariat. If any commission members have ideas, please forward them to Joe. Also, if there are other people that should be getting notice of this project, they can contact either Joe Jennison directly, or give information to the Commission.

Susan Hargus has asked to have a leave of absence through the June, 2022 meeting. She is involved in an educational program that is time-consuming and will be completed at the end of her semester. The Commission approved the leave of absence.

Guy Booth reported that he is concerned about the information that the Department of Natural Resources for the state has decided to not make needed maintenance and repairs on the park ranger homes that exist in a number of the state parks. The Palisades-Kepler ranger's home may be in that list of properties that will no longer be available for housing the park ranger. Guy suggests that we encourage other Historic Preservation Commissions within the state, and individuals who have a special interest in the preservation of the history of the state to contact their local legislators, or officials of the DNR to see that funds are generated, not only to repair the buildings, but to also have a long-term program to maintain them and to preserve the historical significance of the buildings which were mostly constructed by the CCC Program during the great depression in the 1930's. The Commission feels that a letter should be sent to these various organizations.

Suzette indicates that she would like to see the educational forums that have been previously scheduled be rescheduled. During the pandemic, these have been cancelled. It was also suggested that we may try to organize a practical education session for homeowners to recognize and complete maintenance of historic buildings. Commission members should consider topics that could be explored at a seminar presented by the Commission.

Suzette also indicated that she had received communications from the person who is interested in purchasing the building on the southeast corner of downtown Mount Vernon that is occupied by the Sing-A-Long Café. The inquiry is about which portion of the building was included in the historic district. There may be more information in the near future about who will be purchasing the building and how it will be used.

Under old business, Suzette indicates that the new map of the Cornell Historic District has been completed. It has been submitted to the state for initial approval. This will be the first of several steps needed to have the new map for the update of the district.

Suzette reported that the annual certified local government report has been completed, except we still need to schedule a date for presentation to the City Council. Suzette will get this scheduled so the date of the report can be included in the CLG report. It was also reported that during the past year, there have been 15,997 views of the Historic Preservation homepage. People have found our website and searched our website through different platforms, which includes a substantial number coming through Facebook which Grace has set up. The number of contacts with the website continues to increase. Mary Evans has been so helpful in organizing and getting the assistance she needs to see that material is added to the website and is kept up to date.

There is also a question about having the Minutes of our meetings available on the website. If they are on the website, they should be searchable. We will continue to work on this so the topics discussed in commission meetings are available to the public.

Suzette indicates there are a couple of update issues. The picture boards that are at the First Street Community Center are missing two pictures, and there are several pictures that are placed in the wrong historic district. Sue is going to look into getting replacement pictures for the missing pictures, and see that all of the boards are accurate in their depiction of structures within the district. There is also a question about bringing the business genealogy report up to date. There have been a few changes in ownership of downtown properties, as well as changes in usage of properties. The genealogy history that has been completed recently is significant in depicting the history of the town, and it was felt we should continue to register changes for this genealogy. Suzette thinks it would be an interesting idea to have a brief history moment with each meeting. This could cover many different topics. She has asked if Guy would do the first history moment by giving information about the Albright/Ebersol house. We can do these history moments on our first of the month Saturday morning meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 am. The next meeting may be March 16 at 5:30 p.m. if needed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary