

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
March 6, 2021

The Historic Preservation Commission met via Zoom on Saturday, March 6, 2021 at 9:15 a.m. Members present on Zoom were Leah Rogers, Mary Evans, Grace Chamberlain, Susan Hargus, Ed Sauter, Suzette Astley, Duane Eash, Janet Budack, Donnie Moore and Guy Booth. There were no guests present.

The Minutes of the meeting of February 17, 2021 were approved.

Leah reported that we had our initial request for a demolition permit. A garage that was not located in a historic district suffered roof damage and a partial collapse due to the weight of snow. Leah reviewed the history of the property and determined the garage had been built in the 1960's and had been added on to after that. There were structural deficiencies and the weight of the snow on the roof caused the building to collapse. The owner of the property requested a demolition permit. Pursuant to the demolition ordinance, because the building was not of historic significance, and because of public safety concerns, a public hearing was not required for approval of the demolition ordinance. Leah communicated to the city that Historic Preservation Commission would approve the demolition permit. Upon motion made by Guy Booth, seconded by Suzette Astley, the action of HPC to approve the demolition permit was approved.

Under old business, the Cornell Report alumni magazine had an interesting article that included material from HPC. This included old photographs of the community. Mary also reported that the website continues to have a number of contacts. The City directory that has been added to the website has helped people identify houses and the history of the houses. We will also be adding the old maps in our archives to the website.

Suzette Astley reported on the terms of the commissioners on historic preservation. Over the years, because of people leaving the commission, the staggering of terms has gotten out of sync. Suzette presented information that six commissioners terms end in one year, four in another year, and two in a third year. There should be four terms expiring each year. We will attempt to reset the terms so there will be consistency in the turnover. First, it was determined that Peter Ault has decided to no longer participate as a member of the Commission. Upon motion made by Suzette Astley, seconded by Duane Eash, the seat held by Peter Ault has been declared vacant. The motion passed unanimously. The City Council will be advised of the opening.

It was determined that the person who will fulfill the vacant position term will run until 2022. Also, Donnie Moore's term will run to 2022. Guy Booth indicated that his term expires in 2021 and is willing to have his new term be appointed for one year. By making these adjustments, we will then have four commission seats terminate each year. Upon motion made by Suzette Astley, seconded by Ed Sauter, the motion to readjust the terms of members was approved. This information shall be forwarded to City Council so they are able to confirm the adjustment to the terms of members.

Under new business, Ed Sauter indicates he is serving on a committee to deal with affordable housing in the community. One concept that is being pursued is to allow accessory dwelling units to be placed on lots where there already is a residential unit. This information has come from the American Planning Association. This would allow for a limited size dwelling unit to be placed on a residential lot. Currently, a second residential unit is not allowed under Mount Vernon zoning ordinances. Ed indicates there is a lot of work to be done to determine rules and regulations regarding this type of accessory unit. City zoning ordinances will need to be changed. Ed will want to have the regulations be established so any accessory buildings will fit within the concept of historic districts that are already established. This concept would mean these small structures would be available for one or two person occupancy.

Grace Chamberlain and Ed Sauter indicate they are working with Deanne Rexroat from Cornell and Joe Jennison from CDG on the project to update and change the audio tour system that is in existence. They would like to determine what will be the most efficient way to have the audio tours available to the public. Ed indicates there will also need to be more publicity so people are encouraged to use the audio tours. Ed and Grace will keep us informed as to what changes are going to be made, and how the costs of the program can be monitored.

Leah indicates that there is no other business for today's meeting. She will notify the commission if a March 17, 2021 meeting will be necessary.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary