

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
April 12, 2023

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall on Wednesday, April 12, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. Commissioners present at City Hall were Sherry Brayton, Mike Guerber, Suzette Astley, Matt Ruff, Duane Eash, and Guy Booth. Edith Dawson was also present. A guest at the meeting was Isaac Weddington.

Minutes of the meeting of April 1, 2023 were amended to show a corrected street address, and were thereafter approved.

The first item of business related to the design review request of Shane Amundson, who resides at 724 5th Ave. NW, Mount Vernon. This property is in the Ash Park Historic District. The Commission has had an application from Mr. Amundson for a certificate of appropriateness that dates back to January 24, 2023. The application was reviewed at the meeting of the Commission on February 4, 2023. No one on behalf of the applicant appeared at the meeting. After review of the application, the Commission, pursuant to motion duly seconded and carried, deferred any action on the application until Mr. Amundson provided additional information that would assist the Commission in their consideration of the application. Because the Commission had some questions about the application, the Commission requested the applicant to provide additional information for review by the Commission before a final review of the application. Since the February 4, 2023 meeting, the Commission has had meetings on March 4, March 15, April 1 and this meeting on April 12. This application was placed on each of the agendas so we could act if the requested information was provided. Mr. Amundson has failed to provide any additional information that could assist the Commission in acting on the Application for a certificate of appropriateness. Neither Mr. Amundson, nor anyone on his behalf has appeared at any meeting or has submitted any additional information to assist the Commission in making a decision on the application.

Suzette Astley reported that at a recent City Council meeting, the City Council instructed the Commission to act on the Amundson application on or before the City Council meeting scheduled for April 17, 2023. Because the applicant has made no effort to communicate with the Commission to provide the additional information that has been requested, or to have someone appear on his behalf, the Commission feels that it is unable to approve either a certificate of appropriateness or a certificate of no material effect. The Commission has the right to request additional information pursuant to Mount Vernon City Ordinances, specifically Chapter 165, Article 12, Section 1.307(3), but because of the failure of response from the applicant, there is no additional information that has been provided to assist the Commission. Upon motion of Guy Booth, seconded by Mike Guerber, a resolution denying the application for a certificate of appropriateness was passed unanimously. The Commission shall provide notice to Mr. Amundson and to the City Clerk of the denial of his application. It should further be noted that there has been no approved building permit issued to accompany the application for a certificate of appropriateness. Mr. Amundson will be notified of the denial of his application, and will be notified of his right to appeal the action of the Commission. The Commission does encourage the applicant to file a new application for certificate of appropriateness and to provide sufficient information that the Commission can knowingly act upon the application.

The second design review issue for the meeting comes from Isaac Weddington, who resides at 712 6th Ave. NW. This residence is in the Ash Park Historic District. Mr. and Mrs. Weddington had prepared an application for a certificate of appropriateness for a number of windows in their residence that needed either repair or replacement. The application for approval from the building department was also filed. For any unknown reason, this material did not get returned to the City and/or returned to Historic Preservation, so the building permit was not approved, nor was the application for a certificate of appropriateness presented and approved. However, the work that was to be done was initiated by the contractor, and is substantially complete. Mr. Weddington gave a presentation regarding the needs for the window restoration. He had information regarding the manufacturer of the windows, the cost of the windows, the superior insulating quality of the windows and the placement of the windows. The Commission was impressed with the amount of information given to the Commission. However, because the windows are already installed, the Commission has decided that an application at this point is moot. Therefore, the Commission will notify the City building and zoning administrator that because of the confusion during the application process, it would be very detrimental to deny what has already been installed. The windows do not have an adverse effect on the appearance of the house. Mr. Weddington was able to present a substantial amount of information regarding how he selected the windows that needed to be replaced and how he was able to repair and retain many of the old windows. Upon motion made by Guy Booth, seconded by Mike Guberber, a certificate of no material effect was approved.

Suzette gave a report regarding the ongoing renovation and rehabilitation of the Visitor's Center. The Commission has been considering filing an application for a grant from the historic resource development program sponsored by the state of Iowa office of historic preservation. This grant will provide funding for the ongoing repair and maintenance of the Visitor's Center. The Commission discussed what portion of the rehabilitation can be provided by the Commission as an in-kind contribution to the project. Suzette will complete the application for the grant, setting out in detail what in-kind work will be provided by the Commission and by the City, and what work will need to be hired. Suzette will need to file the grant application on or before May 1, 2023. In conjunction with this project, it was discussed whether the Commission can be responsible for the cleaning of the exterior of the building as an in-kind contribution for the grant. It is decided that the Commission will look into what is needed for this cleaning and will most likely agree to provide labor and material for the cleaning of the exterior of the building.

Suzette reported that the Commission will be meeting in the future to develop a document that discusses appropriate materials to be used in maintenance and/or rehabilitation of historic buildings. This discussion will take place in future Commission meetings. The discussion may also develop a document on the pros and cons of some modern materials, such as vinyl.

The Commission was reminded that the workshop entitled "Old Time Iowa Gardens" will be held April 15 at 10:00 a.m. at the Buresh Center. The program provider has great knowledge of Iowa's historic gardens.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary