

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
May 14, 2022

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall, and via Zoom on Saturday, May 14, 2022. Commissioners present at City Hall were Suzette Astley, Janet Budack, Mary Evans, Donnie Moore, Guy Booth and Michael Guerber. Leah Rogers was present via Zoom. Also present at the meeting was Edith Dawson.

The Minutes of the April 13, 2022 meeting were approved.

The first design review request is from Tom and Colleen Reding for two signs entitled “Antiques” to be attached to their building at 113 1st St. NW, Mount Vernon. Mr. Reding was at our previous meeting for a preview of the plans. The signs have now been approved by the City of Mount Vernon. Upon Motion made by Janet Budack, seconded by Leah Rogers, a Certificate of Appropriateness has been approved.

The second design review request comes from the owner of property at 101 1st St. NE, which is in the Mount Vernon Business District. The owner, G Bank Health, LLC submitted a picture of a proposed door for the front entrance to the building which is now occupied as a pharmacy.

There were a number of questions regarding the proposed door and door frame that is being requested. Because the owner, or a representative of the owner was not present, it was decided to delay final consideration of the request until there is additional information regarding alternatives to the proposed door. The Commission did suggest a preference for a wooden door, as opposed to a fiberglass or other material door. The Commission would like to discuss alternatives with the owner, and will encourage participation at the next meeting.

Suzette indicated that the amendment to the Cornell Historic District is now ready to be reviewed by SNRC at their meeting in Des Moines on June 10, 2022. The application for approval of the amendment is scheduled to be heard at 10:45 on that date. The meeting will be a virtual meeting. Duane Eash volunteered to be available to participate in the meeting. There will not need to be a presentation by our commission, but Jennifer Price, who has prepared the paperwork for the amendment will be present for the hearing. Suzette indicates that we have reviewed the proposed amendment and have given notice to all property owners of the amendment. A motion was made by Guy Booth, seconded by Leah Rogers to approve the amendment to the Cornell College Historic District. The motion carried. Special recognition should be given to Leah, Duane and Suzette for the work they did to get the paperwork for the amendment put together under the direction of Jennifer Price.

It was announced that The Sun newspaper is in the process of getting rid of a number of old photos and other documents. The Sun has asked if the Commission is interested in receiving some or all of the documents. Mary and Janet have volunteered to review and to inventory the documents that are available from The Sun and to determine which of them should be added to our archives. Mary and Janet will make arrangements with The Sun to have access to the documents.

Mary Evans has presented information that is important to our archives and the acceptance of new material to the archives. She has presented a collecting plan for Mount Vernon HPC. This sets out our mission statement and what we are able to receive as part of retaining information about the history of Mount Vernon, and being able to hold this information in our archives. This is an important statement that will help the Commission determine what should come into the collection and what standards are used to determine what items should be or should not be accepted and retained. Also, Mary has presented a proposal for the actual deeding of documents to the Commission. There were a couple of suggestions for additional language. Mary will do these revisions and present the documents for final approval by the Commission at the next meeting. Leah made an important point that as Historic Preservation Commission, we are a CLG, or Governmental organization. We are not an historical society. Consequently, our work is subject to all of the rules and regulations and statutes that relate to a governmental body, as opposed to a non-profit and otherwise unsupervised historic preservation society.

Janet Budack announced that we are putting together a tribute to Richard Thomas. Dick was a founding organizer for Mount Vernon HPC. Dick has been very involved in historic preservation and has served on the state historic preservation board. He initiated the procedure to have the Cornell campus to be certified as a historic district, and was instrumental in the establishment of the Mount Vernon Commission as a CLG. Dick is currently residing at Cottage Grove. Guy, Ed, Mary and Janet will meet with Dick on May 23 to present him a certificate of appreciation for the work he has done.

Suzette indicates that Cornell has employed a grant writer whose name is Lori Scovil. Lori has reached out to the Commission to give the Commission an idea of her background in historic preservation. We look forward to working with her and seeking her guidance on future projects where grant writing will be important in determining the success of the project.

The Commission wants to recognize the work of Leah Rogers, not only for the Commission, but by the honor she has receive as a Life Time Achievement Award from the State Historical Society of Iowa. . This recognizes Leah's important contribution to many archaeological searches to determine the history of numerous locations throughout the state of Iowa. This is an annual award recognizing the person who has made substantial contributions to the work of historic preservation in the state of Iowa.

Under old business, Duane, Donnie and Suzette all talked about the experience they had at the Camp workshop. All learned about the depth of information available through various organizations to help historic preservation.

Mary Evans indicates that she has arranged transportation for Commission members for the Heritage Days Parade. She indicates she has contracted to have a person with a 1923 Dodge Brothers automobile to take some of the "older" members of the Commission on the parade route. Mary will find other suitable transportation if other members of the Commission want to be in the parade.

Mary also reported that the walking tour that has been canceled twice because of weather issues is now scheduled for September 15 at 5:30 p.m. This walking tour is sponsored by Cedar Rapids Historic Preservation. Mary will help get this organized as we get closer to the schedule date.

Duane Eash stated that he was ready for the two workshops that will be presented. The first is regarding windows and is scheduled for May 21 at 10:00 a.m. at the Buresh Center. The second workshop is June 18 at 10:00 a.m. which will discuss repair and maintenance of porches. This also will be at the Buresh Center. Edith volunteered to help produce a video of the two workshops. These workshops have been approved for education credit for historic preservation.

Mary was able to tell us of an incident where the City of Mount Vernon was looking for a record of Minutes from an early City Council meeting. She was able to direct the City Administrator to our archives and within a matter of minutes, being able to present the full Minutes of a meeting from many years ago. It was an impressive demonstration of the work that Mary has done in organizing the archives of the Commission.

The Commission welcomes Michael Guerber as the new member of the HPC. No other business has come before the Commission and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary