

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
May 2, 2020

The Historic Preservation Commission met via Zoom on Saturday, May 2, 2020. Members present on Zoom were Leah Rogers, Caroline Kelly, Guy Booth, Ed Sauter, Mary Evans, Janet Budack, Suzette Astley, Sue Hargus, Machele Pelkey and Grace Chamberlain. Also present were Kari Morgan and Scott Ladwig from Cornell College.

Upon motion made and seconded, the Minutes of the March 18, 2020 meeting were approved.

Cornell College, represented by Kari Morgan and Scott Lagdwig, were present to have a pre-review regarding the ongoing project for work on College Hall and Old Sem. Scott gave an excellent presentation with pictures showing areas of repair that need to be done on each of the buildings. College Hall will have a fairly extensive renovation in the future. At this time, we are working on window replacements. The current Covid-19 situation has stalled some of the work, as replacement windows are behind schedule. Also, some of the stone work for replacing lintels has not been prepared by the stone quarry.

Scott showed work that will need to be done in the future. He gave a graphic presentation of lintels showing cracks which will cause some lintels to be replaced. There was also some question about adding steel plates in certain areas to help support the building. These steel plates would be relatively inconspicuous, but would give added support in the window areas. Cornell is very conscientious in saying that the windows replicate the old windows, and that the repairs to the building will match in with the historic nature of each of the buildings. As the replacement project gets under way, Cornell will make a final presentation as the building permit is being applied for.

Kari Morgan indicated that the college is looking at radon mitigation for some of the dormitories. She asked advice on how the pipes that are needed for the mitigation can be put in so they have the least visual impact on the buildings. Ed Sauter gave some suggestions for having them blend in, or be as inconspicuous as possible.

Under new business, Leah gave a report on the state preservation summit conference. The conference will be online, and the commissioners can sign up online for the various presentations.

Mary Evans indicates that Addie Pacha will be the intern for the summer. She will be doing a good deal of the work from her home. She, Mary and Scott Cannon are continuing to work on the update of the website. Addie will also work on cataloguing the Lions Club history that contains approximately 96 years of record. Mary said there are numerous photos that are being reviewed to be placed on the website. This includes more recent history, such as Chalk the Walk and the 4th of July celebrations.

Mary and Machele have both talked about a house genealogy project. Mary has been trying to attain historic photographs of houses so the history of each house can be made available.

Machele also talked about a virtual oral history project, which would be focused on family history. Machele gave an example of having high school seniors interview family members, such as parents and grandparents to get the family history people who have lived in Mount Vernon for generations. This could be put on the Facebook site. Grace Chamberlain indicated that this could be done very easily and very effectively. There is a question about the legality of posting family information on Facebook. Janet Budack indicated that an organization known as American States and Local History has information that helps explain legality of this type of oral history and its placement into the public domain. This is a project that could involve numerous people in the community and could give a more intimate history of the town.

Leah indicated that the process of having the Visitors Center be an individual nomination may work better if the Visitors Center becomes part of the Cornell Historic District. The district would need to be amended, but this may be an easier way to get it protected than having an individual nomination. Leah will get further information and approval from the state. Machele mentioned that the walking tour scheduled for June has been cancelled. Most summer events have been canceled.

The next possible meeting for the Commission will be May 13 if there is a request for design review. Otherwise, we will look at the meeting for June 6. The meeting will most likely still be conducted on Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary