

MINUTES  
OF  
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
June 4, 2022

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall, and via Zoom on Saturday, June 4, 2022. Commissioners present at City Hall were Suzette Astley, Mary Evans, Duane Eash, Donnie Moore, Janet Budack, Michael Guerber and Guy Booth. Leah Rogers was present via Zoom. Also present was Nathan Countryman from the Mount Vernon/Lisbon Sun.

The Minutes of the May 14, 2022 meeting were approved.

The first design review request is from Grant Jones on behalf of the pharmacy located at 101 1<sup>st</sup> St. NE, Mount Vernon. The building is in the downtown commercial historic district. The building needs a new front door and Grant Jones presented information about the proposed door. They have compared wood to fiberglass and desire to put in a fiberglass door. They have compared price, availability, longevity and security/strength of the door as being reasons to request approval be given for the fiberglass door. It does have features very similar to the current wood door. It was indicated that the door will be blue in color. Donnie Moore asked for more information about the door jam and surrounding material. In particular, would it be similar to what is currently present and will it match the historic nature of the building? Grant Jones will visit with his contractor to get this information. He understands the concern is that the door replacement, including the door jam, will replicate the current opening. Upon motion by Duane Eash and seconded by Leah Rogers, the Commission approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for the door. The Commission does want to have further information regarding the structure and specifications for the framing around the door.

The second design review request comes from Ben Knake, who resides at 732 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW, Mount Vernon. His home is in the Ash Park Historic District. He has requested the approval of a black chain link fence for a portion of his property. He indicates the fence will be shared with a neighbor, who will be making a separate application for fencing that will be on the neighbor's property. This fence has been routinely approved on properties in the historic district, as it is fairly unobtrusive and does not disrupt the historic nature of the district. Upon motion by Leah Rogers, seconded by Duane Eash, the Commission approved a Certificate of No Material Effect.

Sue reported that Ed Sauter has submitted his resignation from the Commission. It is noted that Ed was a founding member of the Commission and has served since the start-up meetings in 1985. He has been an important member of the Commission because of his architectural knowledge of historic preservation. He has routinely provided advice to owners of historic properties in Mount Vernon as they have questions about restoration of properties. The Commission accepts Ed's resignation with gratitude for his significant contributions to HPC.

Janet Budack reported on a ceremony on May 24, 2022 wherein Janet, Ed Sauter, Mary Evans and Guy Booth traveled to Cottage Grove Place to award a certificate of appreciation to Dick Thomas, who was the founder of the Commission. Dick had served on the state historic preservation board and had a long commitment to historic preservation. Dick also served as chairperson of the Commission from its start-up in 1986 to 1994.

In other business regarding Commission members, Susan Hargus has notified the Commission that she will be resigning, as she is moving to Iowa City. This means the Commission will have two openings. Further, Grace Chamberlain has asked to have a leave of absence until December, as she will be having a baby later in the year and has many projects that need to be done as she and her husband prepare for a new child. Grace indicates she will continue to help with the telephone app and will monitor the website.

Sue has sent a copy of the Mount Vernon HPC design guidelines booklet to each commissioner. She also included information regarding the ordinance establishing the Commission, as well as the demolition ordinance. Sue feels the Commission should spend some time considering how the demolition ordinance will work when an application comes before the Commission. Because there has not been an application as yet, it would be a good idea to have a good understanding of what the Commission needs to do in reviewing an application and how to deal with owners who may be considering the demolition of a structure. We will have this as an agenda item later in the year. Guy will pull together information on the ordinance to help lead that discussion.

We also had discussion about the need to have the Commission review the design review portion of our ordinance. Because we are having new members come on board, this would be a good time for the Commission to review how we process requests for design review. Janet Budack also thought that a pamphlet that in the past has been given to new property owners in the historic district should be made available to the realtors in town. We should also update the design review guideline booklet to make sure it is current. All of these reviews will help commission members feel comfortable in working on these issues.

Sue reported that Cornell has received new estimates on the cost of the new roof for Plattner House. It is quite difficult to get the roofing material that has been on the house. Much of it was destroyed by the derecho. Because of the huge increase in the cost of the material, the insurance coverage for the roof would fall \$250,000 short of what the cost of re-roofing would be. We will ask Scott Ladwig to keep us informed as to what alternatives may work to get the house re-roofed.

Mary Evans indicates that Marge Whitley is interested on providing a grave marker that she has in her possession. It is from the Minnick family. Upon Marge leaving her home on Third Avenue NW, she would want the grave marker to be returned to the cemetery if at all possible. This will be referred to our work on other portions of the cemetery project.

Duane Eash gave a summary of his experience giving the window workshop. It was well-attended and there was good discussion from the participants. Duane will give his seminar on porch and column repair on June 18. The notice that had previously been sent out gave the date and time for both the window workshop and the porch workshop.

Leah stated that she attended the Preserve Iowa Summit and thought it was a good program. The Summit returned to being returned an in-person Summit, rather than the virtual Summit from the past two years. Leah was recognized at the summit for her outstanding career in archaeology and her contributions to Iowa historical preservation issues.

Our next meeting will be held June 15, but only if there is a design review request that comes in by that time. Sue will be out of state at the time, so if a meeting is necessary, we

discussed how to get City Hall available, set up a Zoom connection, and get notice sent out. Sue will provide notice if a meeting is necessary.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary