

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
June 6, 2020

The Historic Preservation Commission met via Zoom on Saturday, June 6, 2020 at 9:15 a.m. Members present on Zoom were Hugh Lifson, Leah Rogers, Mary Evans, Grace Chamberlain, Suzette Astley, Ed Sauter, Machele Pelkey, Susan Hargus, Janet Budack and Guy Booth. A guest who was present via Zoom was Elias Schroeder.

The Minutes of the May 13, 2020 meeting were approved.

The design review schedule for today was requested by Elias Schroeder. Mr. Schroeder owns the property at 609 5th Ave. NW in Mount Vernon. This is in the Ash Park Historic District. Mr. Schroeder is having a new roof placed on his residence and has indicated he will be using a black asphalt shingle. He will also be replacing the aluminum gutters and replacing the existing fascia and soffit with new material. The use of black shingles will be the change in appearance on the house. Elias indicates that the window frames and doors of the house will also be black. Elias has previously consulted with HPC regarding siding on the house, and indicates the current siding will be removed and be replaced with a vinyl siding. After discussion, a motion to approve a certificate of no material effect was made by Hugh Lifson, seconded by Susan Hargus. The motion carried.

Mary Evans gave an update regarding the activities of the summer intern. Addie has been updating the website. She is doing research on the history of the Heritage Days celebration in Mount Vernon. She has also been working on the genealogy of houses. This would include stories about each house, and information about the previous owners. Mary indicates that the information that was part of the application for the 11 houses that have just been approved for the National Register will have all of the background information included on the website. Machele has put together the ideas for the house genealogy project.

Under new business, Grace Chamberlain gave information about two statements made by the National Trust regarding the protests and gatherings around the country prompted by the death of George Floyd. The statements give an important historical perspective of this event. The Commission did not feel it is necessary for us to take a position on this matter, but it would be appropriate to post the National Trust statements on our website.

Mary Evans, Janet Budack and Machele Pelkey have given some thought to researching of the history of the Mount Vernon Cemetery. It was learned that the cemetery is owned by the City, but the City sells the individual plots to families. Consequently, the families of deceased people would be the party responsible for placement and maintenance of any monuments on the graves. Mary also learned that there is not an entity such as a cemetery association that is responsible for maintenance of grave sites. It is assumed the City of Mount Vernon does the normal mowing and tree maintenance in the cemetery. The Commission members agree that there should be a more formal method of dealing with the cemetery and recording its history. Janet Budack will contact the state cemetery association to see what types of material and guidelines are in existence for local cemeteries and local cemetery associations. Our members are uncertain whether this is a project that should be taken on by historic preservation. It does

need to be researched, and perhaps a plan can be developed that would include involving the community as a whole, and to identify stake holders such as American Legion, which has a large monument in the cemetery, to be the active participants. Janet will report back what she learns from the state cemetery association.

Leah gave a brief summary of how the Preserve Iowa Summit is going. Hugh Lifson indicated that he is fairly certain he will become a permanent residence in Cedar Rapids and will be selling his house in Mount Vernon. Consequently, he indicated we should begin thinking about a replacement for his position.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m. The next meeting would be June 17 if needed. The meeting will be via Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary