

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
March 2, 2024

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall on Saturday, March 2, 2024. Meeting was called to order by Suzette Astley. Commissioners present at City Hall were Randy Brown, Duane Eash, Mike Guerber, Suzette Astley, Sherry Brayton, Mary Evans, Wade Squiers, Matt Ruff and Guy Booth. Also present was Nathan Countryman of the Mount Vernon Sun.

Minutes of the meeting of January 6, 2024 were approved.

Sue indicates that she has received information from the City and from a consulting firm that there would be some additional antenna attachments made to the water tower in Memorial Park. They will be similar to antennas that had been attached in the past. It does not change any appearance, nor are they even visible to the casual observer. Edge Consulting Firm has asked for an acknowledgment of approval from the Historic Preservation Commission. Sue will send a letter of approval. This action does not need a certificate of no material effect.

Cornell College has continued to have repair work done on building roofs since the derecho. Roof repair has been completed on Olin Hall and on Cole Library. Cornell needs a certificate of no material effect from the Commission so that funds for the repair work can be obtained from FEMA for reimbursement. Upon motion by Guy Booth, seconded by Matt Ruff, a certificate of no material effect was approved and will be issued.

Sue indicates that Cornell would like to have conversations with the Commission regarding new projects that may be on their schedule. Sue will invite a person from the Cornell staff to visit with the Commission.

The Commission held a discussion on the issue of how we approve new construction, whether it be a new building or additions to buildings in the historic districts. It is difficult to know what guidelines the Commission needs to use as there is nothing that has been approved by the Commission or City Council. Sue has obtained a copy of guidelines that are used by the City of Dubuque for new construction in historic districts. This may help our Commission understand how new construction can be harmonious with the historic nature of the districts. This may be a question to raise with the firm that is hired to work on the guidelines for the Commission.

Regarding the revision of the Commission's guidelines, Sue will be putting together a request for a proposal to companies that may be interested in preparing the guidelines. Sue will not send the RFP out until we are certain of the financing that will be provided by the City.

The Commission also spent some time discussing how we can inform people about the availability of pre-review on renovation and construction projects. People often get locked in with contractors and use their advice without considering whether it conforms to the guidelines for property in historic districts. The Commission also discussed how important it is to direct people to the Commission for pre-review and to not get involved in any informal discussions that could lead a person to feel they have some unofficial understanding as to the appropriateness of proposed changes to their property. It would be a good idea to always refer someone who makes

a casual inquiry to our website to understand the process of moving through the application for a certificate of appropriateness.

It has come to the attention of the Commission that there are several businesses that have put signage on the buildings in the downtown historic district that have not gone through the permitting process. The City is aware of this, and will help get these signs regulated, and also, to see that proposed signage comes through the Commission if need be.

Sue indicates that Matt Ruff will help review applications for certificates of appropriateness, as Sue is going to be more involved in the work at the Visitor's Center.

Bob Campagna will be having a display of his photographs at the Visitor's Center. We have been asked to help finance the exhibit. Upon motion made by Guy Booth, seconded by Duane Eash, the Commission will contribute \$500 toward the costs of the exhibit.

The Commission has previously included gutters and downspouts as items that would need to have a certificate of appropriateness if they are being replaced on an historic building. However, the City has indicated because a building permit is not required for changes in gutters and downspouts, that we should not require a certificate of appropriateness. Consequently, we will reverse our position on requiring review of these two items. Upon motion by Wade Squiers, seconded by Sherry Brayton, the Commission declares that a COA is not required for gutters and downspouts.

Guy Booth indicated that he and Mary Evans are scheduling a meeting with Tom Wieseler, Mayor, to encourage the City to look at the issue of funding for historic preservation and renovation of items at the Mount Vernon Cemetery. Mary and Guy will schedule a meeting with Tom in the near future. Guy also indicated that the first meeting on the planning for the streetscape project in the downtown area has been held. No decisions have been made as yet, but HPC should be involved in the discussions.

Finally, Sue, Sherry and Duane have all volunteered to spend an afternoon cleaning and preserving the glass negatives that have recently been donated to the Commission. They will be cleaned and put into archive-approved envelopes. Thanks to the three of the volunteers for getting this project completed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary