

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
April 6, 2024

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall on Saturday, April 6, 2024. Commissioners present at City Hall were Sherry Brayton, Mike Guerber, Duane Eash, Randy Brown, Donnie Moore, Mary Evans, Wade Squiers, Suzette Astley and Guy Booth. Guests present were Nathan Countryman of the Mount Vernon-Lisbon Sun, Jordan Smith and Nanette Rambo.

Minutes of the meeting of March 2, 2024 were approved.

As the meeting started, Sue Astley gave information regarding the preservation summit, which will be held in Mount Pleasant this year. She passed around a sign-up sheet for people to indicate if they are able to attend, and if so, what portion of the summit meeting they would like to attend. Sue can send in the reservation for members who will be attending.

The first design review item is presented by Jordan Smith. Jordan's house was destroyed in a fire a year ago and he has been working with the insurance company, and with contractors to design and build a replacement home. The project will be able to utilize the original foundation of the house. The design for the new structure expands the house by adding a garage and a breezeway. The application for a certificate of appropriateness contains the building plans and a good description of the new structure. The structure will resemble the house that was destroyed by fire, with some pleasant additions that fit within the historic district. This includes a porch area with period columns for a circa 1950's ranch style home. The new construction will have blue siding with a limestone-appearing base around the front and northerly side of the house.

Sue has prepared a statement to go along with the certificate of appropriateness to provide information about the project, as it is unique to have new construction being placed on the foundation of a property for which the commission had previously granted a demolition permit. Upon motion by Guy Booth, seconded by Wade Squiers, a certificate of appropriateness shall be issued and the certificate document shall include the narrative provided by Sue Astley.

The second design review item relates to the signage at Bigs Barbecue and Brew. The restaurant has recently moved to 106 1st St SE, the former Alger's Pizza restaurant. New signage includes the painted words Bigs BBQ and Brew, as well as a sign that indicates the business is open. A sign permit had not been applied for prior to the placement of the new signs. This is being corrected, and Nanette Rambo, an owner of the business, is working with the city zoning administrator to see that the signs are in compliance. The plans that had been presented by Ms. Rambo will meet with the city sign ordinance, and the commission appreciates the extra effort by Ms. Rambo to make sure the signage does comply with the ordinance. Upon motion made by Wade Squiers, seconded by Sherry Brayton, a certificate of appropriateness was approved.

Under new business, Sue indicates that Scott Cannon, who is our consultant for our website, has indicated he is available to help with recording any seminars that we may have. He has also helped Edith with learning how to scan information to the website. His assistance will help Edith with the continued updating of the website. A discussion was also held regarding an upcoming walking tour of the downtown area, as the city is developing street-scape plans. JEO Company, who is designing the streetscape, will hold a meeting April 27, 2024 for people to visit

the various buildings so there can be substantial input from townspeople and from the business owners.

Donnie Moore proposed the possibility of having additional meetings and community gatherings as we get into the summer. This includes the idea of a community picnic.

Several members of the Commission participated in the Zoom seminar on substitute materials in historic preservation. Sue will email a link from the seminar that is produced by the National Park Service on the use of substitute materials on historic building exteriors. It is an excellent summary of the seminar. It was also discussed that there is an organization known as the window preservation alliance that is part of the National Association of Historic Preservation Commissions. We will explore the cost of becoming a member of the alliance.

Under old business, Guy Booth indicated that there is still organizational efforts under way to deal with the Mount Vernon Cemetery issues. Sue reported on the work on glass negatives. We are fortunate to have some expertise in this area presented by Christine Flavin. She will be able to give expert advice as to the preservation of these negatives.

The cleaning and tuckpointing project for the Visitor's Center should start within the next several weeks. Technical Specialty Services of Cedar Rapids will be doing the work. Donnie Moore volunteered to take some photographs of a before, during, and after recording of the project. Sue is going to contact the city regarding the placement of shrubs for landscaping.

The Commission is still in the process of identifying firms who could be hired to produce the new design guideline booklet for the Commission. We would like to identify up to ten companies that could be sent an RFP for the project. Although we had a good discussion on signage today, the Commission has decided that signage will not be included in the guidelines.

Mike Guerber indicated there were no sales of structures in any of the historic districts during the past month. It was also requested that Sue send a copy of the past year's budget as well as the proposed budget for the coming year to each of the members.

The next meeting will be held May 11, 2024, instead of on the first Saturday of the month. Chalk the Walk will be in progress on the first Saturday.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary