

MINUTES  
OF  
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
May 22, 2024

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall on Wednesday, May 22, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. Commissioners present at City Hall were Matt Ruff, Randy Brown, Mary Evans, Guy Booth, Duane Eash and Sue Astley. Also present via Zoom was Edith Dawson. Guests present were Hannah Mercer and her son.

Minutes of the meeting of May 11, 2024 were approved with the correction that Mary Evans was in attendance at the meeting, although her name did not appear in the list of attendees.

The first item of business was review of a request for approval of signage at 122 1<sup>st</sup> St SW, Mount Vernon. This is in the commercial historic district. The business is known as Dreads and Threads and is owned by Hannah Mercer. Ms. Mercer requested approval of the lettering of the signs in the main window of the business, which is “Dreads and Threads.” Also, she requested approval of the sign indicating that she was open or closed. The application for the signage has been submitted to the City and no objection has been raised by the zoning department. It was pointed out that the signage is not a permanent change to the building, and can easily be removed if the business changes. Upon motion by Duane Eash, seconded by Guy Booth, a certificate of no material effect was approved.

Under new business, Sue Astley reported that the photography exhibit of Bob Campana will be opening at the History Center in Cedar Rapids. Because of the monetary contribution made by our commission, the History Center has provided invitations for up to six members of our commission to attend the opening of the exhibit. Any members who are interested in attending should contact Sue so reservations can be made.

Under old business, Sue Astley reported that the company that is doing work on the Visitor’s Center has continued to attempt to remove the dark stains on the building. The effort is still ongoing, and a stain remover has been applied to the building. It may take a good deal of time for the cleaning agent to have an effect on the stains.

The landscaping of the building was also discussed. The City has contributed \$21,300 toward the renovation project. HPC has made an offer of \$1,600 toward the landscaping and renovation project. The company doing the renovation work indicates that it may be best to install a retaining wall along a portion of the landscaping area so the mulch will not be washed away from the building. The cost of a retaining wall will be \$1,950. We will be able to contribute some additional funds so that the retaining wall can be rebuilt. Sue has negotiated with the company to allow us to pay half of the cost in the current fiscal year and the other half in the upcoming fiscal year. In this way, our budget will be able to cover these additional expenses, which the Commission agreed would be worth having done. A motion was made by Matt Ruff, seconded by Duane Eash that the contract for work be amended to include the retaining wall and necessary shrubs. The motion passed.

The next item of business was discussion of the design guideline project. Randy and Sue have been working on this project. Randy has added language to the request for proposal that discusses energy efficiency in the guidelines. The next step will be to send the request for proposal to companies that have been identified by Randy and Sue. Upon motion made by Guy

Booth, seconded by Matt Ruff, the revised request for proposal shall be sent to 11 companies. Sue will get the RFP in the mail on May 28. She will request a reply within six weeks of the date of mailing. At that time, the Commission will be able to review the proposals, the costs of the project, and will discuss this with the Mount Vernon City Council.

Sue indicates she is willing to continue to chair the subcommittee that is working on the design guideline project. She recommends that we have four members of the Commission work on the subcommittee, as well as invite the City Council to appoint a liaison from the Council to work on the design guideline booklet. Sue and Randy are willing to continue work on the subcommittee. Other members of the Commission may contact Sue to indicate if they would like to participate. It was suggested that Wade Squiers be approached, as his architectural expertise may be helpful in the review of the design guideline book. Edith Dawson indicates she would like to participate on this subcommittee.

Sue reported that Edith is available to be hired to do work on preparing historic pictures to be placed on the website. They need to be scanned into the website and put into our archives. It is important to have labels attached to each of the pictures. Sue will negotiate the hours of work and the pay for the work. It was suggested that Edith be paid \$9.50 per hour for her time.

The photos that are going to be reviewed and scanned into the website are from the Bob Horton photo collection. Advantage Archives of Cedar Rapids will be working on many of the photos that are on the website. They also may have the expertise to help on digitizing the glass negatives.

It was announced that Bob Meeker will be giving a presentation on the archived photos at the Buresh Center on May 23 in the afternoon. This presentation will qualify for the continuing education requirements of historic preservation.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:45.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary