

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
July 6, 2024

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall on Saturday, July 6, 2024 at 8:30 a.m. Commissioners present at City Hall were Matt Ruff, Randy Brown, Mary Evans, Guy Booth, Duane Eash, Sherry Brayton, Mike Guerber, Edith Dawson and Sue Astley. present were Nathan Countryman from the Mount Vernon Sun, Chris Childers, Bob Campagna, and Kimberly Machovec-Smith.

Minutes of the meeting of May 22, 2024 were approved. A design review request was submitted from Chris Childers regarding the signage at his new business known as Abbe Creek Gallery, which will be located at 105 1st St NW. Chris Childers, Bob Campagna and Kimberly Machovec-Smith were present to present the proposed signage for the business. Chris mentioned that in addition to the language shown on the proposed signage, that they will also be adding the word "Gifts." The City zoning administrator has reviewed the request for signage. Upon motion made by Mary Evans, seconded by Duane Eash, the Commission shall issue a certificate of appropriateness for the signage. The motion passed unanimously.

Randy Brown and Duane Eash reported on sessions they attended at the Preserve Iowa conference. Both attended lectures and workshops regarding design guidelines. Randy indicates the features of the guidelines that we have outlined in our RFP are the factors that the presenters at the conference said should be in the design guideline booklet. In addition, Duane attended a cemetery workshop and felt he learned a good deal about issues of historic preservation for cemeteries and also, how both state and local statutes and ordinances can affect the preservation effort.

Guy Booth brought the commission up to date regarding the City's preparation of an ordinance to establish a cemetery commission. This is a culmination of work over the years to highlight the need for maintenance and repair of the gravesites and to see that the sites are preserved. It is also important to have good records regarding location of graves. By having the City establish a commission, this should give better long-term direction to this preservation project. Historic Preservation will need to be involved in helping the Commission, and perhaps having a member on the commission. The third reading of the ordinance will take place at the next City Council meeting. After that, the City will advertise for people to apply to serve as a commissioner.

Donnie Moore was not present for the meeting, but asked Sue to report that he is continuing to plan a social event for the community that relates to historic preservation.

Michelle Pelky has contacted the Commission regarding the possibility of an historic hayride to be presented in September. The hayride would begin at the LBC Building and will tour the historic districts. The hayrack will be provided by Bass Farms. Sue has indicated she will be able to serve as a guide and give information about the historic sites. By helping in this tour, this will fit in with our requirement to have cooperation with other public entities in educating on historic preservation. The tour is scheduled for September 5, 2024.

Mike Guerber reported that the house at 616 5th Ave. NW has a new owner. This is in the Ash Park Historic District. The new owners will be sent a copy of the Historic Preservation Commission brochure to highlight information about the District.

Sue reports that the tuckpointing project at the Visitors Center has been completed. She also indicated that there are continuing attempts to remove the dark stains that are on the building. There is a new cleaning substance that has been applied twice. It has lightened the stains. The company that is doing the project will continue to work on the stains and there may be additional applications of the cleaning substance. Also, the landscaping project which the Commission is supporting will be completed in July. This includes the retaining wall that is being built by Culvers, and a selection of plants to be included will be done by the City gardener.

Sue indicates that the request for proposal applications have been sent out to a number of companies. The deadline for submitting the RFP is July 17. There have been five requests for information that have come in. It appears the cost of hiring a company to do the design review guideline booklet may exceed the original estimates. Sue reports that there is a new CLG grant program that has a deadline of early September. This may be available to assist in the payment of the design guideline project. Randy, Duane, Edith and Sue are all involved in evaluating the applications that are received. Wade Squiers is also involved, although he will be leaving the Commission as he is intending to move to Cedar Rapids. Paul Tueler is the liaison from City Council for the project.

Edith Dawson has been working as an intern for the Commission this summer. She is posting material on our website and has been working with both photographs and historic articles about the history of Mount Vernon. She is in the process of being certified as an administrator so she can post information on to Facebook. Sue also indicates that we are still looking for a company that can help in the preservation of glass negatives.

Because of the departure of Wade Squiers from the Commission, the Commissioners are asked to give thought to finding a person to take Wade's place on the Commission. It would be helpful to find a person with experience in architecture.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary