

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
December 7, 2024

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall on Saturday, December 7, 2024 at 8:30 a.m.. Commissioners present at City Hall were Donnie Moore, Duane Eash, Mike Guerber, Edith Dawson, Sue Astley, Randy Brown, Wade Squiers and Guy Booth. Guests present include Kim Schwiebert and Nathan Countryman.

Minutes of the November 13, 2024 meeting were approved.

A design review item on the agenda was the review of a proposed sign at the Mount Vernon Methodist Church. The sign is a statement of welcome that is a message of inclusion that represents the philosophy of the church. The sign has been constructed by Rickard Sign & Design and would be placed near the northwest corner of the church, near the entrance. The sign has been approved by Mount Vernon Zoning. Upon motion made by Wade Squiers, seconded by Mike Guerber, the Commission approves the application as having no material effect. Sue will send the certificate to Kim Schwiebert on behalf of the Methodist Church.

Sue led a discussion regarding the Commission's budget for the next fiscal year. We will need to submit our proposed budget for approval by the City Council. The budget request will follow the format that has been used in previous years. The Commission's budget will go toward a project to digitize photo collections, to contribute to continuing education for commission members, to work on presentation of awards for historic preservation, for advertising, and for other projects that relate to the preservation of the historic nature of the City of Mount Vernon. Sue will submit the proposed budget to the City Council for consideration.

As a final summary of our discussions on the new Intellistreet lighting and banners, the City has ordered the light pole fixtures. Evidently eight of the light pole fixtures will have digital screens. The City Council has approved the agreement with Alliant Energy. It appears the inclusion of digital screens on the light poles is not necessarily required by Alliant Energy, but the poles will have the screens or will have the ability to have screens attached. Guy Booth indicated over the past couple of weeks, he has interviewed a number of owners of businesses and owners of buildings in the historic district. The majority of the business owners did not feel the digital screens were necessary. However, at least two people who were interviewed enthusiastically supported the screens and hoped they could become available for advertising. This is the precise reason the Commission has been reluctant to endorse the digital screens. It was reported that there could be at least eight digital screens put in place along 1st Street in the downtown area. It is hoped the screens will not become a distraction to the historic nature of the districts.

The contract for the new design guideline booklet has not been signed as yet. It is hopeful this can be done within the next several weeks so the project can get under way. Once the contract is signed, the Commission will need to meet with the company that is preparing the guideline booklet as different chapters of the booklet are prepared.

Mike Guerber indicated there have not been any sale of homes in the historic districts since our last meeting. There was no update report regarding archives and/or the cemetery Commission. Mary and Duane are both involved in these activities for the Commission.

There was brief discussion that Cornell College is now at the stage where they are asking for bids for the repair of King Chapel. It is exciting to know that project is under way.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary