

MINUTES  
OF  
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
March 1, 2025

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall on Saturday, March 1, 2025 at 8:30 a.m.. Commissioners present at City Hall were Mary Evans, Duane Eash, Randy Brown, Sue Astley, Sherry Brayton, Mike Guerber, and Guy Booth. Others present included Quinn O'Brien and Wendy and Alan Recalde..

Minutes of the February 1, 2025 meeting were approved.

The first design review item on the agenda is a request for approval of the sign for Wren and Purl in their new business address at 100 1<sup>st</sup> St SW. This is in the downtown historic district. The signage includes the words Wren and Purl above the front door, and a small sign on the window of the front door. The signage is very similar to the sign of the previous occupant, White Tree Bakery. The application indicates the City has approved the signage, as it conforms to the sign ordinance. Upon motion by Guy Booth, seconded by Sherry Brayton, the Commission shall issue a certificate of no material effect.

Quinn O'Brien was present at the meeting for a pre-review of a project to construct a new garage on his property located at the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW. This property is in the Cornell Historic District. Mr. O'Brien identified the location of the new garage as being in a vacant portion of a lot directly behind his house. He would like to build a driveway on the north lot line of his property to access the garage, which would then be behind the house. Although there could be access to the property from an alley which runs north south along the western edge of his property, it was shown that the alley is on a fairly steep hill and is a one-way alley. Further, the O'Brien property has a fairly steep downslope from the alley. The Commission reviewed the type of garage and the building materials for the garage and all seems to be appropriate for a historic district.

There is an existing older structure on the southwest corner of the O'Brien property. It could have been a stable, as it was constructed in the early 1900's. It has not been used, except for storage in recent years and is in fairly unstable condition. Mr. O'Brien was advised that if he intends to demolish the building, he needs to file an application pursuant to the demolition ordinance and the Commission will review the request after filing of the petition. The Commission thanked Mr. O'Brien for coming to this meeting and expressing his plans so that he is sure that his plan is appropriate for the historic district.

Sue gave an update on the status of the audio tour that has been in existence. As reported last month, both Cornell and CDG have stopped participating in paying for the program that allows access to an audio presentation regarding certain buildings. It has come to our attention that the software program that the audio information is on will be terminated within the next 30 to 60 days. To save the material and allow us to use it on a different platform, it would be necessary to hire someone to preserve the tour information. As the site is rebuilt, it can then be on the HPC website and we will have the ability to edit the material whenever there are changes. Overall, it would appear the cost will be a maximum of \$3,000. Scott Cannon has been our consultant for the HPC website and he feels the project will not exceed \$3,000. It is important to make sure we have retained all of the material that is on the audio tour so it can be placed into our own platform and into the website.

Upon motion made by Mary Evans, seconded by Duane Eash, we authorize Scott Cannon to be employed to obtain the interactive history tour material and to set up the new program so the website will be the proprietary property of MV HPC. The motion carried.

Mike Guerber indicated that there has been a transfer of title of a house in the Ash Park historic district at 725 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW. He will be sending the new owners information regarding the preservation commission and the Ash Park historic district.

As an update for the project on remaking the design guideline booklet, JMT plans on being in Mount Vernon during the week of March 23. It is likely that we will have a meeting with them on or about March 26. Consensus of the Commission is that it would be good to hold the meeting at the Lester Buresh Center as they have a comfortable conference room and easy access to technology for displaying any documents or pictures that are available. Sue will let the Commission know what the date and time will be.

Also, the Commission discussed and paid tribute to Ed Sauter, who passed away last week.

Ed was a founding member of the preservation commission and his work on the commission and as Chairman was invaluable in the organization of the commission and the addition to the historic districts while he was on the Commission. The drawings in our current design guideline booklet were made by Ed. We are hopeful that some of these drawings can be part of the new design guideline book as a tribute to Ed's significant contributions to the Commission.

Mary Evans gave an update on both the archives and the cemetery. She reported Dan and Linda Gains will be giving a lecture regarding fires that have occurred in Mount Vernon's history. Dan was head of the fire department for many years and has researched the records of the City so he can give a very informative discussion about fire disasters and how the owners of property and the City have responded to these disasters.

Mary also reported on cemetery issues. The cemetery commission has met with surrounding communities regarding how they handle maintenance of grounds and gravesites and what kinds of regulations they have. Mary will want to have these regulations in place so anyone involved in maintenance at the cemetery knows what obligations they have and what procedures should be followed. Mary also reported on work she and Joe Jennison are doing to cross check various books maintained by the City that show ownership of gravesites and the names of individuals who are interred in these gravesites. It has been a very frustrating research project, as the various books have not used one conforming method of reporting, so there has to be cross-checking on the various records to accurately identify ownership of gravesites and who was buried in the gravesites. Once completed, this will be a tremendous asset for the community.

Guy Booth mentioned that the Linn County History Center has contacted him regarding doing an article about the Albright/Ebersol house. He will meet with someone from the Center and give a tour of the house.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary