

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
June 7, 2025

The Historic Preservation Commission met at the Mount Vernon City Hall on June 7, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. Commission members present were Mary, Evans, Donnie Moore, Mike Guerber, Duane Eash, Sherry Brayton and Guy Booth. Randy Brown attended via Zoom. present was Nathan Countryman from the Mount Vernon-Lisbon Sun. Present from Cornell College was Susan Readnour and Jen Visser.

Minutes of the meeting of May 3, 2025 were approved.

The first design review item on the agenda comes from Cornell College. They are requesting a certificate to allow the construction of a drop box, which will be located at the rear of the Commons Building. The drop box will be used exclusively for Amazon deliveries. The box is located in a protected area on a concrete platform that is already in existence. The box will have a number of locker units that can be accessed via using a mobile phone. This will be for students, faculty and can be used by townspeople. This is a removable drop box and would not be considered a permanent addition to the building. Upon motion by Guy Booth and seconded by Donnie Moore, a certificate of no material effect was approved.

The next item that was discussed was an application by T Mobile for the placement of a generator in Memorial Park. A question arose as to whether the City had approved the location of the generator. There was also concern about its appearance and whether any screening fence may be appropriate, as it is in a city park. No one from T Mobile attended the meeting, either in person or by video, and it was decided that more information was needed, and especially, knowing that the City approves of the placement of this generator. Upon motion made by Mary Evans, seconded by Sherry Brayton, the Commission has deferred action on the application until we have additional information from the City and from T Mobile.

There is a pending request for approval of a demolition permit. This is for a house at 606 6th Ave. NW, which is in the Ash Park Historic District. There is a deck that was constructed in the 1990's that has deteriorated and is causing damage to the house itself. The request is to remove the deck and to possibly replace it with a smaller deck and stairway. The owner was unable to be at the meeting, however, all of the documents, including the demolition permit request, adequate pictures and description, and information from Planning and Development indicated it is an appropriate situation for allowing the demolition of the existing deck. Upon motion by Randy Brown, seconded by Mike Guerber, the request for a demolition permit, based upon the provided material, was approved and the presence of the owner was waived.

Duane indicated that the building at 113 1st Street NW, which is in the downtown historic district, is having tuck pointing work done. It appears that tuckpointing does not need an application and permit from Historic Preservation. There was discussion, however, about how the Commission is able to require tuckpointing to meet the historic preservation standards of using an appropriate mortar and an appropriate color for the mortar. It was decided to review the necessity of some input from historic preservation regarding tuckpointing.

Under new business, the Commission discussed the continued work on the design review guidelines. There was a suggestion to use the words “not appropriate” rather than “not acceptable” in showing types of repair and maintenance on buildings. There was also some question about the discussion of what paint colors may be appropriate in historic districts.

There was also discussion regarding the procedures that are going to be set out for people making applications to the Commission. Various suggestions will be communicated, both to Sue Astley, as she works on her part of the project and to JMT.

Under old business, Mary Evans indicated it was discovered that the City Council Minutes from the year 1861 through 1880, which have been missing, have now been certified that they are destroyed. They were lost in a fire that occurred in the building that was on the site prior to the current building, which is occupied by Scores. The discovery of the reason for the missing Minutes allows people to stop searching for the lost Minutes.

Mary gave an update on work being done by the cemetery commission. Attached is Mary’s report. We look forward to having Mr. Heider in Mount Vernon from July 13 to the 19th when he will be working on restoration of 13 grave stones. 11 of these are paid for by the American Legion and 2 by the Masonic Lodge.

Mary also indicated that in September, a University of Iowa class will use a drone to locate an area of common graves. This would be the “pauper field from the early years.” Mary also indicated there has been continual clearing of brush from fence areas around the cemetery. Mary’s report is attached as part of the Minutes of the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary