

MINUTES
OF THE
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
August 13, 2025

The Historic Preservation Commission met at the Mount Vernon City Hall on Wednesday, August 13, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. Commission members present were Sue Astley, Sherry Breyton, Randy Brown, Edith Dawson, Duane Eash, Mary Evans, Mike Guerber. Katrina and Leslie Garner were present for a design pre-review of their property in the Cornell College district, and Samantha Smith was present via Zoom call to discuss the draft design guidelines document recently received from JMT.

Minutes of the meeting of August 3, 2025 were approved upon motion by Randy Brown, seconded by Mary Evans.

The first topic of business was a pre-review of the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the addition of handrails for the property of Leslie and Katrina Garner located at 109 10th Ave. SW, Mount Vernon, IA, in the Cornell College Historic District. Leslie indicated that he was interested in consultation with the MVHPC for tonight's meeting. The first approach the property owners considered for the handrails were wooden rails, but their builder said that wooden railings would be hard to match to the existing porch. The proposed approach is for wrought-iron handrails for the single step to the porch and for the three steps from the street to the sidewalk. The property owners have been working with Dale Merrill of Liberty Iron Works of Mount Vernon to design appropriate handrails. The commissioners agreed with this approach, and drawings of the proposed handrails will be prepared by Mr. Merrill and submitted to the commission as part of a revised application for consideration at the September meeting.

Samantha Smith of JMT provided an overview of the process that was used to develop the historic design guidelines for Mount Vernon. Sue Astley asked about what assistance JMT could provide for obtaining community involvement on the guidelines. Samantha stated that JMT could help with that and has scope for a public meeting. Samantha recommended putting the second draft of the design guidelines document on the MVHPC web page and then notifying the public via newspaper or other means with a link to the document. A public roundtable discussion could then follow, with JMT taking the lead role. Mike Guerber commented that the meeting could be similar to the public meeting held for the streetscape project. Randy Brown brought up a comment that the colors used to distinguish between "Best Practices" and "Not Appropriate" in the document are

somewhat similar, and it would be good to use a bolder color for the “Not Appropriate” guidelines. Samantha took an action to look into that. The following process for addressing comments was agreed to by the commission:

- Reviewers can put comments in the Google sheet or they can record comments in a separate spreadsheet.
- All comments/findings should be provided to Sue Astley no later than three days prior to the September meeting so they can be discussed at that meeting.
- Sue will compile all comments into a single spreadsheet of findings.
- Typos should be provided to Sue, but they will all be addressed in a single finding.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 pm.

Prepared by Randy Brown, August 13, 2025