

MINUTES  
OF  
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
September 6, 2025

The Historic Preservation Commission met at the Mount Vernon City Hall on Saturday, September 6, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. Commission members present were Randy Brown, Sherry Brayton, Mike Guerber, Duane Eash, Sue Astley and Guy Booth. Less and Katrina Garner were present for design review. Nick Shanahan was also present for a design review. Nathan Countryman was present from the Mount Vernon-Lisbon Sun.

The first design review request relates to the house owned by Less and Katrina Garner in the Cornell Historic District. They have applied for a certificate of appropriateness for the handrails on the porch. There was some discussion about a handrail on the steps from the street to the sidewalk, but the request for this handrail has been withdrawn. Upon motion by Duane Eash, seconded by Sherry Brayton, a certificate of appropriateness was approved for the remaining handrail that has been designed by Liberty Iron Works.

Nick Shanahan, who resides at 609 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW in the Ash Park Historic District, was present to discuss his plans for a new back porch on his residence. The design is appropriate for the house and the district, and will be a great addition to the home. This porch will replace a deck that had deteriorated and needed to be demolished. The design of the porch and the construction materials are all appropriate for the age of the house. Upon motion by Mike Guerber, seconded by Randy Brown, a certificate of appropriateness has been approved.

Under new business, Sue reported that the Randalls, who are the owners of the Bauman building, are making an application for a Main Street Challenge Grant. Sue has written a letter in support of their application. The renovation that will be part of the project includes new windows on the west side of the building. They will be appropriate for the historic nature of the building. The Randalls will also continue their interior renovation which includes a new ceiling in the first floor of the building, and repair to the shelving and casement of the building. The entire project may be in the area of \$250,000.

Bob Campagna, a well-known and highly regarded photographer, has indicated that he is willing to donate a substantial portion of his photography collection to the Historic Preservation Commission. Many of Bob's photographs are of Mount Vernon and the surrounding area. He also has a number of photographs that would be considered to be artistic photographs. The Commission desires to support Bob in finding a permanent place for his photographs. However, the archival area that the City has provided to our commission is of limited size and is not easily accessible to the public. Mary Evans has had conversations with Bob, and the Commission would want to continue to be supportive of Bob, but try to work within the restrictions that the Commission has in being a repository for a major collection.

Under old business, Sue reported that Maggie Willems, who is a history teacher at Mount Vernon High School, has discussed student history projects, which may include a review of mid-century modern housing in Mount Vernon. This may be helpful for the Commission to have a good inventory of these properties, as the State Historic Preservation Commission is requiring that all commissions have an updated inventory of properties. The work done by the High School Students will become part of our recording of properties in the City of Mount Vernon.

Sue Astley has indicated that she will be stepping down as chairperson of the Commission as of January 1. Because of this, the Commission would like to move ahead and appoint a new commissioner to take effect as of January 1. Upon motion made by Guy Booth and seconded by Duane Eash, Randy Brown has been elected as the chairperson of the Mount Vernon Historic Preservation Commission with his term to begin January 1, 2026.

Guy Booth reported that because insurance companies are more and more demanding about conditions of historic properties, and the cost of repair, that many insurance policies could be cancelled. A Mount Vernon resident who is currently facing this problem has asked if there are grants that could be available to assist owners of properties in historic districts to meet the requirements that are made by insurance companies. Sue does have some information about potential grants. Our commission does not have funds to help in this matter, but Sue will be able to give some guidance for identifying grant programs.

The final portion of today's meeting related to a review of the draft of the proposed design guidelines that have been sent to us by JMT. The guideline booklet is impressive and gives a great deal of historical information about Mount Vernon. It also provides summaries as to the duties of the Commission and the process of people who are doing renovation and repair work on properties. Suggestions were made for some change of language in certain sections and Sue will pass these along to JMT. We have a deadline of September 15 for suggestions for changes and additions to the proposed guideline. There was also discussion about signage and painting on windows. Sue will ask if there is any guideline material for signage that is of a temporary nature. Everyone is encouraged to get final thoughts on changes to Sue by September 15.

Finally, there was some discussion about whether we will have our next meeting on September 17. Several commission members may be at a seminar that day. Sue will report as to whether we need to have a meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary