

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
October 4, 2025

The Historic Preservation Commission met at the Mount Vernon City Hall on Saturday, October 4, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. Commission members present were Sue Astley, Donnie Moore, Duane Eash, Sherry Brayton , Randy Brown and Guy Booth. Guests present included Nathan Countryman from the newspaper, Tom Wieseler, the Mayor of Mount Vernon, and Laura and Tom Nogaj.

The Minutes of the meeting of September 17 were amended to include Mary Evans as being present for the meeting. Upon motion made and seconded, the Minutes were approved.

Mr. and Mrs. Nogaj were present for design review of work being done on their house at 615 6th St. NW in Mount Vernon. This house is in the Ash Park District. They are adding a back porch deck and also changing the window in the back of the house to a doorway so they have a rear access door. The application for a certificate of appropriateness sets forth the design of the porch, the inclusion of the new door, the porch steps, and the railing. There is also a description of the wood siding that will be used for replacement where necessary. The Commission pointed out that the railing for the deck could be approved if it is less than code height, but would need to be approved by the building department. Upon motion by Guy Booth, seconded by Duane Eash, a certificate of appropriateness will issue for the project.

Mayor Tom Wieseler came to the meeting to thank the Commission for its work, and to bring the Commission up to date on several topics. First, he requested that we make sure our mission statement and information regarding meeting dates be on the city website. He also advised that new state legislation requires all members of certain boards and commissions to take a certified course on open meeting requirements. He indicates this can be done through a seminar that is available on one or more websites. Mayor Wieseler makes annual visits to boards and commissions so he is sure the city has good communication with the entities that help the City function.

The Commission discussed the ongoing issue of the guidelines we should use for accepting donations of documents, pictures and other printed material. Mary Evans indicated that there would be room for approximately 30 additional storage boxes in the archive area. This could cause some limitation on what can be accepted by the Commission if someone desires to donate a substantial amount of material. The Commission wants to be sure that important historical documents are accepted and preserved. The question that is raised is what documents are unique and not duplicative of other material already in the archive room. Sue Astley recommended several principles be used to determine whether material should be accepted, and what material may be rejected or disposed of. There is also a letter of acceptance that has been used in the past, and Sue will send that so all of the Commission members are aware of how this information is transferred to a potential donor.

Sue and Randy Brown are meeting to work on the transition of the chairmanship from Sue to Randy, which will occur at the first of the year.

The design guideline book is getting close to the point where it needs to be shared with the City and with the public. Sue recommends that Leigh Bradbury, who handles planning and zoning issues for the City, be given a draft so she is aware of the changes that are being made. Sue also would like to get on the agenda for CDG so they are aware of guidelines and restrictions that may be in place, especially in the Commercial District.

Because the City must approve the amended guidelines, it is recommended that the Commission lets everyone know that the new guideline booklet will be an update of what is already in place. This is not a new set of regulations that is being proposed. Sue has asked for assistance in setting up the public meetings. Sue and Randy will work on the invitation that will be sent to all property owners in the historic districts, as well as the City Council and City residents, generally. Mary and Duane volunteer to work on the arrangements for the public meetings.

Mary Evans gave a brief update that 7 students have requested material from our archives as they are working on projects in the American History class.

Mary also gave a report on what is happening with the Mount Vernon Cemetery Commission. She reports that a mapping service has been approved for the cemetery so all graves are adequately identified. Mary reports that there is an Eagle Scout project involved in some gravesites, and that some grave stones have been leveled and installed. Mary has presented a written report and it is attached as part of these Minutes.

Our next meeting could potentially be October 15. We will consider setting a time to schedule the open meeting law seminar so all members of the Commission will have met the new state requirement.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary

Monday, October 6, 2025
City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
Cemetery Commission is requesting to speak

July 14-16: Gravestone Conservation Specialist John Heider presented a 4-day hands-on workshop. Eighteen participants gained experience on identifying issues and proper skills to repair common problems. Volunteers are halfway through cleaning stones in Block 4. Volunteers are ready and eager to level stones that are leaning.

Photo: McKay 1856 & 1858



To the best of my knowledge using the maps and documents available at this time without GIS assistance these stones are "McKay" Block 1, lot 78. Stones read "Emma, Mother, Donna, Father". Tim & Diane Lagore are ready to level these leaning stone.

Photo: Unidentified

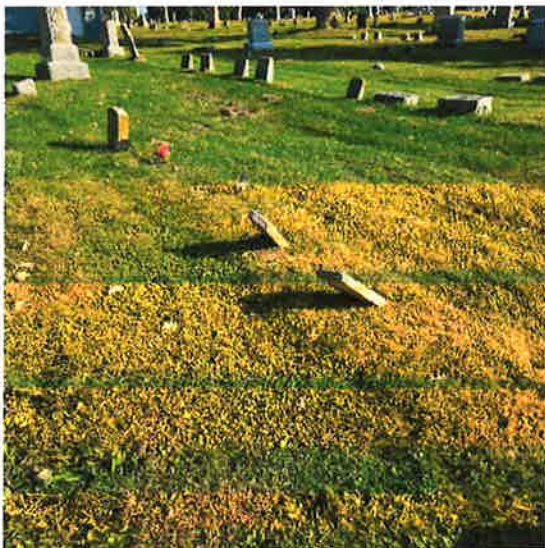


Photo: Block 5, lot 34

No identification. Eric Siggins' team will level these two unidentified leaning stones.

September 1: Council's approval of WKHS GIS mapping services for the cemetery. The commission is eager to get started with this project.

September 23: Robert B. Mitchell's and James Holman's 1812 gravestones were installed. The commission worked with Tony Townsend, member of the Sons of the American Revolution. The S.A.R. is replacing missing veteran markers all across the U.S. Commission members and Tony researched military records, marriage licenses, and obituaries. Paperwork was submitted to Veteran Affairs for shipment of the 240-pound marble stones. Volunteers at the installation were: Commission members, Dustin Burnett, Jacob See, Tony & Deanna Townsend, and Dustin Peterson Director of Linn County Veteran Services. Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel gave the blessing.

September 2025: Volume 30, Issue 3 *Grave News* a quarterly newsletter of the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries printed a two-page article on the Mount Vernon Cemetery.

October 19: Eagle Scout Project by Cait O'Connor will begin at noon on Sunday. Casey & Cait O'Connor, Ted Seiter and commission members walked the cemetery multiple times locating shrubs to be trimmed, bushes to be cut back, and sticks to be picked up getting the cemetery ready for winter.

The Cemetery Commission is very grateful for the city's support and encouragement.