

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
November 1, 2025

The Historic Preservation Commission met at the Mount Vernon City Hall on Saturday, November 1, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. Commission members present were Sue Astley, Randy Brown, Mary Evans, Mike Guerber, Duane Eash, Sherry Brayton, and Guy Booth. Also present was Nathan Countryman from the newspaper.

The Minutes of the meeting of October 4, as amended, were approved.

Under new business, Sue indicated that there could be a number of design review applications that will be coming in, as the Mount Vernon-Lisbon CDG is working on a block grant through the Iowa Economic Development Authority. A number of property owners on Main St are currently determining whether they will participate in the grant program, which will provide funding for designated exterior work on structures. It is possible that the grant, which would be divided between approved recipients could be in the \$650,000 range. Bethany Jordan, an architect that works with ECCOG, will determine the type of work that will be completed within the grant program. The process of determining recipients and the type of work is under way, so there is no reason to schedule a separate meeting for reviewing requests at this time.

It appears that the public hearing on the proposed new guidelines will be scheduled for either December 10 or December 11 at 7:00 p.m. The public hearing will be held at Mount Vernon City Hall. The Commission discussed how the meeting should be publicized, as well as how the information about the new guidelines should be presented. The representative of JMT will be present. She will likely be able to give information that shows the positive results, both visually and economically of having a strong design guideline manual for our commission, and how it positively affects the attitude of the community. We discussed at what level the specifics of the new guidelines should be presented. Much of the guideline booklet will be a re-statement of our current guideline booklet.

Sue indicated that she has talked with JMT about adding a section on fences. There is no mention of fence regulations in the proposed guidelines. Randy and Sue will also meet with CDG to talk about guidelines for signage. This will need to conform to the City ordinances, but there could be more definition as to what is considered temporary or what is permanent in terms of signage on the buildings and windows of the downtown commercial district. Randy and Sue also will see that there are post cards sent to residents of the historic districts and have posters prepared so the public is aware of the meeting that is scheduled to discuss the guideline proposal.

Mary Evans and Sue discussed the need to continue to put together the inventory of historic structures in Mount Vernon. We will refer back to the inventory identified by Barbara Long while she was working for Midwest Research. Barbara was a credentialed historic preservationist and her research and listing of properties should be acceptable to the state. Sue indicated there may be roughly 45 properties in Mount Vernon that do not appear on the inventory. We still need to determine how these can be identified and added to the inventory list. As a Commission, we have a good understanding as to what constitutes a historic structure. It can not be based strictly on date of construction. Numerous factors come into play in determining historical significance. It may be a good idea to have the additional 45 structures

listed as proposed structures of historic significance so that they are highlighted for future full inclusion.

Sue and Randy attended the Mount Vernon High School program where students displayed their projects regarding Mount Vernon history. This is done by students in their freshman year. All of the projects were interesting. There were not projects of new or unique substance that need to be added to the website.

There was continued discussion regarding the Commission's position on accepting material that could be considered archival that should be within the protection of the Commission. Sue included in the material for the meeting a collecting plan that sets forth the considerations the Commission should give in reviewing the acceptance of proposed gifts. Also included was a proposed Deed of Gift. Both documents are well constructed and give written structure to the considerations the Commission gives to proposed gifts. It was suggested that the two documents be sent to City Hall so they can review it to see that it is acceptable to the City. Guy Booth suggested that on the Deed of Gift that there also be a line showing that the gift has been accepted by the Commission.

Mary Evans indicated that she has had an opportunity to review the photo collection that is being offered to the Commission by Bob Campagna. She said all of the photos are relevant to Mount Vernon and would be a welcomed addition to our archives. Upon motion by Mary, seconded by Duane Eash, the Commission accepts the donation of photographs from Bob Campagna.

Mike Guerber indicates there has been the transfer of title of a house in the Ash Park Historic District at 716 6th Ave. NW, and he has sent information regarding historic preservation to the new owners.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary