

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
April 4, 2026

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall on Saturday, April 4, 2026 at 8:30 a.m. Commissioners present at City Hall were Duane Eash, Mike Guerber, Sherry Brayton, Donnie Moore, Mary Evans, Kim Benesh, Grace Chamberlain, Guy Booth, and Edith Dawson. There were no guests or visitors.

The Minutes of the March 7, 2026 meeting were approved.

Duane Eash served as chairperson for the meeting.

The design review item on the agenda was not presented as it is determined the request for the construction of a portico on the education wing of the Mount Vernon Methodist Church does not need approval, as the education wing is not within the Cornell Historic District. The Commission thanks the church for submitting plans and asking for feedback on the project.

There was discussion regarding ongoing repairs and maintenance on other property on the Cornell College Campus. Because of some misinformation in the community, the Commission would like to invite a representative from Cornell to provide information as to plans that are going forward regarding King Chapel, as well as other maintenance of buildings. The Commission desires to remain updated on activity in all of the historic districts.

Grace Chamberlain gave a report on the Commission's effort to have archives available to the public. Grace has identified a collection management system program that would be a good fit for our Commission. The program is from CatalogIT Collection Management System. The cost to purchase the program will be \$540. The City of Mount Vernon will pay the initial purchase fee. The annual subscription fee is \$ 450. This is a system that is used by a number of Historic Preservation Commissions. It will provide easy access through a link that will be on our website. It will promote interest in Mount Vernon architecture and history by offering access to records, pictures, and information about local buildings, people, places and events. This will be a cloud-based record that serves as a backup to the physical materials within the archives. The addition of additional material can be managed by the Commission. Upon motion made by Mary Evans, seconded by Kim Benesh, the Commission approved the adoption of CatalogIT as the CMS platform for the Commission.

Mary Evans gave a report on several projects that could fit within this year's budget. She has contacted Christina Millikin to determine the cost of preparing a video about the murals in Mount Vernon so they can be preserved on film. The cost of producing the video will be \$1,500. Mary also indicated that Charles Weldon will complete work on organizing the walking tour audio for the historic districts. The cost will be \$500. Upon motion by Grace Chamberlain, seconded by Sherry Brayton, the hiring of the above persons for these two projects was approved.

Mary Evans gave an update on the projects at the Mount Vernon Cemetery. During the summer, it is planned to repair 30 gravestones that have been identified as needing leveling, repair, or resetting. There will be no charge for these services. Duane Eash is assisting in this project, along with members of the Masonic Lodge. Tim Legore is working on a system that

will help locate and identify each gravesite in the cemetery. There are between 3,500 and 3,600 gravesites. A project conducted by WHKS to map and locate gravesites has been completed. The results may differ from the map that was completed in 2014, so these two maps will be used to complete the location and identification of gravesites. This will include the physical walking of the cemetery to ensure accuracy of the sites. The project could take several years to complete. The persons who are actively involved in the cemetery project have made great progress thus far.

Duane Eash indicated that the historic downtown tour plaques are going to be installed in the near future. Guy Booth inquired about the availability of presentations from the Preserve Iowa Summit, which could be made available through Zoom.. It would seem that the presentations should be available so that persons interested in historic Preservation could access them at any time on the internet, rather than having the information limited to only those persons who are able to attend the Preserve Iowa Summit. Perhaps a letter to the organizers of the summit could encourage them to record and make these presentations available to the general public.

Kim Benesh gave a report regarding enhancing the understanding of historic preservation in our community. She suggested having a table that is manned by our Commission at Heritage Days. This could include information material, as well as having photoboards. Kim and Grace Chamberlain have also worked on the idea of having participation in the Heritage Days parade. Mary Evans stated that there are a number of items that could be hand out material at the Heritage Days table. Upon motion made by Guy Booth, seconded by Duane Eash, the commission shall continue plans to participate in the Heritage Days activities scheduled for July.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary