

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
September 16, 2026

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall on Wednesday, September 16, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. Commissioners present at City Hall were Sherry Brayton, Mary Evans, Mike Guerber, Randy Brown and Guy Booth. Attending via Zoom was Danielle Kumley. Guests present for the meeting were Leigh Bradbury, Nathan Countryman. Michael Feinberg is present via Zoom,

Minutes for the September 5, 2026 were considered. Mike Guerber asked to have the Minutes indicate that the house at 402 3rd Ave. SW is not in an historic district. Upon motion by Mike Guerber, seconded by Sherry Bratyon, the Minutes were approved as amended.

A design review request has been submitted to the Commission related to the renovation and improvements at the gas station located on the corner of 10th Ave. SW and 1st St SW. Ownership of the facility has changed, and the new owners are replacing the pumps and signage around the pump area. The new owner indicates that there will not be lighting along the sides of the canopy over the pumps. There is indirect lighting from the canopy to the pumps. The amended application for design review meets with the City lighting ordinances and zoning ordinances.

Upon motion by Guy Booth, seconded by Mike Guerber, the Commission approves a certificate of no material effect for the project.

Michael Feinberg, the professor of art history at Cornell College appeared by Zoom and gave the Commission a summary of the work that was accomplished by a class he taught during the last block at Cornell. The course was organized to study the history, construction, and use of the facility, and also to become familiar with the many programs and events that have been held throughout its history. Dr. Feinberg indicated that it was determined that in the early life of the chapel, a portion of the building was dedicated to a museum which contained many artifacts, including stuffed animals and birds. Dr. Feinberg indicated the students were very involved in research regarding different aspects of the building and its use. At the end of the course, the students prepared an exhibit which is now on display at the Cole library. He encouraged members to visit the exhibit. He hopes that a similar class can be taught again every few years as the Cornell is interested in having each student take at least one course that deals with the history and nature of the community in which they are living.

Under the section of informational discussion, Guy Booth discussed the recent resignation of Sue Astley. In particular, he expressed concern about the events that led to Sue's resignation. The City alleged a certain level of unprofessional conduct by Sue, but gave no notice to the Commission of the City's concern, nor did it give the Commission any notice that the City contemplated suspending Sue from the Commission for a 3-month period. His concern points to a lack of notice or consultation with the Historic Preservation Commission and a lack of definition of "unprofessional conduct." It is hoped that the City and the Commission can reach an understanding as to the importance of open communication so commission members will not feel their actions in serving as a Commissioner could be subject to claims of unprofessionalism if a complaint is filed. The Commission would like to have a definition of unprofessional conduct

and would like to have assurance that the Commission, or at least the chair person is made aware of any actions that are being taken by the City Administration against a commission member.

The commission members discussed various views and opinions regarding this incident. Leigh Bradbury was present and was able to comment on behalf of the City. The conversation was productive and hopefully a better understanding of this issue will lead to more open communication between the City Administration and the Commission.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary