

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
October 3, 2026

The Historic Preservation Commission met at Mount Vernon City Hall on Saturday, October 3, 2026 at 8:30 a.m. Commissioners present at City Hall were Grace Chamberlain, Mike Guerber, Mary Evans, Danielle Kumley, Kim Benesh, Guy Booth and Randy Brown. Guests at the meeting were Tom Wiesler, Mayor, Nathan Countryman, and Nanette Rambo.

Mayor Wiesler gave a presentation. He annually wants to attend and visit with members of various commissions of the Mount Vernon government. He gave a good presentation of the city's support of the Commission, and gave an update on the expectations of the City. The Mayor's attendance was appreciated.

Minutes of the September 16, 2026 meeting were reviewed. Upon motion by Mike Guerber, seconded by Danielle Kumley, the Minutes were approved.

The first design review request on the agenda was submitted by Nanette Rambo for the building she owns at 106 1st St NW. This building is in the downtown commercial historic district. Ms. Randall presented diagrams of a request to replace a second story window at the rear of the building with a door. The door would provide access to the extended roof at the back of the building. At this stage, she is not requesting the construction of a stairway from the roof to the ground. Having a door instead of a window does give more ready access to the roof in case of emergency. After a review of the application and a discussion as to the request, it was determined that Ms. Randall had not yet made an application to the City for a building permit for the project. The Commission does not object to the replacement of the window with a functioning door. Upon motion by Guy Booth, seconded by Mary Evans, the Commission will approve a certificate of no material effect. However, the approval is subject to the City of Mount Vernon and Linn County issuing a building permit that reflects that all city and county zoning ordinances and safety ordinances are approved. The motion to approve the certificate of no material effect was passed unanimously.

The second design review request is for property at 615 6th St NW in Mount Vernon. This property is in the Ash Park Historic District. The request is to repair and extend a boulder/rock retaining wall on the property. It will run from its present location near 6th St and will run along the property line which is adjacent to a city-owned alley. It then curves in a westerly direction along the rear of the residence. The proposed plan also indicates the installation of a limestone walkway from the retaining wall to the back porch steps of the residence.

There was discussion as to whether the plans submitted to the Commission adequately describe the location and nature of the proposed retaining wall. The applicants appeared and discussed the issues raised by Commission members. Upon motion by Mike Guerber and seconded by Grace Chamberlain, the Commission approved a Certificate of Appropriateness to the homeowners to extend the rock wall and to include the sidewalk and stairs that leads from the garage driveway to the rear porch of the house. During the discussion, before approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness, the issue of storm water was discussed. This issue had been previously discussed at the meeting on August 1, 2026. The property owners acknowledge there is additional storm water that both comes onto their property, and exits their property onto the

City alley which is adjacent to the east property line of the applicants. The Commission stated that they do not have jurisdiction to resolve storm water issues that affect properties in an historic district.

Randy Brown gave a report regarding the need to officially name officers of the Commission. Randy has been previously approved as Chairperson of the Commission. There has not been a formal designation of other officers. Duane Eash, who has been the Vice Chair of the Commission, has resigned. Therefore, Randy suggested that the Commission officially name a new Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The discussion that followed encouraged commission members to volunteer to serve as an officer. Guy Booth volunteered to continue as Secretary, Grace Chamberlain volunteered to serve as Treasurer, and Mike Guerber volunteered to assume the position of Vice Chair, but also requested that other commission members assist in dealing with the Vice Chair's duties if he is not available. Upon motion from Mary Evans, seconded by Danielle Kumley, the new officers were approved.

Randy Brown reminded the Commission of the meeting scheduled for October 16 at Marion, Iowa to be conducted by the Iowa Historic Preservation office. Randy made a list of members who planned to attend and he will forward the RSVP to the state office.

Under old business, Mike Guerber indicated that there were no parcels of real estate that changed hands in any of the three historic districts. However, there have been other houses that are historically significant that have changed hands. This would include the house at 318 2nd St NW, the house at 215 10th St, and a third house located on 2nd Avenue.

A brief discussion regarding the HPC website indicated that we need additional help in working on the website and adding information to the website. It is hoped that this can be done by an intern if one would be available. This would help save money for the Commission as we would not have to hire a tech person to do the work. Grace Chamberlain thought she may have someone in mind that could be well-qualified to assist in working on the website and she will report at the next meeting if that person is available.

Mary Evans reported that she had inquiries from several different parties to get historic information about families gravesites and location of heirs of a deceased person. Mary, as usual, did a thorough research to answer the questions of people who contact the Commission looking for historical information. She was able to help in each of the instances and get questions answered.

Mary also reported that the Mount Vernon Fire Dept has donated their historical records to the Commission and they will become part of the archives.

Randy gave a review of the budget for the Commission. First, he indicated that the grant for the application to have the First Street building added to the National Register will not be going ahead in this fiscal year. It is hoped that other grant programs may be available. Any grant program that is explored should be noticed to the City Council in the event the application needs City approval. Randy also stated that the City has stated that expenditures of the Commission must be approved before decisions are made and checks are written. Randy will need to find out if there are expenditures that do not need separate City approval on a monthly basis.

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 10:00
a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary