

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Saturday, December 10, 2016

The Historic Preservation Commission met on Saturday, December 10, 2016. Members present were Leah Rogers, Mary Evans, Susan Hargus, Sarah Kelly, Patty Westerkamp, Ed Sauter, Robert Murphy, Caroline Kelly and Guy Booth. Additional persons present were Joel Miller and Deanne Rexroat from Cornell College, Margaret Stephens, of the Mount Vernon Lisbon Sun and Jim Evans.

A design review application for a certificate of appropriateness was forwarded to the commission by the Mount Vernon zoning Administrator. Cornell College is requesting a certificate of appropriateness for construction of the new Science Center. It appears the request does not include a permit for the renovation of West Science Building. Joel Miller presented architectural renderings of the appearance of the new Science Building, both from viewing the building from its entrance, as well as a view of the building as it would appear along 5th Avenue. Joel indicated that the work on site preparation is under way. He anticipates that actual construction which is initiated by placing the sub-foundation caissons would begin late February, early March of 2017. He indicates the Board of Trustees will meet in February for final approval of the combined new building and renovation of the current Science Building.

The issue that was discussed by the Commission relates to the commitment Cornell has given to the Commission that there will be the incorporation of architectural material from the two houses that have been demolished, so that there will be a permanent recognition of the previously existing buildings and their historical significance to the campus.

Joel indicates that the architects for the project have made a couple of proposals, but they have not been accepted by Cornell. Joel also indicates that there has been a request by the City Council to gather additional information about the site/landscape work to be done. Cornell is anxious to be able to get all permitting completed so the building construction can begin as early in 2017 as possible.

The Commission expressed concern that there has not been a specific plan presented to the Commission regarding the completion of the landscaping and plan for reference to the demolished buildings. Guy Booth moved that the Commission delay a decision on the request for a certificate of appropriateness until final plans for the building, landscape and memorial to the demolished buildings is submitted to the Commission. Susan Hargus seconded the motion. After further discussion and assurance that the Commission will be available to act upon the updated site plan material, the motion was approved. Joel indicated that he will be able to get a specific plan from the architectural firm, and also get information needed by the Mount Vernon City Council.

Mary Evans gave the Commission an update on the development of the Commission's website, as well as an update on work that has been completed with the archives.

Mary indicated that she met with Brenda Adams Oakley, who had a number of photographs that had been in the possession of Ivan Simonds, a former custodian at Cornell College. Mr. Simonds also had in his possession a number of musical instruments. Attached to these Minutes is a report prepared by Mary. Mary indicates ten photographs were chosen to be scanned and placed on the website.

Mary also indicated that she has been working with teachers in the Mount Vernon School District to develop an architectural history curriculum. She has worked with an expert in this field, whose name is Alice Kurtz. Mary has requested that the Commission hire Ms. Kurtz to complete her work in developing the architectural curriculum that can be incorporated into the history program of the district.

Mary also reports that the continued development of the website is going to need professional help. She has met with Scott Cannon, who is a website designer. He has estimated to her that the cost of his work may be approximately \$3,000. There was discussion about how the \$3,000 can be raised for hiring Mr. Cannon. Mary Evans moved that we hire Alice Kurtz and pay her \$500 for development of the architectural curriculum. In addition, that she and Robert Murphy consult with Scott Cannon to get a specific proposal for the work to be done so the Commission can make a decision on hiring Mr. Cannon and determining how funds should be raised to pay for the website development. Sarah Kelly seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Leah Rogers indicates that she will be able to review our budget, as well as grants that may be available to meet the expense of the website development.

Leah and Sarah both discussed the research that is being done for the Historic Preservation Commission's thirtieth anniversary. Dick Thomas has provided an article regarding the history of the Commission. Sarah's research indicates that annual reports of the Commission are missing for the years 1992, 2000, 2001, 2009 and 2010. Hopefully these will be discovered in the archives. It is hoped this research can be completed early in 2017.

A summary of the preservation summit seminars and workshops is going to be presented at the next meeting. Leah also announced that a request has been made for people to submit ideas about presentations for the 2017 summit, which will be held at Fort Dodge, Iowa. They can be sent to Leah. can be forwarded to Leah.

Sarah Kelly indicates that she will be out of town for the months of January, February and march, 2017 and is taking a leave of absence for those three months, with the approval of the Commission.

Robert Murphy and Caroline Kelly, our newest Commission members, each gave a summary of their backgrounds and why they are interested in being members of the Commission. Both people will be able to make significant contributions to the Commission.

Leah indicated she has had conversations with Hugh Lifson. Hugh has expressed concerns that the articles in The Sun regarding the demolition of the two houses and the

proposed memorial may have been understated in the information provided. He is hopeful more information will be presented in the future.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary

On 11/7/16 Brenda Adams Oakley walked into the Visitor Center and asked Joe Jennison if he knew anyone who might like some old photographs. Joe gave me a call saying she was bringing the photos to the Visitor Center the next day at 9:00 and I was welcome to join them.

On Tuesday, 11/8/16, Brenda Adams Oakley told the story about her husband's grandfather, Ivan Simonds, being a custodian at Cornell College. Ivan and his wife Orvilla lived in the brick house on 3rd Ave SW where Ivan often stored Cornell items intended for the dump in his basement: such as photographs & musical instruments. Brenda respectfully related that Ivan was a hoarder. (Ivan was on the Mount Vernon Fire Department.)

When the Simonds family moved from their home on 3rd Ave SW their basement belongings were placed in a storage unit. The family recently cleaned out the storage unit taking multiple boxes to Goodwill at Council Street and Marion. (I called both Goodwill Stores and neither had any records of receiving boxes of photographs and albums.)

Brenda has loaned 47 photos to be identified, scanned and placed on the MVHPC Website and then returned to the family. *10 photos were chosen.*

Ivan & Orvilla Simonds [Grandparents]

Patrick & Brenda (Simonds) Oakley [Parents]

Patrick (Tim) & Brenda (Adams Champeau) Oakley [Donors]

Tim Oakley 319-651-9840

Brenda Oakley 319-270-6900

I will deliver the photos to Dick Thomas for possible identification and then start the process to place designated photos online.

Mary E. Evans

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