

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Saturday, November 1, 2014

The Historic Preservation Commission met on Saturday, November 1, 2014. Commission members present included Leah Rogers, Ed Sauter, Sara Kelly, Ashley Anthony, Janet Budack, Hugh Lifson, Dianne Osmun, Patty Westerkamp, Dick Thomas and Guy Booth. Also attending was Francesca Thompson, liaison from the City Council.

A design review conference was held which was essentially a pre-design review conference, even though the sign that is under discussion has already been placed on the building. Marcia Collins, Molly Collins and Kelly Collins, owners of the business known as Ain't Life Grand, were present to discuss the sign that has been installed on the building. The building is owned by Karen Thornton and is located in the building that formerly housed the Purple Elephant. There were several concerns noted. First, the fact that the sign was put on the building without receiving approval from the zoning administrator or historic preservation is of concern. There was a breakdown of communication between the building owner and the Planning and Zoning administrator.

The discussion related to two panels that were installed on each side of the printed sign. The owners indicate this was to replicate what might have been decoration in the mid 1950's. It was pointed out this isn't historical in relationship to the downtown district. The owners of the business are submitting an application to the zoning administrator for approval of their sign. If it is not approved, the zoning administrator will notify the Collins. The application will be forwarded to the Historic Preservation for formal review. The Commission could not reach a consensus on the appropriate use of the sign. We have requested that more detail about the sign be presented when the application comes before Historic Preservation.

It was also decided to send a memo to City Hall, and the Community Development Group, giving information as to what requires review by Historic Preservation as it relates to signs and exterior changes.

Dick Thomas gave a report on the Micky Woods mural. The cleaning and restoration of the mural is under way. The conservator has indicated he is removing white paint that was put on the mural at a later date. There still is a question about what type of frame should be prepared for the mural, and also a question as to where it would be placed once it is completed. It was decided to meet in the City Council chambers for our next meeting so we can better determine where it could be placed in City Hall.

Ed Sauter reported that the walking tour project is still being developed. It will probably take another few months before it is workable.

We had a discussion regarding openings on the commission. It would be helpful if we had a member that represented the school district. It was also suggested it would be helpful to have a member who works at the library and is familiar with the archives at the library. Ed Sauter also asked everyone to consider volunteering to serve as the next chairperson for the commission.

Under old business, Dianne Osmun presented information regarding the process of putting new tags on many of the photographs and other archival material that we have in the computer. She handed out an instruction sheet as to how to get into the program so information can be placed on the tags. It also was determined that we need to clean up the identification for names and streets so submitting a request for information will gather everything that the database has regarding the topic.

Janet Budack gave a brief report on the cemetery project. She also presented a written report which she asked to be made part of the Minutes.

Leah indicates that the budget requests for the next fiscal year need to be pulled together. We will continue to request the same funding. The request from Historic Preservation should be prepared and forwarded to City Council by mid-December.

Guy Booth indicated that the demolition ordinance is going to have its first reading at the City Council meeting on November 3. He encouraged members to be present if they would like to be supportive of the ordinance.

We had a general discussion about having better communication with City officials, as well as the public. It was decided to prepare a checklist of information that is needed for a person who is making a request for signs or design review on any project. This checklist should be available at City Hall when a person files their application. It was also decided that whenever possible, we should have discussions with the head of Public Works, as well as the new City Engineer to keep them informed as to what our concerns are on historic preservation. It was also suggested that any job description for these employees should include their need to interface with Historic Preservation.

We are at a point where the archival storage space in City Hall is lacking adequacy for property protecting the archival material. We should make sure the City knows that in the future, we desire to have a more secure area, as well as an area that has climate control.

In other new business, Hugh Lifson mentioned he would like to plan a trip to Mason City to view the Frank Lloyd Wright Hotel. He thought it would be a two-day trip. He will continue to research the trip.

Janet Budack asked for a leave of absence from the Commission from November through April as she would be at her home in Arizona during that period of time. The Commission did grant the leave of absence.

The next meeting for the Commission would be December 7, 2014 at 9:15 a.m. This may be held at City Hall. The agenda will identify the site for the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary