

MINUTES  
OF  
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
Saturday, February 6, 2016

The Historic Preservation Commission met on February 6, 2016 at 9:15 a.m. Present were Leah Rogers, Dick Thomas, Susan Hargas, Hugh Lifson, Mary Evans, Patty Westerkamp, Carine Klein and Guy Booth. Upon motion made by Hugh Lifson and seconded by Mary Evans, Minutes of the January 9, 2016 meeting were approved.

Leah Rogers gave several reports. The budget request for the next fiscal year has been submitted to the City Council. The City Council has not completed its approval of the budget as yet. The CLG report will be filed by the end of the month. Leah indicates there are a few additional items that need to be added to the report.

Leah indicated that the Micky Woods mural project continues to progress. The photo boards have been removed from City Hall and are stored at the 1<sup>st</sup> Street community building until the new exhibit space for the boards is completed. The City is working with Ed Sauter to prepare the apparatus for installing the mural on the wall of the City Council chambers. Ed is also working with Jim Englebrecht to prepare the frame for the mural. It is hoped this can be completed in the near future. The Commission will then arrange to have a formal grand opening for the introduction of the project to the City.

Leah has sent out information about projects that have been completed by HPC over the years. This is in preparation for a meeting with the City Council on February 15, 2016. The purpose of the meeting is to update the City Council on the work of HPC, as well as give an understanding of the certified local government status that the commission has. We can also discuss future projects that are on our agenda. Leah, Ed and Dick will be the presenters for the discussion, but all HPC members are welcome to attend.

Mary Evans has given a report about the progress of the website. She has been very busy entering new material onto the website. This includes a list of history projects that have come through the Mount Vernon High School local history project. Mary has been scanning and tagging the new material. She indicates there are many other sources of material that we can explore to have included on the website.

Mary also indicates she has been doing a lot of work in the archive room. Basically, Mary is starting from scratch on reorganizing, cleaning and removing unused equipment. She has also identified the need for a new filing cabinet and other material to help protect the archival material. Upon motion made by Booth, seconded by Lifson, the commission approved the purchase of a filing cabinet for the amount of \$439 and further, to have Mary organize the removal of unused desks and other equipment from the archive room. The motion was approved.

Finally, Mary commented on the excellent collection that resulted from the Bicentennial project in 1976. All of the structures of the City were photographed and are available on a page that has additional information about the structure.

Janet Budack is in Arizona for a portion of the winter. She has submitted a formal request to take a leave of absence. Upon motion by Thomas, seconded by Lifson, the leave of absence request was approved. Janet will be back in May.

Leah indicated that the preservation conference for 2016 will be held in Davenport, Iowa in mid-September. She also said there is a preservation 50 conference which is being organized to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the federal legislation establishing historic preservation.

Hugh Lifson indicates that he is beginning to organize a plan for an educational trip to Davenport, Iowa. We have discussed a similar trip to Mason City, but a trip to Davenport may be more practical.

Dick and Hugh discussed an interesting project they are involved in. This relates to a portrait that may have been in the possession of Cornell College that relates to the initial design of the president's home and the connection between former residents of the house and an artist who completed a portrait of the daughter of a Mr. Hamilton, who was initially involved in development of land in the Mount Vernon area. They will continue their research and verify information about the early years of Cornell College.

Hugh indicated that he is contemplating a picture for Chalk the Walk that includes campaign buttons for President McKinley, President Obama and President Clinton. He will keep the commission informed as to what his Chalk the Walk project will be for this year.

The next scheduled meeting for the Commission is March 5, 2016 at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary

## **Mt. Vernon Historic Preservation Commission**

### List of Projects and Activities Conducted by the Commission:

- Surveying, evaluating and listing three historic districts (Cornell College, Commercial, and Ash Park) in the National Register of Historic Places. These projects were conducted with the assistance of matching grants through the State Historical Society of Iowa.
- Providing technical assistance and expertise from professionals on the Commission to the City, private property owners, and Cornell College on historic preservation projects for which someone would otherwise have to hire such assistance/consultation through Design Review and pre-reviews.
- Assisting property owners in emergency situations, such as the fires at the Pizza Palace and Scorz, to find and obtain emergency grants from the State Historical Society of Iowa and the experts needed to recover from these catastrophic events.
- Assisting property owners with information and contacts for state and federal historic preservation tax credits and available grant funding.
- Spearheading a historic masonry evaluation of all the brick buildings in the Commercial District and assisting with brick restoration projects on several buildings including Bauman's, Big Creek Market, and Chameleon's, and the removal of the slip covers formerly on Lee's Town & Country building and the current Right Frame of Mind.
- Working with Cornell College and others in the development of the Commission's website, which now contains an extensive collection of historic photographs that are searchable for research purposes.
- Working with the City and other groups in getting the City's cemetery records digitization project completed and supporting the digitization project of the Mt. Vernon/Lisbon Sun newspaper collection, both resulting in searchable databases accessible to the public.
- Developing a good working relationship with Cornell College resulting in early pre-review consultations of all building restoration, landscape, and sign projects proposed by the College within the Cornell College Historic District.
- Conducting seminars in Mt. Vernon to assist property owners in proper preservation techniques including seminars on porch restoration, historic paint colors, window restoration, masonry repairs, design review, and historic preservation funding and tax credits;
- Conducting historic tours during community events and scheduled bus tours and supporting local artists in historical-themed events such as the Lincoln Highway Arts Festival and Heritage Days.
- Supporting and assisting with the audio tour of historic sites in Mount Vernon.
- Conserving the Mickey Woods mural of Historic Mount Vernon. The conservation was completed with the assistance of a grant obtained from the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation.
- Working with Cole Library to have a section of historic preservation books and guides available to the public.
- Conducting design review under city ordinance to help preserve the integrity of the historic buildings in the three historic districts. The Commission compiled a design guidelines booklet to assist in this process.
- Working with other Historic Preservation Commissions in the area including Lisbon and Linn County in conducting survey and evaluation projects and preservation seminars.