

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Saturday, April 6, 2013

The Historic Preservation Commission met on Saturday, April 6, 2013. The meeting was called to order by Dick Thomas. Present were Dick Thomas, Hugh Lifson, Pat Westerkamp, Ed Sauter, Mary Iber, Sue Hargus, Janet Budack, and Guy Booth.

The Minutes from the meeting of March 2, 2013 had not been sent to the commissioners, therefore, they will be resent and will be considered at the next meeting.

There was a follow-up on design review concerning the windows at the Video Village building. Dave Krogmann had appeared previously with a proposal for new windows on the second story of the building. The Commission had indicated reservations about the plan he proposed and requested him to consider retaining the arch shape of the windows. Mr. Krogmann presented a new plan indicating that he has found windows that will fit within the original openings and he has ordered them. There has not been a formal building permit approved, so the Commission could not act on his plan, but gave him an indication that the Commission favors his new approach. Mr. Krogmann will also be putting in two rectangular windows that face the alley and three rectangular windows which face the west. The rectangular windows will not be visible from the front of the building. Mr. Krogmann indicated that the increased cost of a window from his original proposal to the new proposal amounts to approximately \$1,500 per window. This is a significant cost, but it is extremely important for attempting to preserve the historic nature of the building as best possible.

Guy Booth gave a report on the demolition ordinance. The City Council had a review of the ordinance at his March 11 meeting. The ordinance has been referred to the City Attorney. Guy met with the City Attorney to review the ordinance and will get a revision from the City Attorney to consider some changes that the City might like to have. Overall, there was very little objection to the nature of the ordinance.

Dick Thomas indicated that the website still needs some design work to make the database more identifiable and workable. Dick also indicated that the people who are using the Historic Preservation website are leaving questions to be answered. For instance, one person wanted to know about any restrictions on making changes to the exterior of the building, as well as the interior of the building. There was also a question about any limitation on paint colors. Currently, Dick is attempting to answer questions that are presented. This led to a discussion on how people who are purchasing a building in a historic district are able to get information about the district so they know before purchase what types of restrictions may apply. Ed Sauter will look at the packet of material that used to be provided to people purchasing property in the historic districts, and whether this can be made available to realtors so people have advance notice of any restrictions and regulations.

Dick and Mary Iber gave an update on the newspaper digitization project. The portion of the project relating to the Lisbon paper has not been completed. Mary indicates that there is a problem about which browser to use to get the most complete access to the newspaper. She has contacted the company that is doing the work and has let them know we are not satisfied with the accessibility to the paper and identification of requested searches. Mary will continue to monitor how this can be completed.

Dick Thomas has requested that each member of the Commission submit a list of what responsibilities for the work of the Commission can be taken on by each member. In attempting to reorganize the Commission, we want to make sure each member of the Commission has an area in which they can lead the work to be done. This will make it easier for the chairperson to keep all of the projects on schedule. It was also noted that Addison Ault was visiting the meeting today, as he has interest in applying to become a Commission member.

Dick Thomas shared a report from Leah Rogers about the review of the Commercial District. Jennifer Price recommends that we not attempt to expand the district at this time. She identifies in her report reasons why the update she has made is important, but does not lead to a recommendation of an attempt to expand the district. Because there have been substantial changes in how the State Historic Commission reviews districts, and because of the numerous changes in our Commercial Historical District, there would be some risk that we could lose our designation as a historic district in the commercial area. Leah Rogers will follow up with a report at our next meeting.

Under old business, Hugh Lifson indicated that plans for the trip to LeClaire, Iowa are on hold. He may have an opportunity to do some organizational work on this later in the year. Hugh also gave a report on the chalk the walk project. He and Sue Hargus have decided on the picture that is going to be prepared. They have also prepared a one-page summary of a letter from Taylor Pierce to his wife describing the reading of the Declaration of Independence and the Emancipation Proclamation at a Fourth of July gathering in approximately 1865. This will be available to be read while the picture is being prepared. It was also decided that they will have a table at the site so people can connect the history of the painting with the actual writings of that time. We will also have cards and book bags available.

Hugh Lifson also reported that he has contacted a conservator in Kansas City regarding the Micki Woods mural. It appears she has good experience in working on this type of project. Hugh will continue corresponding with her to see if she would like to become involved, and what the cost would be if she is involved.

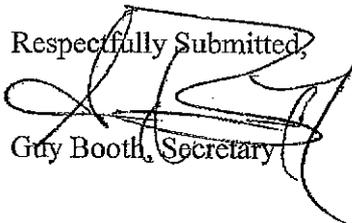
Under new business, Ed Sauter indicates that Cornell College has hired his firm to design the replacement cupola for Main Hall. The cupola was destroyed by lightning a year ago. Cornell wants to have it rebuilt and reproduced as close as possible to its original construction.

Dick Thomas reported that he has identified a firm that will be able to assist the City in developing the cemetery records. The firm is known as Thorson Project in Cedar Rapids. They have had a lot of experience in working with the Oakhill Jackson Cemetery. Dick is going to have a committee made up of himself, Janet Budack, Judy Lass and other persons to define what work needs to be done and a schedule for preserving the cemetery records and establishing a map of the cemetery.

In other new business, Dick Thomas indicated he had received a 118 page manuscript from the Bryant family. He has had a chance to read it, and is going to have others read it. The question that arises is where should it be stored. It was decided to keep the manuscript within the archives of Historic Preservation and then determine at some point whether this should be scanned on to the website.

Dick Thomas also indicated there is a gift that has been provided to the City of Cedar Rapids to annually highlight the history of Cedar Rapids and Linn County. The first program is scheduled for May 4, 2013. The program will be on historic preservation issues, and also on information about the Tax Act and how it can benefit historic preservation. Dick also mentioned there is a program to be given in Ames that will discuss many of the repair issues on older houses. We will try to get a video of both of these presentations for our archives.

Next meeting for Historic Preservation is May 18 at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary