

MINUTES  
OF  
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
Saturday, September 7, 2013

The Historic Preservation Commission met on Saturday, September 7, 2013 at 9:15 a.m. The meeting was called to order by Dick Thomas. Present were Dick Thomas, Patricia Westerkamp, Ashley Anthony, Hugh Lifson, Leah Rogers, Ed Sauter, Janet Budack, Mary Iber, Sue Hargus and Guy Booth. Also present was Will Klein, a former intern.

Dick Thomas reported that the windows for the Kepler Building have been ordered. The owners have had to do the construction for the framing of the windows so they could be sure the order for the windows will fit into the frames. This procedure was approved at the last commission meeting when the Certificate of Appropriateness was approved.

Dick and Leah reported on the Main Street Summit that they attended in Burlington, Iowa. Leah attended the CLG Meeting. She reported Mount Vernon has better funding than most CLG's and that the City has been helpful to us by including our budget as a line item in the general budget for the City. Leah indicates that we have been encouraged to make sure the proposed demolition ordinance be sent to the state for review. She also reported on a Section 106 training that deals with cultural resource surveys. A training program will be given on September 21, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. in Cedar Rapids at the CSPS Hall. Leah also indicated that there are continuing education programs online and she will provide the website for these training sessions.

Dick Thomas reported on the session that he attended entitled Preservation Iowa. This group is developing procedure to be aware of decisions being made by the Cultural Affairs Office. There seems to be a shift of authority to this office which allows the approval or disapproval of requests that may affect historical properties, without having the request go through the State Historic Commission procedures. Dick also reported on the tension within Main Street between supporters of economic development versus historic preservation. Finally, Dick reported that next year's Main Street Summit will be in Cedar Rapids at the end of August. We can have an impact on the meeting and encourage that all of historical preservation in Linn County be highlighted. In particular, we should try to make available our website and encourage others to look at it in terms of using software that we are developing.

Hugh Lifson gave a report on the Mickey Woods Mural. He is still working on establishing a contract with a conservator for the project. He has identified a person in Kansas City. It appears the contract for this conservator will be in the \$8,000 to \$9,000 range, so we need to make sure this is funded before we can enter into a contract. Hugh will prepare a letter to attempt to raise funds for the project. He will send a copy of the proposed letter to Ed Sauter. It is suggested that this may be a good article for the newspaper. Hugh also indicated that we need to re-supply the post cards of the mural so they can be used in the fundraising effort.

Sue Hargas reported that the Historic Commission will have a new Christmas card for this year. It has been designed by Patty Westerkamp and met with the great approval of the Commission. It is hoped the cards will be available by early October.

Dick Thomas indicated that we still have a vacancy on the Commission. Everyone is encouraged to identify people who should make an application to be on the Commission. City Hall sent an application from a person who will be moving to Mount Vernon within the next month or two.

Leah Rogers indicated that the seminar on repairing, rather than replacing windows can be booked at any time. The Commission felt that March, 2014 would be a good time, and Leah will look into getting this scheduled.

A question has been forwarded to the Commission about a person who objects to a neighbor putting a satellite antenna in their backyard. It is believed the dish is the normal size dish that people have using Dish Network. It was determined that the house is not in the Ash Park Historic District, so we may not have jurisdiction. Secondly, we do not know if the City requires a building permit for installing a dish on private property. Consequently, it would appear we do not have any authority for input at this stage.

As part of our ongoing work of the Commission, we discussed goals for the coming year. There were six areas identified: 1) more Historic Preservation newspaper articles; 2) continue to work on website and to transfer control and maintenance of the contract from Luke to someone in town, most probably Mitch; 3) continue plans for annual Historic Preservation trips; 4) continue to work on self-guided tours, including the placement of plaques on the respective buildings, and to be part of the telephone tour that has been developed by Cornell College; 5) do the windows work shop; 6) complete the cemetery project.

Dick reported that the summer intern has catalogued the archive material into an index on the computer so you will be able to determine where the archives are located and how to find the information within the storage area. This would allow a person to look at a hard copy of the archive material. The summer intern has submitted a report of her work and this will be distributed by Dick. The Commission felt the intern did a great job for the summer, and she should be paid the complete contracted amount, plus a bonus if there are funds available.

Hugh Lifson had announcements to make, including that the renovation of the President's home has been completed and is especially well done. Secondly, he indicated that there are portraits of Mount Vernon done by local artists on display at the Robert Murphy gallery.

The next scheduled meeting of HPC is October 12, 2013 at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary