

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
October 6, 2018

The Historic Preservation Commission met on October 6, 2018. Members present were Mary Evans, Leah Rogers, Ed Sauter, Suzette Astley, Hugh Lifson, Caroline Kelly, and Guy Booth. Guests at the meeting included Kari Morgan, Jason Bersch, Elias Schroeder and Margaret Stevens.

Minutes of the meetings of September 15, 2018 and September 18, 2018 were approved.

Cornell College has asked for design review of renovations to West Science Center. Kari Morgan and Jason Bersch presented documents showing the renovations taking place. The Commission was asked to review and approve the window replacement and window additions to the building. Hugh Lifson reviewed the architectural rendering of the projected changes and was quite complimentary of how the plans retained the integrity of the original windows and entry way to the building. The entryway has new windows adjacent to it for a lounge area, which provides more lighting at the entrance. There will also be new windows on the top floor of the building in the northwest portion of the building. The windows and the new entryway retain the lintel. Upon motion made by Ed Sauter, seconded by Hugh Lifson, a certificate of no material effect is approved.

Kari Morgan also gave a report on the development of space within Russell Science Center that will present a history of the two civil war houses that were removed to facilitate the construction of the new science building. The plan is to have a number of pictures that show the two houses and will give information about the history of the structures. The Commission concurs with the ongoing plans for memorializing the structures. Because of this, there is no reason to amend the Minutes from the August 18, 2018 meeting.

Elias Schroeder was present for a pre-review of work he is doing on his home at 609 5th Ave. NW, Mount Vernon. This is in the Ash Park Historic District. Mr. Schroeder is going to be putting in new windows and wanted to have the commission review his plans. The framing will be a fiberglass material and will be one over one in design. He also discussed the exterior framing of the windows. After removing a portion of the vinyl siding that is on the house, Elias found there has been a good deal of destruction to the underlying clapboard siding, to the extent that it may not be salvageable. He is looking at a vinyl siding for replacement, but is also considering cement board. The Commission suggested that vinyl siding is not the most favored approach, but the Commission realizes it may be cost prohibitive to not use vinyl siding. Elias will keep us informed as to his decisions on both the windows and the siding. He also asked for advice on colors for his house, and Mary gave him a book on appropriate colors for historical homes.

Under new business, there have been two people who have filed applications to be on the Commission. These two people are Peter Ault and Machele Pelkey. The question arose whether there has been adequate notification of vacancies. This led to a discussion of how we can best get information to people in Mount Vernon who would like to be on the Commission, and how they understand what the qualifications are, especially in terms of being a resident of the community, being a resident in a specific historic district if needed, and what type of general

historic preservation background a person might have. Leah will talk to the City Administrator to determine what is the best method to contact potential applicants, and especially when we are looking for an applicant in a specific historic district. Leah will put together information that can be on the website so people will better understand the requirements to be a commission member. Caroline mentioned that the Commission may want to think more about having a “friends of HPC” established so people could volunteer their expertise without having to be appointed as a commissioner.

Mary Evans reported that there is a substantial amount of archival material regarding Mount Vernon that is at the Cornell Library. Some of it has been identified in a specific area. There appears to be a substantial amount of other archival material that may be best protected if it is within the archives maintained by the Commission. Mary will continue to work with Cornell to identify “non-Cornell related material” that the college may want to have placed into the Historic Preservation Commission’s archives so that the college has less responsibility in maintaining these records.

Mary also announced that the oral historic district tours can now be accessed at mountvernonhistorytours.com. This material has been completed by the interns who worked for the Commission this past summer.

Leah indicates that the King Chapel Tower tour is tentatively scheduled for November 3, following the Commission meeting on that date.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary