

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
November 13, 2019

The Historic Preservation Commission met on Wednesday, November 13, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. at the Mount Vernon Visitors Center. Members present were Leah Rogers, Caroline Kelly, Suzette Astley, Hugh Lifson, Peter Ault, Guy Booth and returning Commissioner Janet Budack. Guests present were Les and Katrina Garner.

Upon motion made, the Minutes of the November 2, 2019 meeting were approved.

Les and Katrina Garner were present for design review on the fence project that is part of the renovation of the home they have purchased on 10th Avenue. Katrina presented information regarding the fence. It is a black aluminum fence with the slats giving full view of the property, but being close enough together to be a fence for preventing the Garner's dog from leaving the property. Hugh Lifson mentioned that the fence is a good match for the same type of fencing that is surrounding the nearby Cornell Ash Park Field. Upon motion made by Hugh Lifson, seconded by Caroline Kelly, a certificate of appropriateness was approved.

Leah brought to our attention that this is the first meeting for Janet Budack, who has rejoined the Commission. It is good to have her expertise back on the Commission.

The Commission reviewed the brochure prepared by Machele Pelkey entitled "Owning Property in a Historic District." The brochure gives a good explanation of how owning property in a historic district may affect the property owner. It sets forth the rationale for historic districts and the pride that the community has in historic preservation. The brochure will be available at City Hall, at the Visitor's Center, and it is suggested that it also be made available to realtors to be handed out when a person is looking at property in one of the districts. Upon motion made by Suzette Astley, seconded by Guy Booth, the final draft of the pamphlet was approved.

The Commission had a discussion on possible issues of fund raising for the Commission. The HPC is a branch of City government, and is actually a certified local government entity. Because of this, the Commission works within the auspices of the City government and the City Council. Members of the Commission have looked into establishing a fundraising arm of the Commission that could apply for 501C(3) approval by the Internal Revenue Service. It was pointed out that the Commission would have to have a separate non-profit corporation set up such as a "friends of historic preservation" in order to apply for the tax exempt status. All money that comes to the Commission is money that would be considered part of the City general fund. An exception may be grants that are awarded to the Commission, but even the grants are administered through the City checking account. The Commission is certainly in favor of obtaining grants and other funds to enhance historic preservation projects. However, the requirement that funds raised by HPC would necessarily have to be shown in the books of the City could cause audit problems if there wasn't adequate city oversight of the procurement of and use of these funds. This is an issue that we can continue to look at, especially as we can identify grants or participate in other fundraising that will be of benefit to the Commission.

Leah announced that the Cedar Rapids Historic Preservation Commission is sponsoring walking tours of various places around Linn County. They have scheduled a walking tour of the historic districts in Mount Vernon for June 23, 2019. These walking tours will be promoted in advertising by the Cedar Rapids Historic Preservation Commission.

Other information at the meeting included the announcement that Baumans Clothing has received a Main Street Challenge Grant in the amount of \$25,000. This is to be used for the updating of the front windows of the store. A presentation of this project was given by Mike Smith in October. Leah also announced that our IT consultant has suggested we upgrade our website. We will get more information as to what is needed and what the cost will be. Leah also mentioned that the next scheduled meeting of the Commission is December 7. She will be out of town so we will determine whether it will be necessary to have a meeting on that date.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary