

MINUTES  
OF  
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
December 1, 2018

The Historic Preservation Commission met on December 1, 2018. Members present were Ed Sauter, Suzette Astley, Leah Rogers, Mary Evans, Robert Murphy, Hugh Lifson, Sue Hargus and Guy Booth. Upon motion made and carried, the Minutes of the November 14, 2018 meeting were approved.

The design review request for this meeting comes from Sing-A-Long Bar & Grill. Joe Jennison has submitted an application for approval of a proposed sign that is the name of the business. The sign will be white vinyl letters that will be placed in the upper portion of the front windows of the business. The only sign that identifies the name of the business at this time is a small sign extending from the front of the building. Upon motion made by Ed Sauter, seconded by Sue Hargus, a certificate of no material effect is approved, subject to the approval from the Mount Vernon Zoning Administrator. The motion was approved.

Suzette Astley gave a report regarding the process of obtaining a certificate of appropriateness for properties in historic districts. The Commission approved her request for porch repair at the November 14, 2018 meeting. Because the Linn County Building Department now issues building permits for projects in Mount Vernon, the building department is requesting that the Historic Preservation Commission review and approve the building project before the county building department approves the permit. Each of these approvals, from the Historic Preservation Commission and Linn County Building Dept still are contingent until the permit is approved by the City of Mount Vernon. This change in procedure needs to be understood by people who are requesting building permits for properties within historic districts. The Linn County Building Department will tag all properties in historic districts so they will be able to determine whether HPC has reviewed the building permit request. Ed Sauter suggested that we visit with the Linn County Building Dept. to make sure we understand what types of improvements are subject to a building permit, and which improvement projects are exempt from obtaining a permit. HPC also feels the City should provide a list of projects that do not need building permits.

Mary Evans discussed a proposal from CDG and the City of Mount Vernon regarding repair work on the Visitor's Center. A question arose regarding roof repair. The building has a tile roof, and may be the oldest tile roof in Iowa, as well as west of the Mississippi River. The Commission feels quite strongly that the tile roof should be maintained. CDG also is suggesting that the front window of the building be restored to its original configuration. Mary presented pictures of the original building, as well as the proposed change of the front window. The Commission does support the proposed change. Hugh Lifson pointed out that this building is a Neoetruscan-style building, which is quite rare. The City should recognize the uniqueness of this building as it contemplates any repairs or other changes. It was suggested that the lettering on the building, which identifies it as the Mount Vernon Visitor's Center could be changed, and if so, that the word "Visitor" be corrected. There was also a question regarding future painting, and also concern about some dry rot in the front columns. It would be a good idea for the City to have a pre-design review of different restoration issues that may be present so an overall plan can be developed to ensure that the historic significance of the building is not diminished.

Leah indicates she is preparing an Annual Report for state historic preservation submittal. We are also coming into the budget request period, and Leah will forward our budget request.

Under new business, Hugh Lifson gave notice of two good articles in the publication *Voices From The Prairie*. He also indicates that we may want to determine a way to protect the written legend regarding the Mickey Woods mural. He feels that it is not well-protected and could deteriorate.

Ed Sauter discussed what may be necessary to help preserve the murals that were discovered in the Broulik building. Both were painted by Joan Kent in 1972-74. The Brouliks would like to have them remain, but they will need some restoration work.

Suzette Astley gave a very interesting report on how communities can use tax incremental financing funds to help in historic preservation. She has had conversations with the City of Dubuque, and have seen material from Davenport and Des Moines. Sue has talked with the City Administrator about the possibility of having funds available for historic renovation/preservation purposes. It will take some time to get this set up. The first step, however, would be to convince the City that funds should be set aside for these purposes. The Commission will attempt to put together a salient argument why the establishment of a fund would be beneficial to the community and so the funds could be obtained from TIF sources.

Leah indicates that the names of Peter Ault and Machele Pelkey have been submitted to the City Council for approval as members of the Commission. Leah also gave an update on the brick house nomination process.

The mid-month meeting will be held if there is a need for design review that arises.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary