

MINUTES  
OF  
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
February 9, 2019

The Historic Preservation Commission met on February 9, 2019. Members present were Leah Rogers, Ed Sauter, Mary Evans, Machele Pelkey, Susan Hargus, Suzette Astley, Caroline Kelly, Hugh Lifson, and Guy Booth. Guests were Les and Katrina Garner.

Minutes of the December 12, 2018 meeting were approved.

Les and Katrina Garner were present for a pre-review of plans they have when they purchase a house located at 109 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW in Mount Vernon. The house is in the Cornell Historic District. Les and Katrina are working with Ed Sauter as the architect to expand the living area on the first floor. Further, there may be some work done on the garage area to expand it into a work area. There are future plans for the front porch of the house to wrap around to the south so it comes close to the garage. The diagram of the proposed improvements are well designed and fit well within the historic district. The consensus of the Commission was that the more specific plans will be readily acceptable.

Leah and Suzette talked about a historic preservation grant that is being proposed. There is some uncertainty as to whether the state historic preservation office will be administering the grant, or whether it will go through the federal agency. Grants will go directly to the cities that are accepted. It appears the minimum grant may be in the area of \$100,000. There are projects that could easily use this type of funding. The Mount Vernon Visitor's Center needs additional work that could be as much as \$50,000. Cornell has several projects that are expensive and could use substantially more than \$100,000. Leah and Suzette will keep track of the development of the procedures for applying for the grant, and for putting together the grant proposal. It appears we can work with Cornell to maximize the effect of the grant proposal. It is hoped that this program will favor rural communities and be designed to further develop tourism.

Leah announced that there is going to be a webinar put together by the state commission that will deal with murals, and how they can be protected and maintained. Our commission has dealt with the topic of murals, both to be displayed on the exterior of buildings, and in addition, helping with the preservation of murals that have been discovered within a building.

Leah announced that the state Main Street conference will be held in Mount Vernon May 20, 21 and 22. There could be at least 70 people attending the conference. Joe Jennison is actively planning events for the conference. Mary Evans is working with Joe, and indicates we may want to have people dressed in period costume to help guide the visitors through the city.

Guy Booth mentioned that Grace Chamberlain-Rowray has inquired about being a volunteer for HPC. Grace has great credentials as she works at the Cornell Library, and is familiar with the archives. Also, she has great skills in the area of computer work. Leah will contact Grace to see what specifically she might like to do to start in as a volunteer.

Suzette gave an update on the building permit process. It now appears that all building permits will come through Linn County Zoning. However, sign permits, which are required by the Mount Vernon ordinances, will still be processed through the city and through Historic

Preservation. Suzette also indicated that, in her conversations with the City Administrator, that a program of revolving loans for historic preservation could come through city funds. Its more likely it would come through TIF funding. We would need to work on guidelines for these types of loans, and may want to highlight specific activities that would apply to buildings in the historic districts.

Under old business, Leah reports there is still work to be done on the brick house nominations. There are two future deadlines for reviews that will be done at the state level. Leah indicates there is the need for additional digital photos of each of the residences.

Leah indicates that she is completing the annual report for Historic Preservation. Mary indicates that there have been a number of hits on the HPC website. Leah indicates that there are new people in town who are indicating interest in being on the Commission. Hugh inquired about the progress on photos that are to be on display in the Russell Science Building that commemorates the two civil war houses that have been demolished.

The next meeting would normally be scheduled for March 2. Leah will send out an announcement if the meeting will be held on that date or delayed by a week.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary