

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
March 2, 2019

The Historic Preservation Commission met on March 2, 2019. Members present were Hugh Lifson, Machele Pelkey, Leah Rogers, Mary Evans, Suzette Astley, Ed Sauter, Caroline Kelly, Susan Hargus and Guy Booth. Arlen Russell was also present.

Minutes of the February 9, 2019 meeting were discussed. The Minutes should be corrected to indicate that Mary Evans presented information regarding the Main Street conference. Mary is also the person who indicated there are new people in town that are showing interest in being on the Commission. Upon noting the corrections, the Minutes were approved.

A pre-review for a project at Arlen and Cheryl Russell house was discussed. Their property is located at 617 7th Ave. NW in the Ash Park District. This is the historic Kollman house. The Russells are proposing the replacement of the back porch with an addition that would be a back porch across the back of the house. The design of the addition would be similar to the back porch that is currently in place, it would merely be an expansion of the porch. Arlen will present an application for a certificate of appropriateness at the time that the building permit is applied for. The Commission commended Arlen on the design. Hugh Lifson stated that he felt this was a rare example of the Venetian design that is not often seen.

There are two design review requests. The first is for the review of proposed signs at 118 1st St SW. This is the confectionary store. There is a change of ownership, and the new owner has presented the proposed designs, which include fairly large vinyl signs that will be placed on the windows. There are questions regarding the size of the signs and the appropriateness of the substantial covering of the windows. Further, there was not an application for a certificate of appropriateness that has been submitted. Upon motion by Ed Sauter, seconded by Hugh Lifson, the design review is deferred with the hopes of having a conversation with the owner to clarify these issues. The motion carried.

The second design review was submitted by Patrick and Jaclyn Westhoff. They are renovating the kitchen area of their home located at 406 2nd St SW. This property is in the Cornell Historic District. The owners were not present at the meeting. Questions arose regarding the proposed new windows that will be part of the renovation project. There was no information given about the type of window and how it fits within the historic nature of the house. There was also a question regarding what is proposed for the area in which a window is being removed. The Commission would like to have more information regarding the side window removal and the design and material of the triple window replacement. Upon motion by Ed Sauter, seconded by Hugh Lifson, the Commission defers action on the application for certificate of appropriateness until we have additional information. The motion carried.

Under old business, Leah gave an update on the webinar on murals in historic districts. The webinar was extremely informative, and raised many questions that our commission may need to deal with. In particular, it would appear our ordinance should be amended so there is better definition of the placement, maintenance, type of painting, and how murals are fixed on buildings. There should also be specific review of murals that fit within the criteria that should

be within the ordinance. Our Commission should move ahead to prepare an amendment to the ordinance that will address the numerous concerns that were raised by the webinar presentation. We will obtain an example of an ordinance that does address these issues to compare it to the current Mount Vernon ordinance.

Leah gave an update on the brick house nomination process. The final revision of what is being prepared will be sent to the state historic commission for review on April 3.

Leah indicated that the annual report has been submitted. Hugh Lifson did have a question about addressing the issue of the memorialization of the civil war houses that were demolished. Leah indicates we will continue to review this as Cornell completes its plans for the photographic display.

Suzette Astley had an update on the historic preservation grant that is being made available on the federal level. The state historic society is going to apply for the grant money. This means organizations in Iowa will need to apply for grant money through the state historic society. Cornell will want to present a grant proposal, and our Commission will want a grant proposal for the Visitor's Center.

There was also discussion regarding the City's interest in having a grant program coming from TIF funds for assisting moderate income families who desire to work on renovation projects that may exceed their financial means. It would be helpful if there could be a fund that helps defray some of the expenses or provides matching funds. The Commission would need to work on eligibility requirements as well as having a review process to approve grant requests.

Mary Evans gave an update on the website. She indicates the summer intern may want to get involved in a project that identifies the usage of the significant buildings in the commercial historic district. It could be interesting to identify the various businesses that have been in existence in the various buildings, as the usage has changed over a period of time.

Caroline Kelly indicates that the brick house tour is scheduled for September 29, 2019. The tour will be from noon until 5:00 p.m. She has five houses available for a tour of the interior. She also is arranging a walking tour of certain areas of the districts. Caroline will continue to update the Commission on the development of the brick house tour project.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 6, 2019. The mid-month meeting may be scheduled for March 13, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary