

MINUTES  
OF  
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
Saturday, April 7, 2018

The Historic Preservation Commission met on April 7, 2018 at 9:15 a.m. Members present were Caroline Kelly, Sarah Kelly, Hugh Lifson, Mary Evans, Leah Rogers, Janet Budack, Patricia Westerkamp and Guy Booth. Guests included Craig Peterson and Dan Hottinger of BWBR, and Carrie Morgan, Julie Barnes and Leland Belding of Cornell College.

The first item of business was a design review request from Cornell College regarding location signs they desire to put in five places on the campus. These signs will identify all of the buildings on the campus so that visitors to the college will be able to find the various buildings on campus. The signs will be using the same lettering and design as the other signs that have been placed on campus. It was requested that the signs be placed in such a way that they do not interfere with traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian. Upon motion made by Hugh Lifson, seconded by Sarah Kelly, a motion of no material effect was approved.

Craig Peterson and Dan Hottinger of BWBR Architectural Firm presented information regarding the construction of Russell Science Building. They presented an initial concept for work that is being done to memorialize the location of the two civil war houses that have been removed. The proposal is to have the foot print of the two buildings be outlined in limestone blocks. Questions were asked whether any of the bricks from the homes would be used in the project. The soft bricks would deteriorate if they were left exposed outdoors, so there may be a use of the bricks for an interior display. This issue will come back to the Commission once final plans are put together.

Craig Peterson also discussed the renovation of West Science Center that will take place. The proposal is to move both the chemistry department and biology department to the new building so West Science Center will have the light sciences. There will be a good deal of interior renovation, with some changes on the exterior, including a new entrance and new windows in the building. Hugh Lifson questioned the architects whether they have had any contact with the original architects of West Science Center. In particular, Hugh feels the architects should talk with Ben Weis from the original architectural firm. There was also questions regarding the expansion of the lintel above the new entrance, and questions about the interior walls being changed. The original walls do not go all the way to the ceiling. Craig indicates that under current building codes, the walls do have to go to the ceiling. Craig was very accepting of the questions that were asked, and will continue to work on the design of both buildings so they are appropriate for the historic district.

Leland Belding, from Cornell, indicated that new poles are going to be put into place for the traffic lights at the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Street SW and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW. There will be a decorative base that is similar to the base of the poles in the downtown area. This information is basically a preview of what will take place. The college will probably not need to have a building permit for putting in the new poles. The Commission had no objection to the design.

Julie Barnes, who is head of the grant writing office for Cornell, brought the Commission up to date on the restoration projects at King Chapel. She reviewed the grant that has been received for restoration of the Seth Thomas Clock and of the clock tower. It is hoped that the clock will be worked on, and completed later in the year. There is a new grant application to

restore the operation of the bells that are in the tower. One bell had been removed from the tower and was destroyed in an earlier fire. A Meneely bell, which was cast in 1882, has been found to replace the damaged bell. Also, the restoration company has been able to find weights that will operate the bells. The bells were used in the past to mark each quarter hour, as well as an hourly tolling. Julie gave a great presentation of the history of the bell tower and the restoration. It appears that the Seth Thomas Clock is one of only two of this type that are still existing in the world. Further, it is the longest-running clock that is still in its original site.

The Commission discussed the proposal to hire a consultant for the Brick House, NRHP nominations. Jennifer A. Price, PHD, was the only consultant to submit a proposal. Ms. Price is known by Leah Rogers. Leah indicates she is very competent and would do an excellent job in helping owners of the brick houses to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Upon motion made by Janet Budack, seconded by Caroline Kelly, the Commission approved hiring Ms. Price. \$12,600 of the contract will be paid from a grant received by HPC, with an additional \$1,000 being paid from our budget.

To get the project under way, we will have a meeting of all twelve home owners so they become aware of what information will need to be assembled to complete the application process. Leah also mentioned that our summer intern will be able to assist in the project for each of the homeowners.

Hugh Lifson indicates that he and Dick Thomas have talked about the plans for a fall Historic Preservation trip. He is looking at Anamosa and Monticello as two nearby communities that could be of interest. In particular, the penitentiary, and their museum could be an interesting site to visit. Leah is working with the Jones County Historic Preservation people and can help Hugh get information about a potential visit.

Caroline Kelly indicates she is working on plans for the brick house tour this fall. She asked for input from anyone who has a suggestion for houses to have on the tour.

Patty Westerkamp handed out a list of properties she has discovered that may be considered for MVHPC awards for preservation efforts. Members can look at the various buildings so we can have a meeting that can make a selection of properties to be given awards.

The next meeting of the Commission will be announced by Leah.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary