

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
May 15, 2019

The Historic Preservation Commission met on Wednesday, May 15, 2019 at Mount Vernon City Hall. Members present were Leah Rogers, Hugh Lifson, Mary Evans, Peter Ault, Susan Hargus, Machele Pelkey, Patti Westercamp and Guy Booth. Also present with the Commission was Jennifer A. Price, a consultant for the project to add the eleven brick houses to the National Register of Historic Places. Also present were owners of properties that were being nominated, as well as interested residents of Mount Vernon.

Upon motion made and seconded, the Minutes of the meeting of May 4, 2019 were approved.

The meeting scheduled for today has several purposes. Most importantly, this meeting is the public hearing for the Commission to present the 11 brick houses that have completed the research and nomination process for inclusion on the list of the National Register of Historic Places. Leah Rogers gave a presentation about the process that has been undertaken, and the great work that has been provided by Jennifer Price, as well as other members of the Commission and volunteers. In particular, Mary Evans and Janet Budack devoted many hours of research for the project. Leah Rogers has been the writer for much of the material included in the nomination form for each of the houses. Leah mentioned that the funding for the project, which included a grant for hiring Jennifer Price, has come from historic preservation funds on the national level. Leah indicates that the funding from the historic preservation office comes from revenue produced by oil leases that the government has granted.

Leah gave a power point presentation which developed information about each of the 11 houses that are requesting approval to be on the National Register of Historic Places. Leah gave a good summary of each of the houses. The houses are known by the name of the original owner or builder of the property. The eleven houses, by their historic name, are as follows: Albright House, Bauman House, Knott House, McCartney House, Pease House, Robinson House, Shantz House, Smith House No. 1, Smith House No. 2, Waln House, and Wilds House. After Leah Rogers gave a presentation about each of the houses, and reviewed pictures of the houses on her power point summary, members of the public who were present were able to ask questions about the various houses. At the close of the hearing a motion was made by Mary Evans and seconded by Susan Hargus that the 11 houses be approved by the Mount Vernon Historic Preservation Commission, and further, that the nominations be forwarded to the state historic preservation nominating commission to provide approval for each of the 11 structures to be on the National Register of Historic Places. The motion passed unanimously.

The state review of the nominations for the 11 structures will be forwarded to Des Moines to the state commission for final review and recommendation to the National Register of Historic Places. The review is scheduled for June, 2019. Any changes to any of the registration forms will need to be made prior to the hearing date. Leah Rogers acknowledged with gratitude the work of all parties who allowed these 11 properties to become candidates for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

After conclusion of the hearing regarding the 11 properties that were nominated for inclusion on a National Register of Historic Places, the Commission continued in session to consider three design review requests.

The first request is submitted by Arlan and Cheryl Russell. Mr. and Mrs. Russell are demolishing the back porch on their house at 617 7th Ave. NW (Ash Park District) and replacing it with a new porch that will be expanded along the width of the house. Mr. Russell presented architectural plans for the house, which demonstrate that the new porch will fit with the architectural style of the house. Upon motion made by Hugh Lifson, seconded by Mary Evans, a certificate of appropriateness will be issued for the addition.

The second design review item is for a fence located at 511 6th Ave. NW (Ash Park District). A fence has been installed on the property and the fence meets all requirements of the City zoning ordinance. The property belongs to Tracy Jo Sherman. It is regrettable that this application was not presented to the City or to Historic Preservation before installation of the fence. Despite concerns of the Commission, a motion for approval of the project having no material effect was made by Guy Booth, seconded by Sue Hargus. The motion was approved, 6 in favor and 2 against.

The third design review item was for replacement of a roof on the Steve and Mary Young property at 115 4th Ave. SW (Cornell Historic District). The roof material replicates the roof that has previously been on the house. Once again, it appears the roof has been replaced prior to seeking approval from Historic Preservation. It is noted that in the past, there was not a requirement by the City to have a building permit for roof replacement. It is now required, and there is concern that the public is not aware that renovation, repair or restoration of properties that affect the exterior of a structure needs to have a building permit. Further, and the structures in historic districts need to have pre-approval for the project from Historic Preservation Commission. Upon motion made by Sue Hargus, seconded by Hugh Lifson, the Commission approved the project as having no material effect.

There was no new business to report. Under old business, Guy Booth mentioned that the proposed Demolition Ordinance passed its first reading. The City Council seems prepared to complete the final two readings of the ordinance.

The next meeting of the Commission will be held June 1, 2019 at 9:15 a.m. unless there are no design review requests or other business that needs to come before the Commission by that date.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary