

MINUTES
OF
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
August 4, 2018

The Historic Preservation Commission met on August 4, 2018. Members present were Leah Rogers, Ed Sauter, Sarah Kelly, Robert Murphy, Mary Evans, Susan Hargus, Caroline Kelly, Janet Budack and Guy Booth. Guests at the meeting included Cari Morgan and Jeff Streits from Cornell College, Jim Evans and Cindy Strong. The Minutes of the meeting of July 18, 2018 were approved.

The first design review item relates to a new roof placed on the Duane Yock residence at 615 5th Ave. NW. This is in the Ash Park Historic District. The house was re-roofed because of damage from a recent hail storm. A building permit application had not been filed before the project was undertaken, therefore, HPC did not receive an application for a certificate of appropriateness. To date, the City has not approved a building permit for the roof repair. This is another instance where the Commission has been presented with a request for approval of a project after it has been completed, rather than the application coming to the commission prior to initiation of construction. It was determined that the Commission needs to meet with the city to better understand what should happen when neither the City, nor the Commission has been contacted about a project that requires a building permit. Upon motion made by Guy Booth, seconded by Ed Sauter, the Commission shall defer action on the request for a certificate of appropriateness until the City and the Historic Preservation Commission have established a policy for review of a project that has been undertaken and/or completed without the owner following appropriate city ordinances and regulations. The motion passed.

A second design review request was presented by Guy Booth for his residence at 717 6th Ave. NW, also in the Ash Park District. The back porch stairs and deck on the north side of the house need repair. The application requests that the deck of the porch will be replaced and will be extended in length by 24". The stairs will remain the same, but will have additional support because of the 24" extension of the deck. Upon motion made by Janet Budack, and seconded by Sarah Kelly, the Commission shall issue a certificate of appropriateness for the project.

Cornell College was present to review several issues with the Commission. Cari Morgan and Jeff Streits presented a proposal for two patio areas between the new science building and 5th Avenue that would show the approximate location of the two brick houses that were demolished. The location of the patios and retaining walls is appropriate. However, the Commission requested that rather than using brick in the retaining wall, that the college use limestone, which would be similar to the limestone foundations of the two buildings that were demolished. This project was not presented for approval at this time, but the college will provide updated drawings of the structures that will be put in place.

Cornell also indicated that a new scoreboard has been placed at the Cornell football field. It was discovered that the scoreboard was not part of the plans that were submitted for the building permit at the start of the project. Consequently, the scoreboard portion of the project was not approved by the City or by Historic /Preservation Commission. The Commission did not have any objection to the placement of the scoreboard. However, the college will need to amend its application for a building permit, so this issue will come before the commission for final approval at that time.

The college also presented plans for a sign that identifies Cornell College, which will be placed at the southwest corner of Ash Park. It is a nicely designed sign between two brick columns. The Commission noted their approval of the design and the location that is proposed. This sign will need to be presented to the City zoning office for approval under the sign ordinance and will come back for final approval from HPC.

Cindy Strong, who resides at 608 7th Ave. NW, was present to provide information and to gather information regarding her desire to update windows in their house. The house has very unique windows, and the Commission advised Cindy of the possibility that restoration of the current windows may be as economically efficient as buying replacement windows. Further, Leah Rogers indicates the restoration of the original windows may provide the same energy efficiency that new windows would provide. Cindy was pleased to receive this information and will want to consider this alternative as they make final plans for working with the windows.

Leah Rogers was able to give Cindy good personal information about the success of restoration, rather than replacement windows. Leah also indicated that Bob Yapp, a nationally known restoration expert has done cost studies for window restoration and has a cost calculator that would be of interest to people who are looking at the energy efficiency of windows. It was suggested that this may be a good seminar project for the Commission, and that it would be interesting if Mr. Yapp could be retained to give the presentation. There may be funding through a Historic Preservation grant to get this program put together.

Leah reported on the summit meeting in Des Moines for historic preservation. She indicated there are great concerns about the funding of historic preservation and there are concerns about cutting back on the availability of the tax credits. It is important to have preservationists lobby their respective representatives to indicate the importance of continued funding for historic preservation issues.

Leah also wondered if it might be possible to amend the ordinances for our CLG so that an executive committee may be able to rule on a limited number of design review issues that are otherwise very routine. This would speed up the process for getting paperwork completed on a new project, and would eliminate the need of having a full commission meet on each design review request. Guy Booth will take a look at the ordinances to see what might be a good approach to an amendment.

Leah indicates that Hugh Lifson is still working on the possibility of an HPC trip to have a tour of Monticello and of other Jones County historic sites. This will probably be scheduled during the fall.

Caroline Kelly discussed plans for the upcoming brickhouse tour. It is tentatively scheduled for September 30, 2018. She is still working on details as to which houses will be on the tour, and other information that will be available during the tour. She is waiting for a response from a couple of brick house owners as to their willingness to be part of the tour.

The next potential meeting date for the Commission will be August 14, 2018 if there is a design review request that needs to be addressed. Leah will give notice of the meeting if it is scheduled.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary