

OFFICIAL MINUTES
MUSCATINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
APRIL 16, 2008

The Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission met in regular session on Wednesday, April 16, 2008 at 5:15 p.m. in the lower level conference room at the Muscatine City Hall, 215 Sycamore. Members present included Dan Clark, Jo Ann Carlson, Jerry Lange, Devin Pettit, Mary Anne Kessler and Jane Reischauer. Visitors present included Alec Kessler and Logan Kessler. Staff present included Jim Rudisill.

The consent agenda, including the distributed meeting agenda and the minutes of the regular March 19, 2008 meeting, was reviewed. There were no changes to either the agenda or the minutes.

After the review, Kessler moved to approve the consent agenda; Clark seconded; motion passed; all ayes.

The first agenda item was the Mulberry Avenue Survey. A status report was provided by several members.

Pettit said he is now working on the other side of the 700 block.

Kessler said she has completed quite a bit on her properties, but some holes remain. She asked if there was any transfer book older than the 1909 book at the courthouse. Pettit said a 1902 book and an 1865-74 book are both on the auditor's shelves. Kessler will look for them to extend ownership history on her properties. Pettit also reminded Kessler of the book that lists transfers by date. If either a specific date or a more general time is known, it might be possible to review this book and determine property ownership.

Clark said he has obtained a little amount of information on all his properties and will continue research.

Carlson said she is working on directory information.

Lange is focusing on his house and Jefferson school.

Reischauer reported she had not done any recent work, but has quite a bit of information on specific properties, such as the Roach House.

Pettit suggested a workday at the library might be useful, but neither a final decision nor any date was made or set.

The commission next received an update on the Friends of Muscatine Historic Preservation (FHP) and Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission's (MHPC) joint commemoration of 2008 Historic Preservation Month on May 3-4 at the Walnut Room of the First National Bank building.

Reischauer reported that Michael Maharry had drafted a invitation letter, while Kessler said she had recently sent out a sample invitation for review. Commissioners were unsure which would actually be used to invite award winners and other guests. Kessler will follow up on her invitation submittal. Kessler also reported that refreshments will be provided during the award ceremony.

Reischauer said Steve Armstrong has designed a lawn sign to place on the award winners' property. She has also contacted the Journal, which has agreed to publish preservation articles prior to the event.

Clark said he would also publicize the award presentation and other events on his radio show. He will contact some of the award winners to see if any wish to be a guest on the show.

Kessler reported the proposed tour of historic homes had been indefinitely placed on hold and no tours will be held on the celebration days.

Pettit also announced he still needed to install the more recent historic plaques as part of an on-going MAPS project. These plaques will also be the last scheduled to be installed under the initial development effort. Additional stories and plaques may be completed in the future.

Committee reports were the next agenda item. Although there were no formal reports, several commissioners did notify the others about upcoming events, activities or other items of interest.

Several commission members who attended the recent Friends of Muscatine Historic Preservation reported that Michael Maharry has scheduled a cleanup day at the Marshack House for April 19. He will be closing on the property later in the week. The commissioners reported surprise at the apparent quick sale, since Maharry had not announced anything at the recent FHP meeting.

Clark said he had talked with Linda Eckert after learning Maharry might be planning to use the house as a bed and breakfast. Clark said Reickert had reminded him the area needed to be zoned commercial to house a bed and breakfast and there was a requirement for off-street parking at the bed and breakfast.

Commissioners also discussed the status of the downtown book project and reported a book publisher had attended the FHP meeting to discuss printing the book. The commission members said it appears the FHP membership favors letting Tom and Sharon Savage, who are writing the book, to move forward on their own with publishing it.

Pettit notified commission members that he would check with Fran Donelson to learn if any names had been submitted to city hall in application for any vacancies on the MHPC. He said it was possible some names from earlier application periods might still be on a carry-over list.

Rudisill reported on his communications with Pam Collins concerning the housing of the MHPC minutes at the library. Collins and other library personnel are reviewing the proposal, but have generally not pursued these opportunities because many organizations have submitted similar requests and the library does not have room for all.

Kessler said she raised her initial inquiry because she had earlier found a few minutes at the library, but not all. She felt either all the minutes should be there or the binder with the ones she saw pulled from the shelves.

In a final discussion, Clark told the commission that Kent Sissel had been notified the Alexander Clark house had been nominated to a list of potential National Landmark sites.

The meeting then adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair