

OFFICIAL MINUTES
MUSCATINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
AUGUST 18, 2010

The Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) met in regular session on Wednesday, August 18, 2010, at 5:15 p.m. in the city council chambers at Muscatine City Hall. Members present included Jane Reischauer, Jo Ann Carlson, Anna Mack, Ramiro Vazquez and Jim Schmidt. Others present were Devin Pettit, Dan Clark and Jim Rudisill.

The commission reviewed the consent agenda, including the distributed agenda and the minutes of the regular July 29, 2010 meeting. Carlson moved to approve the consent agenda; Vazquez seconded; motion passed, all ayes.

The commission first discussed several Certified Local Government (CLG) issues.

Participation in the upcoming Davenport Downtown Summit was reviewed. Sarah Ott of the Downtown Action Alliance (DAA) and DAA volunteer Dan Clark plan to attend the event. Rudisill said he had been able to talk to Steve Boka about possible funding availability, but Steve had indicated he did not have any uncommitted funds to provide for historical preservation training.

Members also discussed CLG annual training requirements, training costs and the upcoming budget process. Rudisill also reminded commissioners about the on-line training available on the State Historical Society of Iowa website.

Additional CLG activity reviewed by the commission included the Muscatine County NRHP Nominations CD. Carlson had reported last month that she had submitted copies of the CD to the library and there was nothing new to report.

The commission next discussed education efforts by the members. Reischauer reminded members the CLG ordinance required the commission to engage in regular education efforts.

Mack reported that Michael Maharry, president of the Friends of Muscatine Historic Preservation, had recently made a good presentation to the Muscatine Board of Realtors.

Reischauer asked if any programming, especially for children, could be arranged through the library. Pettit reported a middle school student had talked to him concerning a church project she was conducting that focused on Muscatine history. Carlson asked Pettit to learn more about the girl's project and suggested the library might be able to help with it. Carlson also said the library will also talk to other groups.

The next agenda item was property and historic district discussions.

Rudisill provided an update to the commission on the Alexander Clark National Historic Landmark (NHL) Project. He has not been able to talk with anyone at the State Historical Society of Iowa (SHSI) concerning project scope issues that need to be in a consultant contract. He also has not been able to locate a sample contract. He will continue to investigate and try to reach an SHSI advisor.

Clark notified the commission that Paul Finkelman would be presenting a talk at the MCC campus on September 16, as part of his speaking tour through southeast Iowa.

The commission next discussed signage for the historic districts. Carlson reported on her contacts with the Iowa State Prison Industries. Carlson said she had requested a cost estimate and had been told that information would be sent to her.

Pettit next reported on damage caused to the Trinity Episcopal Church from a lighting strike and progress towards completing repairs. He said the church is currently accepting repair quotes, with the intent to repair the damage in a historically accurate process as possible.

The church has good insurance and the insurance company appears willing to follow the Secretary of Interior's Standards. Pettit said church members had investigated using the state's Historic Resource Development Program's (HRDP) Emergency Fund, but likely won't because of the good insurance the church has. However, the church has other repair needs and might look at the HRDP for insistence with those efforts.

Pettit did report that the steeple will be grounded in the future to hopefully prevent a future strike. He also pointed out the church owns the building next door and it had sustained damages from the strike. The insurance will apparently also cover that damage.

In other historical property or district discussions, Mack reported 1122 Mulberry had been rented out, but another historic property on Mulberry remained on the market. Mack later also took the name of the sister of the current owner of 313 W. Third and will contact her about possibly listing the house for sale. That building is deteriorating and commission members said they were concerned about its condition. Rudisill had previously reported the family had indicated interest in selling the property.

Schmidt reported he and his crew were continuing to progress on the Marshak House renovation on Third Street. Mack said she had also noticed restoration/renovation work progressing on the Weed House.

The commission next received several miscellaneous reports, including one under the MHPC explaining that Pettit would be appointed to the commission by the city council at its August 19 meeting.

The Friends of Muscatine Historic Preservation will hold election of officers soon. The annual meeting is scheduled to be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, September 25. It should offer another opportunity to showcase the Marshak House restoration.

Clark reminded the commission that he, Sarah Ott and Dawnese Openshaw would be attending the Davenport Downtown Summit in August. Another local citizen might also attend. Clark also reported that he was continuing to serve on the Downtown Action Alliance (DAA), although he was no longer on the MHPC. Pettit offered to begin serving on the DAA as the MHPC representative and would begin discussing with that group the potential of using tax increment financing (TIF) funds for downtown façade improvements.

The meeting then adjourned at approximately 6:20 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the commission is scheduled for Wednesday, September 15, 2010 at 5:15 p.m. in the Muscatine City Hall lower level conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair