

OFFICIAL MINUTES
MUSCATINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 17, 2010

The Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) met in regular session on Wednesday, November 17, 2010, at 5:15 p.m. in the lower level conference room at Muscatine City Hall. Members present included Jo Ann Carlson, Devin Pettit, Jane Reischauer Anna Mack and Jim Schmidt. Others present were Jim Rudisill and Michael Maharry.

The commission reviewed the consent agenda, including the distributed agenda and the minutes of the regular October 20, 2010 meeting. Pettit requested the minutes show on page 2 that single-family residences and duplexes are allowed in Rock Island's historic districts. He also pointed out on page 3 that the discussion he had with Gregg Mandsager on TIF funding should have identified the funding as promoting current urban revitalization efforts, which could include a downtown façade program. Pettit then moved to approve the October 20, 2010 minutes as amended; Mack seconded; motion passed, all ayes.

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

Reischauer asked Mack if local realtors are aware of the city's historic districts. Mack said most realtors were not well informed about the districts. Maharry reminded the commission of the talk he had given to the realtors association a few months ago.

Mack said that had been a first time experience for many of the realtors.

There was a short discussion on possible links that could be provided to help keep realtors knowledgeable about the program. Carlson said the library had several links to historic websites. Mack said the realtors already had links to local schools. She said she would forward the library site to the realtors.

Maharry also suggested contacts be established with the chamber. He offered to make contact.

Rudisill reported there were no new developments on the commission's request for a \$350 appropriation in the FY 12 budget cycle.

The commission next continued a discussion the members started last month on the possibilities of the commission establishing a review process for building permits. Reischauer reviewed the previous month's discussion.

Maharry said a review process would provide an educational opportunity and increase attention in the districts. Schmidt said he was concerned a review process could prevent a property owner from doing something on that property. He said even an informal influence could be a problem.

Reischauer said she did not view any review process as being a restriction as much as providing increased awareness of the historic district opportunities. Pettit agreed and suggested HPCs should be able to make recommendations for historic districts. There was a general discussion on how the Muscatine Planning and Zoning Commission operates. Pettit said he would like the MHPC to have some review authority to help keep property conditions up.

There was also a discussion on the conflict occurring in Davenport between a property owner wishing to demolish a historic building and the Davenport HPC. Maharry suggested a letter of support be sent to the Davenport historic commission.

Reischauer asked if the MHPC could request informal notification when a building permit was issued. Rudisill said he would ask Community Development Director Steve Boka about the possibility.

The final CLG activity discussion was a reminder from Rudisill about the upcoming annual report. Some renovation work has been done in the 400 block of Second Street. Pettit also asked if you would need to complete a revised biographical sketch for the report.

The commission next discussed issues relating to historic properties and districts. Rudisill provided an update on the Alexander Clark Heritage District and National Historic Landmark (NHL) application. He said a subcontractor's contract with Paul Finkelman had been finalized and signed earlier in the month.

The contract will cover both the development of the NHL application and its presentation to the National Park Service. Rudisill reported Kent Sissel is continuing to coordinate most of the project.

The commission then reviewed progress on acquiring signs for the city's West Hill Historic District. Carlson reported there would be an \$800 cost to extend street poles. Reischauer questioned if the cost of signs that would be mounted on street sign poles would be harder to cover through fundraising efforts than district entrance signs.

Maharry said district entrance signs would be fine with him.

Carlson agreed to redesign the signage proposal and examine installing entrance signs. She requested Rudisill to learn when the January meeting of the traffic committee would be scheduled. In the meantime, Reischauer suggested determining a number of signs that would be needed.

In other discussion involving historic properties or districts, Reischauer asked if anyone knew what was happening with 715 W. Third. Maharry said he was aware of the changes occurring there, but it was too early to comment on the work.

Under miscellaneous reports, Maharry said he had talked with the head of Preservation Iowa at a recent meeting and the person was planning to contact Maharry about scheduling the group's annual meeting in Muscatine.

Maharry said he had also talked with Brian Costas about the status of the Jayne House. There had been some concerns about the lack of progress on finalizing the move. Carlson agreed with the assessment and urged board members and staff to push forward.

The commission next discussed the upcoming house tour planned for National Preservation Month. Maharry and others said the current plan by the Friends of Muscatine Historic Preservation is to identify homes associated with Civil War veterans to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the war's beginning.

Maharry said Mark LeRette is interested in an antique show, possibly at the 4th Street Park

Pettit then recalled the 100th anniversary of Muscatine's Pearl Button Strike would also occur in 2011. Maharry said because of the limited period of time associated with the strike, the Friends might reconsider the Civil War tour and look at a button strike tour.

In general discussion, Pettit said he had not learned anything additional about plans by Ann and Tom Meeker to revitalize an area of Mulberry Avenue.

The meeting then adjourned at approximately 6:37 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Chair