

OFFICIAL MINUTES
MUSCATINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
JANUARY 19, 2011

The Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) met in regular session on Wednesday, January 19, 2011, at 5:15 p.m. in the lower level conference room at Muscatine City Hall. Members present included Jo Ann Carlson, Jane Reischauer, Ramiro Vazquez and Anna Mack. Others present were Jim Rudisill and Michael Maharry.

The commission reviewed the consent agenda, including the distributed agenda and the minutes of the regular December 15, 2010 meeting. Rudisill said Pettit had requested a few changes to the minutes when he had called to report he would not be able to attend. The original minutes identified demolition and other work being considered by Tom Meeker was located near West Sixth and Mulberry. The correct identification is East Sixth and Mulberry. He also pointed out the Muscatine Button Strike was in 1911, not 1910 as reported in the minutes. There were no other corrections. Carlson moved to approve the consent agenda with the changes; Vazquez seconded; motion passed, all ayes.

Under Certified Local Government (CLG) report, Rudisill reported he had intended to bring copies of the monthly building and demolition permits he can now access. However, he had not logged on to the permit site recently; and when he tried shortly before the meeting, discovered he had forgot the necessary procedures. Other staff was not available to explain the procedure, so he will bring those forms to the next meeting.

He also reminded the commission members of the 2010 Annual Report and encouraged everyone to provide to him any reports on training, building alteration or other issues that should be included in the report as soon as possible. Mack said she had watched two of the online training programs, but was unsure of the titles. Maharry also suggested Schmidt may have attended some training that could qualify. However, it was later determined he was likely referring to a lead-paint renovator's class that all contractors are now required to attend. The commission will be asked to act on the 2010 report at the next meeting.

Rudisill also said Pettit had reported the Meekers were now considering the possibility of renovating the historic church building at East Sixth and Walnut rather than demolishing it as originally planned.

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.

Rudisill reported a related effort to identify the house as associated with the Network to Freedom (Underground Railroad) had been submitted, primarily through the efforts of Kent Sissel. Sissel has offered to attend a meeting to explain the program. The commission agreed a good time will be when something is approved.

The commission next discussed the historic signage effort.

Existing cultural and entertainment (CE) signs are currently present on Cedar, Third and Front Streets; and Mulberry Avenue. Other sites may still need to be identified. Commission members are investigating the possibility of using these sign posts to mount the historic district signs.

Carlson said she will contact the sign committee to determine if other CE signs have been installed and the procedures for getting additional signs mounted. .

In specific reports concerning properties within established historic districts, Reischauer reported on the Friends of Muscatine Historic Preservation tour of 311 W. Third earlier in the month. The building's interior has been damaged because of a leaking roof. The Friends agreed to provide a new tarp and Jim Schmidt's work crew will install it. Reischauer said the family is apparently interested in selling the property and commission members agreed to continue efforts to locate a buyer.

In other reports, Maharry updated the commission on the Preservation Iowa annual conference planned for August in Muscatine. There was a general brainstorming on possible locations to hold the conference. Maharry said the group favors historic buildings as meeting sites.

Possibilities mentioned included the second floor ballroom at the Hotel Muscatine; second story of the Button Factory; Masonic Lodge; and the Old Barn at Discovery Park. The barn is not likely a suitable location however because it lacks air conditioning.

Maharry said a walking tour of community historic sites could be a contribution from the commission. He also said a tour of homes might be a possibility and he would continue to check with owners.

He also suggested a planning meeting might be held between the Preservation Iowa staff and interested Muscatine residents and groups to coordinate the event, which is expected to draw around 200 people to the community. Maharry also suggested the conference could be videotaped. He will continue to update the commission.

A tour of houses will also be planned for May 8, Mothers' Day. Different tour themes have been discussed, including the Civil War and the button strike; as well as a general tour with no theme. That discussion will continue. Currently homes at 1420 Mulberry and 417 W. Third have been offered as possible tour sites.

The meeting then adjourned at approximately 6:14 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the commission is scheduled for Wednesday, February 16, 2011 at 5:15 p.m. in the Muscatine City Hall lower level conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair