

OFFICIAL MINUTES
MUSCATINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MAY 28, 2013

The Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) met in regular session on Tuesday, May 28, 2013, at 5:15 p.m. in the city council chambers at Muscatine City Hall. Members present included Devin Pettit, Jane Reischauer and Julie Wolf. Others present included Michael Maharry and Jim Rudisill. Following the roll, the commission reviewed the consent agenda, including the distributed agenda and the minutes of the regular April 23, 2013 meeting. Pettit reported on the first page of the minutes dealing with tax abatement for new houses, the limit was identified as \$250,000, when the actual limit was \$200,000. After noting that required change, Pettit moved to approve the minutes as corrected; Wolf seconded; motion passed, all ayes.

The first agenda item discussed under Certified Local Government (CLG) activity was the city's proposed historic property tax abatement plan.

Pettit reported the second reading of the ordinance establishing the plan had been approved by the city council. The latest version now restricted the abatement to new housing costing up to \$175,000. He said the final reading would likely occur in June.

The commission next discussed membership. Anna Mack's term is ending on June 30. Since the new ordinance specifies commissioners must live within the city limits, she will be ineligible to be appointed for another term.

Rudisill asked the commission if anyone knew if Rochelle Conway remained interested in serving. Reischauer said she felt Conway was still interested. Rudisill said he would email Conway and advise her about the upcoming vacancy. She would need to complete a city board application form if she has not already submitted one.

Pettit's and Reischauer's terms will both be extended as part of the amendment that reduced the membership to five and extended terms to five years. The extension of Pettit's and Reischauer's terms will set up a system where a different commission seat will be vacated annually over a five-year period.

The next general agenda item was a discussion on historic districts and properties.

Rudisill reported a revised contract had been sent to consultant Paul Finkelman for the updated Alexander Clark House National Register nomination and the Network to Freedom application. The contract included a modified list of deadlines for draft and other submittals that were based on an earlier conference call between Finkelman, Kent Sissel, Jim Rudisill and various state and federal historic preservation officials.

The commission next discussed the final reports submitted by consultant Rebecca McCarley for the Fair Oaks and Colver Street surveys.

Rudisill is to send copies of the reports to both the Musser and Muscatine Community College libraries, along with copies of the DVD reports, but will delay that action until the state responds to the reports.

Maharry asked if there was a determination request submitted to the state with the reports. Rudisill presented a copy of the letter sent from McCarley to Ralph Christian asking for a determination.

Rudisill was also directed to submit a report on the project to the Carver Charitable Trust. Reischauer said she would submit a report to the Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine.

Miscellaneous reports were then presented to the commission.

Reischauer reported the Muscatine County HPC did not have a quorum at the last meeting, but still planned to move forward with seeking Certified Local Government status for the county.

Rudisill next updated the commission on efforts to obtain a Historic Resources Development Program (HRDP) grant for 315 W. Second. Maharry said if the grant is approved and the owner eventually decides to donate the property, the Friends of Muscatine Historic Preservation will accept it. The Friends will then restore the house using tax credits and eventually look to sell the house. Maharry said the effort will be big project.

In a related discussion on tax credits, Maharry reported the Iowa General Assembly had approved the full increase in historic tax credits that had been proposed. The legislation will also allow churches and other non-profits to benefit from the program.

In other FMHP activity, Maharry said signs had been posted on the properties recognized for historic preservation efforts in May.

Maharry also said he hoped to work with Jim Schmidt on providing a porch restoration workshop, possibly with videotape. Rudisill said there might be grants available to provide for Schmidt's time.

Maharry also said the FMHP was looking into reviving the old jail preservation effort. He said Mack and her husband were investigating it as a potential business site. Rudisill reported he had seen a recent National Park Service website that featured a restored jail.

The meeting then adjourned at approximately 6 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the commission is scheduled for Tuesday, June 25, 2013 at 5:15 p.m. in the Muscatine City Hall lower level conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair