

OFFICIAL MINUTES
MUSCATINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
JUNE 16, 2010

The Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) met in regular session on Wednesday, June 16, 2010, at 5:15 p.m. in the lower-level conference room at Muscatine City Hall. Members present included Jane Reischauer, Jo Ann Carlson, Dan Clark, Mary Ann Kessler, Jim Schmidt and Ramiro Vasquez. Others present were Kent Sissel, Michael Maharry and Jim Rudisill.

The commission reviewed the consent agenda, including the distributed agenda and the minutes of the regular May 19, 2010 meeting. Clark pointed out the May minutes should have identified on Page 1 a contract being signed by the monument company and not consultant David Arbogast. Clark also reported that on Page 1 the minutes should have reported the meetings of the Civil War monument restoration team were being held at the American Legion Building and not the VFW.

Carlson then moved to approve the consent agenda with the changes; Vazquez seconded; motion passed, all ayes.

Clark then reported on the status of the Civil War Memorial restoration and other information concerning the committee.

A June 7 meeting between the supervisors, Clark and restoration team leader Lee Miller had been held to discuss a proposal by Clark to establish a Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee. The supervisors were interested and requested Clark and Miller to continue investigating the possibility. The supervisors also adopted a restoration plan for the monument.

Clark and Carlson also reported on the initial fundraising event to raise money for work on the monument. Between 100 to 200 people attended the event, which Miller had hoped would raise around \$2500. Carlson and Clark said the event actually raised \$3468.

The commission next discussed the upcoming Downtown Summit that is scheduled to be held in Davenport in August. Clark urged commission members to attend and hopefully the city will help support the cost. Muscatine was the host for the Downtown Summit several years ago, he reported.

Rudisill next presented a CD of all the nomination forms of Muscatine properties currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. CLG Coordinator Paula Mohr prepared the CD earlier this year and mailed a copy to Rudisill. Carlson took the CD and said she would try to have it loaded onto the Musser Public Library website.

The commission next discussed several property and historic district issues.

Clark said there was no new information on the status of the TV/cable showing of the Jayne House move. Kessler checked the schedule during the commission meeting and reported the show was not currently scheduled. She said the foundation on the house was nearly complete. Reischauer said neighbors had indicated they were becoming worried over the progress and Clark said he hoped work would continue to move forward.

In a related discussion on the status of the Muscatine Art Center's proposed developed in the former Jayne House site, Clark said he had not received any new information.

The commission then discussed the Alexander Clark Heritage District. An effort to continue an investigation into establishing a memorial site for Alexander Clark seemed to be growing into more than had been intended, Clark and Sissel reported. Clark said he was becoming frustrated with trying to get the community to embrace what was being done; while Sissel said what had been originally proposed as a molehill had grown into a mountain.

Sissel said it had not been intended that the commission take on the project, but the intent was to involve more groups. He said the commission could continue to be involved, specifically in the historic district, possibly through walking tours and plaques. Those are activities he was especially too busy now to pursue. Sissel said he had talked with staff members and would continue to seek other groups help with consultations and possibly funding. He said there was no plan to present any proposal to the council.

Reischauer asked where funding could be raised to cover some of the costs. Sissel said one source could be the Prince Halls, which were the Black Masons chapters that Alexander Clark originally helped establish. He said the key activity to help raise money through those chapters would be to put a plan together. However, he also pointed out there was not yet any specific plan

Sissel also said the Community Improvement Action Team (CIAT) had agreed to support proceeding with a concept.

The commission next briefly discussed the status of a private residence on Third Street. Sissel reported the owner had attempted to renovate the house, but there had not been any recent progress. Sissel said he had attempted to meet with the owner to discuss the situation, but the owner did not show up. In the meantime, Sissel said the city might identify the house as a potential code violation, especially if neighbors begin to complain.

Clark also reported there is just a small amount of chinking yet to be completed on the Weed Park Cabin. Clark pointed out that his last act as chair of the commission would be to remove the Weed Park Cabin item from the council agenda and declare the cabin had been saved from demolition. Vazquez said the cabin provided a nice sight to travelers on Highway 22.

In the final property and district discussion item, Rudisill reported he had talked with Iowa Prison Industries on signs to identify the two national historic districts. Carlson said Maharry had also discussed signs for the district. Clark suggested talking to the Downtown Action Alliance about assisting with signs for the downtown district.

The commission next reviewed reports, including one provided by Clark on the Friends of Muscatine Historic Preservation. He said the Friends had discussed the Alexander Clark Historic District at the last meeting. He reported Maharry and Sissel were going to work on a proposal, but was not sure if it had been done.

Clark and Carlson also reported on the Pape family and efforts to save historic buildings later demolished as part of the Stanley building projects.

Clark also said Maharry had talked recently with Rebecca McCarley and completing a survey and evaluation of Mulberry Avenue might not be as expensive as currently believed.

In other reports, Clark said he was still hoping to establish a design group as part of the Downtown Action Alliance, but no meeting had been set.

The final discussion item for the commission was trying to identify another member. Kessler and Clark both mentioned possible members.

The meeting then adjourned at approximately 6:05 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the commission is scheduled for Wednesday, July 21, 2010 at 5:15 p.m. in the Muscatine City Hall lower level conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair