

MINUTES

Cheney Historic Preservation Commission September 1, 2005

Commissioners Attending: Bettye Hull, Fred Lauritsen, Steve Emerson, Aimee Flinn and Chris Stewart.

Commissioners Absent: Nikki Gamon and Martin Seedorf.

Staff Attending: Susan Beeman.

Councilpersons Attending: None.

Call to Order: Chairman Hull called the meeting to order at 5:21 p.m. and welcomed Dr. Fred Lauritsen to the Commission.

Approval of Minutes: Motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Emerson, to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2005 Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission as distributed. Motion carried.

Citizen Participation: Chairman Hull welcomed Ryan Walters from Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity. Mr. Walters explained that he is the house manager at the Philena, and they are planning some improvements to the building. He emphasized that they do not want to do anything to detract from the historic character of the building, and asked the Commission what kind of restrictions they would face if the building were nominated to the local, state or national register.

Ms. Beeman explained that she has had discussions with Mr. Walters about the need for any projects on local register buildings which require a building permit to be approved by the Commission prior to issuance of the building permit.

Chairman Hull said that as long as the exterior of the building was relatively unchanged, then updates to the interior would probably be allowed.

Commissioner Flinn asked if this is considered an income-producing property for purposes of National Park Service certifications. Ms. Beeman said that the building is owned by a non-profit corporation, so it is probably not considered income-producing.

Chairman Hull encouraged Mr. Walters to consider register listing as a way to enhance opportunities to receive grants which are available from various sources. Commissioner Emerson added that he should look at the individual grant requirements to determine if register listing is required for consideration. Even though the building is not individually listed, it is a contributing property in a National Register district, so that may be good enough.

Mr. Walters asked if they planned to do an extensive remodel, would they be subject to an lengthy approval process, or would they be required to use more expensive historic materials and techniques.

Commissioner Flinn explained that with a National Register listing, you are under no obligation to do anything. If changes are made which affect the integrity of the building, it may be removed from the National Register. However, since it is a contributing property, she felt it would be redundant to pursue an individual listing on the National Register. Ms. Beeman noted that the building is not on our local register yet, and our practice is to forward local register buildings for consideration to the state and national registers.

Chairman Hull noted that our procedure is not inconvenient; the Commission tries to help keep the building's integrity intact, and it is not their intent to put up roadblocks for property owners wishing to update their buildings to make them more usable.

Ms. Beeman asked Commissioner Emerson to discuss what kind of interior modifications might be cause for concern. Commissioner Emerson explained that for local register properties, there is usually an agreement drawn up which specifies what aspects of the building will be protected in any remodel project. He recommended that Mr. Walters research specific grants and identify what is required by the specific granting agency.

Ms. Beeman suggested that as they contact architects, they look for someone who has experience working with historic buildings. Commissioner Flinn noted that the Spokane HPO maintains a list of 'historically sensitive' contractors who do a lot of work on historic buildings. One of the best is a firm called Rencorps.

Commissioner Stewart asked about the fraternity affiliation. Mr. Walters explained that Sigma Phi Epsilon emphasizes developing balanced leaders for the world's communities.

Chairman Hull thanked Mr. Walters for coming to talk to the Commission.

Old Business: West Cheney Survey Project Progress Report. Ms. Beeman reported that she has edited the articles to meet length requirements for the Cheney Free Press, and has distributed close-to-final drafts to the commission for review. An additional article on the Gibbs House should be completed in the next couple of weeks. Commissioner Stewart suggested that we ask the Free Press to post photos of the house and ask, "Do you know anything interesting about the residents of this house?" as a way to fill out our knowledge of the buildings. Discussion followed on collecting information via the City's web site.

Commissioner Lauritsen noted that the house next door to the Kennedy House was, for several years, the residence of Thomas Hanson, who is now an internationally known opera star. This is the white house on W. 6th Street with an exterior staircase, now a rental. He said that as you walk around London, you will see building markers that describe how some famous person lived here, and the period of time they occupied the house.

Ms. Beeman reminded everyone that the grant period runs through the end of September, and she will need to collect timesheets by the end of the month.

Commissioner Emerson reported that he is putting the finishing touches on the survey records and final survey report, and will have those ready in the next week or so.

New Business: Moorman House. Ms. Beeman reported that the Mayor has expressed interest in moving the Moorman House to a city-owned lot at the corner of 2nd and G Streets, refurbishing it with the aid of grant money, and preparing it for use as the Tilicum Club museum. Ms. Beeman said that she has met with members of the Tilicum Club Board, and they have concerns about humidity and ventilation inside the house, and they do not have the finances to cover operating costs for a building of that size. Right now, the City covers the utilities in their present space at the Wren Pierson Building. In order to make this building usable by the aging members of the Tilicum Club, there would need to be some attention given to the stairs for access to the 2nd floor, which are narrow and steep. The Moorman House needs to be moved from its present location by the end of the year as the present owner has plans to develop on that lot.

Commissioner Stewart described the origins of the museum, which was begun by the Tilicum Club in 1934. Many pioneer families donated artifacts, and things were originally stored in the old high school and in somebody's garage. Eventually the City allowed the Tilicum Club to locate in the Wren Pierson building, and has been very generous in allowing them to locate there without any financial encumbrance. She said that she is supportive of the idea of helping the Tilicum Club to relocate their collection to a more visible, and more historically appropriate location.

Discussion continued.

Commissioner Reports: Commissioner Stewart distributed copies of the calendar developed by the 1989 Washington Centennial Committee which contains photographs of historic Cheney scenes.

Commissioner Flinn reported on plans for the Monroe Street Bridge grand re-opening celebration.

Commissioner Emerson reported that he has been working with Commissioner Flinn on the inventory of Moran Prairie and Glenrose Prairie. This is a big area, with complex properties containing multiple buildings.

Chairman Hull reported on her recent trip to Texas where she pursued genealogy research.

Commissioner Lauritsen offered to share his email address with members of the Commission. Chairman Hull suggested he send the information to Ms. Beeman, who will relay it to the rest of the Commission.

Commissioner Stewart reported that she participated in an early tour of the new Engineering Building and the Computer Science Building, two buildings which share a common atrium. There will be public tours and an open house in early October, and she encouraged

Commissioners to visit during the open house. She said she was very impressed with what they have done with these buildings, incorporating technology with a very inviting design. She added that in 50 years, these buildings will be historic register material.

Staff Reports: Ms. Beeman reported that a 1915-era cookbook compiled by ladies of the Cheney Congregational Church has been sent to the Commission by Gwen Malley of Troy, Montana. The cookbook contains recipes from many prominent Cheney families, such as Sutton, Ratcliffe, and others who are associated with historic buildings. Ms. Beeman suggested that we scan the pages of the cookbook to keep an electronic record of it, then turn the book over to the Tilicum Club. Chairman Hull agreed that the museum is the appropriate place for this artifact.

Ms. Beeman announced that if any commission members have not seen the Moorman House yet, she has the key and would be available to show them through the house following the meeting tonight. Chairman Hull and Commissioner Lauritsen expressed an interest in seeing the interior of the building.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Commissioner Stewart made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Emerson; Chairman Hull adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

Approved:

Bettye Hull, Chairman

Susan Beeman, Secretary