

## **MINUTES**

### **Cheney Historic Preservation Commission February 4, 2010**

**Commissioners Attending:** Bettye Hull, Chris Stewart, Vance Youmans, Scott Wilbanks, Ann Heehn, Fred Lauritsen and Charlie Mutschler.

**Commissioners Absent:** None.

**Staff Attending:** Brian Jennings and Susan Beeman.

**Councilpersons Attending:** None.

**Guests:** Venus Bratsveen, Dave Heidecker & Becky Thomas.

**Call to Order:** Chairman Hull called the meeting to order at 5:22 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the January 7, 2010 meeting were approved as distributed.

**Citizen Participation:** None.

#### **New Business: Certificate of Appropriateness – Frost House, 628 I Street.**

Dave Heidecker, representing owners Joel & Lynnette Tyndell, showed architects' drawings and described the proposal to remove the existing 1-car garage and replace it with a larger 2-car garage. The breezeway between the house and garage would be retained.

Ms. Beeman reminded the Commission that the Tyndells described their plans to expand the garage when we toured the house during the local register review last fall. At that time, they hoped to be able to widen and lengthen the existing garage. Staff did some research on property records and found that the garage came into existence around 1950. That makes it old enough to have some significance in its own right, but it is not from the same era as the house.

Chairman Hull asked what would be done with the picket fence. Mr. Heidecker said that it would be moved over to accommodate the expanded garage.

Mr. Heidecker added that they have found a source for wood lap siding that will match what is existing on the garage. The breezeway will still be attached to the garage.

Chairman Hull said she does not see that modifying the garage to make it more useful would have a negative impact on the historic sense of the house, and it does not interfere with the contributions of the previous owners to the historic value of the house.

Commissioner Wilbanks made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for removal and replacement of the garage, as shown on the construction drawings and as described by Mr. Heidecker. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart; motion carried unanimously.

**New Business: Potential Local Register Nomination – 606 G Street.**

Ms. Beeman referenced the inventory form for the Robert Schanwecker House which was included in the agenda packet, and explained that the house has been purchased by Frances Ruud. Our 2004 update to the inventory makes reference to some improvements that were tastefully done, which did not detract from the historic integrity of the building. Apparently those improvements did some serious damage to the structural integrity of the building as load-bearing walls were moved, and beams were cut to run new plumbing. The new owners are consulting with structural engineers to determine the extent of repairs needed. They may be interested in both the local register and the special valuation program.

**New Business: Removal from the Local Register -- Procedure.**

Mr. Jennings explained that we have been contacted by owners of a building currently on the local register, asking about the process for removal. Our code specifically addresses Commission-initiated removal, but does not address an owner-initiated removal. He noted that there is a comment in the code that says the process for removal is ‘the reverse of how a property is listed.’ In other words, it would need a City Council action to de-list a property.

Mr. Jennings said that he has talked to Kristen Griffen from the Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office. He described a similar situation the City of Spokane dealt with, where new owners acquired a local register house and wanted it to be delisted. In that case, the house was delisted and then demolished. Mr. Jennings added that in the Cheney case, as in the Spokane case, the owner has not taken advantage of the special valuation property tax incentive. That is the trade-off: the owner agrees to list the historic property, and then receives the benefit of a 10-year property tax abatement. In going forward, Mr. Jennings said that he believes it is critical that the special valuation buildings be maintained.

Discussion followed. Mr. Jennings said that he believes this stems from the idea that being on the local register is too much bother because of the process of obtaining a certificate of appropriateness before anything is modified or changed. He added that there may also be a question of whether review of interior modifications is too restrictive; that may be something for the Commission to take a look at.

Discussion continued. Chairman Hull suggested that this is a matter of perception; we would do well to encourage owners to take full advantage of the special valuation program, and be proactive in attempts to make information on special valuation available to purchasers of historic properties. She added that it should not be easy to get off the local register. If a local register building were sold, is there any guarantee that the new owners would be informed of its historic status?

Commissioner Mutschler suggested that for the buildings where a management agreement has been signed, that information would come up on a title search. But without the management agreement, there is no lever for us to use to encourage continuation on the register. Mr. Jennings noted that Spokane has made some changes to their process to ensure that management agreements are signed at the time of local register listing.

Ms. Beeman said that we have also incorporated the management agreement into the local register process, although buildings that were listed on the local register prior to 2009 do not have management agreements. We do have flags on the records in our building permits system so permits are not issued accidentally on local register properties, without certificate of appropriateness review.

Chairman Hull wondered if we could let our local realtors know which properties are on the local register, just to ensure that purchasers and property owners aren't surprised by that discovery. Discussion continued.

Discussion continued about the effectiveness of trying to communicate with title companies about the properties on the Cheney Register. Commissioner Lauritsen asked if all local register properties have been presented with a plaque. Ms. Beeman said that only the properties which have been listed since we purchased the plaques have them. Commissioner Lauritsen suggested that having the plaque affixed to the exterior of the building would make it obvious to new owners, as well.

Commissioner Stewart asked if Mr. Jennings is looking for input on what a reversal process might look like. Mr. Jennings said that he thinks the existing code could be used, and this discussion has provided some good guidance. Commissioner Stewart suggested that any removal process should be prefaced with "profound regret," so there is some soul in the process. People may have reasons for pursuing a removal, but they need to understand that the community values reflect a deep regret for a delisting action. Chairman Hull agreed, and suggested that a proactive notification system will still be beneficial.

Commissioner Mutschler suggested that we should be making contact each year with owners of register properties, just to remind them of the opportunities available. People will come and go, especially with buildings owned by organizations. If we have a regular schedule of contacting property owners, we may avoid some difficult situations.

### **Old Business: 2010 Grant Project: Landscape Workshop.**

Ms. Beeman reported that she and Chairman Hull attended the Cheney Garden Club board meeting this week to discuss the Sterling-Moorman House landscape plan. Members of the Garden Club were helpful in suggesting possibilities, and LaVerle McCandless is going to present a session on the Sterling-Moorman landscape plan at the workshop.

Ms. Beeman reviewed the DAHP contract Scope of Work for the historic landscape workshop, and summarized workshop arrangements to date. We have contacted presenters who specialize in native plant varieties; care of mature trees; landscape design for historic gardens; and other

presenters with the WSU Master Gardeners program. One presenter will speak on microclimates in the Inland Northwest and short-season gardening. We will have a session on what characterized landscaping of period homes, and what is appropriate for the period of construction.

Chairman Hull suggested that dealing with deer in the garden would be of interest to many area gardeners.

Discussion followed on the workshop schedule and location. Hargreaves Hall is available on Saturday, March 20, and after checking various community calendars, that is a relatively clear date. Commissioner Heehn noted that there is a tea in Cheney at 1:00 p.m. on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

Discussion continued. Ms. Beeman will send draft agenda information to Commission members as plans are finalized.

### **Commissioner Reports:**

Commissioner Stewart reported that May is Preservation Month, and suggested that we provide some bookmarks to the Cheney Public Library to observe the event, particularly during the week of May 9-15, 2010. ALA has a bookmark for the event which is available for \$8.50 per hundred, plus shipping. They also have posters available, for the same price. She asked if this is something the Commission would like to consider promoting. Commissioner Stewart noted that the National Trust web site has a new motto: "Spread the Word: Old is the New Green."

Commissioner Wilbanks asked about work being done on the Independent Order of Odd Fellows building on 1<sup>st</sup> Street. Ms. Beeman said that the work is considered a 'tenant improvement,' and will not affect any of the character-defining features of the building. The owner has had a structural engineer involved.

Commissioner Youmans reported that he is preparing for another trip to Ireland and England.

Chairman Hull reported that March is Women's history Month. The National Women's History Museum at [www.nwhm.org](http://www.nwhm.org) has some anniversary specials, teaching aids, and books available. Their motto is "Write Women Back Into History." She mentioned that Hilary Clinton was not the nation's first female Presidential candidate. Victoria Woodhull has that honor, prior to the Civil War (although she was not yet 36, and there was a question about whether you could be elected President if you could not vote); her running mate was Frederick Douglas.

Commissioner Heehn reported that she has been doing some research on 606 G Street, and owners of the building after Julia Edwards.

Commissioner Mutschler shared photos of the Sutton House, and Mr. Sutton. He noted that this was the only photograph he has seen of Mr. Sutton wearing glasses. Commissioner Stewart commented that Mr. Sutton was well-loved by his students. There are mementos in the museum, including a red-velvet covered autograph book that contain inscriptions to Mr. Sutton, and about him. Commissioner Mutschler said that the house was demolished in the late 1960s or early

1970s, when the university had acquired the property. They were looking for land for expansion, and were not interested in historic buildings at that time.

**Staff Reports:**

Mr. Jennings asked if Cheney has ever had any historic gardens, or public gardens of significance. Commissioner Heehn said that Ed Dales, who was in the industrial house department, had a house at the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and B Street, where the old Fairchild AFB houses have been placed. At one time, Ed Dales' garden covered all the way to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. It was a private garden, but it had paths, and fountains, and bird feeders.

Commissioner Mutschler said that the Northern Pacific had a nice little garden near the depot at one time. The railroad encouraged station agents to put in a little garden so the place was attractive to people getting off the train.

Discussion followed on the circle of roses located outside Senior Hall. Commissioner Mutschler said that there have been flowers there for many years, but he is not sure anyone has a record of what was originally planted. Mr. Tobler was the gardener for the college for many years.

Mr. Jennings reported that part of the Utility Building expansion will include landscaping. It is planned to be a demonstration garden of native and water-wise plants.

Mr. Jennings reminded members of the Commission about the February 18 workshop on comprehensive plan land use and public policy.

Mr. Jennings reported on a trip he made last fall to the Tenement Museum in New York. He described the museum, which was created in a four story building where immigrant families lived. It is estimated that over the life of the building, 70,000 people have lived there. Portions of the building have been kept intact since the 1930s, and there are now re-creations of what the rooms would have looked like. He sees parallels to the Sterling-Moorman House. What if this were developed as a 'Settlement Museum;' could this give the same type of experience?

Mr. Jennings said that he would like to explore creating a Facebook page for the Sterling-Moorman House. He feels the ability to network and create a social group associated with the house could help create a solid foundation of support for the restoration project.

Mr. Jennings added that we have the Washington State Historical Society grant, but we need to get the contracts in place and the dollars allocated. We will be renewing efforts to solicit donations toward completion of the house.

**Election of Officers:** Commissioner Wilbanks nominated Commissioner Hull to serve as chairman for the coming year; seconded by Commissioner Lauritsen. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Mutschler nominated Commissioner Stewart to serve as vice-chairman for the coming year. Seconded by Commissioner Wilbanks; motion carried unanimously.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, Chairman Hull adjourned the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

**Approved:**

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Bettye Hull, Chairman

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Susan Beeman, Secretary