

## **MINUTES**

### **Cheney Historic Preservation Commission February 21, 2008**

**Commissioners Attending:** Bettye Hull, Fred Lauritsen, Charlie Mutschler, Scott Wilbanks, Aimee Flinn, and Chris Stewart.

**Commissioners Absent:** Stephen Emerson.

**Staff Attending:** Elisa Rodriguez and Susan Beeman.

**Councilpersons Attending:** None.

**Call to Order:** Chairman Hull called the meeting to order at 5:21 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** Commissioner Stewart made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2007 meeting as distributed. Seconded by Commissioner Lauritsen; motion carried unanimously.

**Citizen Participation:** None.

#### **New Business: Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process.**

Ms. Rodriguez explained that the Community Development staff is undertaking a complete rewrite of the City's comprehensive plan and the associated development codes. We are conducting outreach meetings in the community to explain the process and solicit input from citizens. Ms. Rodriguez distributed two flyers, one on Growth Management, and the other on our comprehensive plan update process. She explained that this is expected to be an 18-month to 2-year process. Our initial efforts are going toward development of a vision statement.

Discussion followed. Commissioner Stewart asked if these flyers with survey questions are being distributed to business owners. Chairman Hull suggested that a supply of the flyers be placed in locations with lots of traffic, such as Curves.

Commissioner Mutschler asked about the age of the comprehensive plan. Ms. Rodriguez said there have been several updates to the existing plan, but this is intended to be a complete rewrite which reduces the length to 30-50 pages. She is aiming for a document that puts the emphasis on a plan for the future, as compared to our current plan, which is heavy on history, and a description of the current situation.

Discussion continued, with suggestions for people who might be willing to participate in the process. Ms. Rodriguez noted that the next Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) is Wednesday evening, March 19. Notices about CAC meetings will be emailed to anyone interested, and the

Historic Preservation Commission is always welcome to request that someone attend a regular meeting to give an update on the process.

**New Business: Northern Pacific Depot.**

Ms. Beeman reported that she had spoken with an employee of the Burlington Northern Railroad who indicated the company's plans for the NP depot building may include disposing of it. The building has been determined eligible for the National Register, but it was never listed because of safety concerns due to its location between two sets of active tracks. There have been discussions in the past about relocating it to the area near the Visitor Center on the south end of town. It may be an opportune time to contact the railroad to see if they would consider donating the building to the City.

Discussion followed. Commissioner Mutschler noted that the cost of moving this masonry building would likely be much higher than the cost of relocating the Sterling-Moorman House. It can be done, but it is not cheap. Ms. Beeman reminded the Commission that this building is related to transportation, and we have been told that there might be funds available through the Transportation Improvement Board for uses related to rehabilitation of that building. Another pool of state funding that we might qualify for is the Capital Heritage Grants Fund, which we are hoping to tap for funding to rehab the Sterling-Moorman House.

Discussion continued. Commissioner Stewart said that she thought it was very appropriate to be considering these projects now, although the rehabilitation of the Sterling-Moorman House is just beginning. It is a matter of taking a visionary approach to the future. Ms. Beeman agreed, and encouraged the commissioners to become active in the comprehensive plan rewrite to ensure that preservation priorities are reflected from the earliest part of the process. Our present plan, which was adopted in 1997, has a significant section allocated to historic preservation, identifying preservation as a community priority.

**New Business: Request for Qualifications – Preservation Planning Consultant.**

Ms. Beeman distributed copies of the RFQ packet which will be mailed and emailed to local architectural firms tomorrow. The 'deliverable' for this grant project is a Historic Structure Report which follows National Park Service guidelines, and the role of the commission in this process is to prepare the history section of the document. We have a good amount of information about the Moorman family and changes to the house which were made over the years, but still hope to complete some additional research on the Sterling family.

Commissioner Stewart asked about the pool of tax money that become available when the Holiday Inn Express was built. Ms. Beeman explained that the hotel-motel tax has been collected all along, but the construction of the new hotel substantially increased that pool of revenue. Prior to that time, the amount of hotel-motel tax revenue collected each year was roughly the amount that the City allocated each year to support Chamber of Commerce operations. State law restricts the use of that tax to tourism development activities, and the City has recently formed an advisory committee made up of representatives of the entities which are paying the tax to make recommendations to City Council on how that tax shall be used. If the

Sterling-Moorman House is directly involved in tourism activities, it might qualify for some of that funding, which will be awarded on a competitive grant basis.

**New Business: Special Valuation Application – 113 F Street.**

Ms. Beeman explained that the owner of 113 F Street, the old Cheney Travel building, has made application to the County for special valuation status after completing substantial improvements to the building last summer. Our code allows properties on the local register to apply for special valuation, but this building is only on our inventory, and has never been listed on the register.

Discussion followed on whether it is possible to do this slightly out of order. Commissioner Flinn stated that a large number of the special valuation applications processed by the Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office have not followed the steps in the preferred order. In most cases, people come in to apply for special valuation and having completed the work, and then they list on the local register; it is rarely done any other way. After further discussion, it was agreed that Ms. Beeman will contact the property owner to explain the implications of register listing, and inquire if he is interested in preparing an application for the local register.

**New Business: Hargreaves Hall Update.**

Commissioner Mutschler gave a brief report following a conversation with Jim Moeller about renovations at Hargreaves Hall. Mr. Moeller has asked for an opportunity to address the Commission to keep them apprised of progress on the project, and has indicated that he will try to arrange a tour of the facility as soon as demolition is complete.

**Election of Officers.**

Commissioner Stewart expressed appreciation to Chairman Hull for her years of leadership on the commission. Following brief discussion, Commissioner Lauritsen nominated Bettye Hull to the position of Chairman; seconded by Commissioner Stewart. Commissioner Mutschler made a motion that nominations be closed and a unanimous ballot cast for Commissioner Hull. Seconded by Commissioner Lauritsen; motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Hull nominated Commissioner Stewart to the position of Vice Chairman; seconded by Commissioner Lauritsen. Commissioner Mutschler made a motion that nominations be closed and a unanimous ballot cast for Commissioner Stewart. Seconded by Commissioner Lauritsen; motion carried unanimously.

Discussion followed on naming a liaison to the Pathway to Progress Board, which regularly meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month. Commissioner Lauritsen suggested that, as a retiree, he is more free with his hours than some of the other members, and suggested that he and Commissioner Wilbanks might share that responsibility, possibly alternating months. Commissioner Wilbanks agreed that he would be able to serve as an alternate to represent HPC interests to the Pathways Board, and to report back to the HPC on Pathways' concerns.

**Commissioner Reports:** Commissioner Stewart reported that she has recently run across a web site called [www.zipskinny.com](http://www.zipskinny.com) which allows a person to enter a zip code and it brings up all kinds of demographic information about that area.

Chairman Hull announced a Planning & Preservation Conference to be held in Chelan on April 30 through May 3, and the Spokane Preservation Advocates Gala & Auction will be held on Saturday, March 15.

Commissioner Wilbanks recommended a display of Colt firearms at the Museum of Arts & Culture.

Chairman Hull reported that she has an opportunity to travel to China at the end of May. Chairman Hull said that she has been contacted by a man who is interested in donating to the City or to the Tilicum Museum a roll top desk made of tiger oak which originally belonged to the founder of Leland-Beady Chevrolet. He found paperwork in a desk drawer indicating that the first mayor of Cheney had used the desk.

Commissioner Mutschler will be chairing a session on digitizing documents at the Northwest History Conference in Corvallis, Oregon, in April, and will be going to Anchorage in May.

Commissioner Lauritsen reported that Saturday is Regional History Day; he and his wife, and Commissioner Mutschler, will be judges at that event.

Commissioner Flinn noted that the City of Spokane HPO was instrumental in helping the Washington Trust get started with the co-sponsorship of the American Planning Association conference. She said that one of the auction items at the SPA gala is rumored to be a house on Lake Chelan where you can stay while attending this conference. She attended the Gala last year, and reported that it was a wonderful event.

**Staff Reports:** Ms. Beeman reported that she has been contacted by Mrs. Halasey in Hawaii, and they are delighted that their house has been listed on the Cheney Historic Register.

Ms. Beeman also reported that Tom Richardson has tendered his resignation after 28 years with the City of Cheney, to be effective in May of this year. His immediate plans include enjoying retirement, and a complete lack of evening meetings.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, Chairman Hull adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

**Approved:**

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Bettye Hull, Chairman

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Susan Beeman, Secretary