

MINUTES

Cheney Historic Preservation Commission

March 5, 2009

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

Commissioners Absent: Vance Youmans.

Staff Attending: Patti Dean & Susan Beeman.

Councilpersons Attending: None.

Guests: LaVerle & Don McCandless, from the Cheney Garden Club.

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

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the February 2, 2009 meeting were approved as distributed.

Citizen Participation: None.

Old Business: Cheney Historical Museum Update.

Ms. Beeman read an email from Joan Mamanakis, Museum Co-Director, reporting on the status of the search for a suitable facility to house the museum. No space has been secured at this time, but they are pursuing a lead that might result in temporary space in the downtown.

Old Business: Sterling-Moorman House Project.

Ms. Beeman reported on plans for the upcoming work day at the Sterling-Moorman House. We will be able to place an A-frame sign in front of the house a few days prior to the work day.

New Business: Landscape & Garden Plans – Sterling-Moorman House.

Ms. Beeman explained for Mr. & Mrs. McCandless that we are in the process of restoring the 1884 house and building an adjacent small 'carriage house' and planning to work in conjunction with the Tilicum Club to operate a historic house museum at this location. Commissioner Stewart had contacted the Cheney Garden Club with a request for technical assistance and advice, and Mr. & Mrs. McCandless were in attendance to learn more about the project and to discuss the possible involvement of the Garden Club.

Mrs. McCandless said that most of the members of the Garden Club are elderly. There are several members who would be great as mentors. They will be busiest in the summertime. Mrs.

McCandless offered to research the types of plantings that would have been common in the period of significance, from the 1880s to 1912. She advised that sprinklers should be hidden, to retain the period appearance. Outlines of any steps and sidewalks should be marked so the gardeners can get an idea of the space available to work with. Bulbs would have been used a lot, and these would be planted in the fall. A kitchen garden would have had a lot of herbs, and not many perennials, other than rhubarb and sage. This type of garden will require time to maintain.

She suggested that we use this as an opportunity to teach the community about landscaping around a historic building. The Garden Club sponsors a spring and fall plant sale, and some members might be willing to donate plants to landscape the grounds. Discussion continued about specific plant varieties that would have been common at the time the Sterling-Moorman House was built.

Commissioner Stewart noted that we do have some time to work on this, because we are just getting started with work on the house itself. The Commission was interested in getting the Garden Club in on the ground floor discussions, so they could contribute their expertise in the early planning stages.

Discussion continued. Mrs. McCandless noted that since watering was done by hand, the trees used in the late 19th century would have been varieties that did not need much water, and consequently, they would not send roots out a long way, and would tend to have fewer problems buckling the sidewalks. For example, they would not have had rhododendrons in the yard.

Ms. Dean said that Cheney High School has a landscape design class, and we might be able to team up with those students for both a learning project and also a community service project, for the installation of the landscape. She said that all Cheney High School seniors have a 10-hour community service requirement prior to graduation.

Discussion continued on goals for improvements on the Sterling-Moorman over the next few months. We want install drain tile, and fill and level the site a bit more so we can plan grass seed this spring. It is important that it not look like a vacant house for the spring and summer months, but the majority of the landscaping will not be done until after construction of the carriage house, a year or more from now. Mr. McCandless suggested that snapdragons were popular in gardens of that era, and are an annual flower that could be used to spruce up the yard this year, adding some color. We only have a 110 day growing season, which is relatively short.

The Commission discussed presenting the research and information to the community in the form of an educational workshop, possibly next fall or winter. Mrs. McCandless said that they would be happy to participate.

New Business: Call for Nominations: 2009 Most Endangered Historic Properties List.

Ms. Beeman reviewed the announcement from the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation calling for nominations for their annual 'most endangered historic properties' list. Discussion followed; by consensus, it was agreed that there are really no properties in Cheney at this time that are candidates for this list.

New Business: 2010 CLG Grant Application.

Ms. Beeman reported that the Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP) has announced that they will have approximately \$70,000 for grants to Certified Local Governments for 2010. This is a competitive grant, and categories for funding include preservation planning, survey work, preparation of national register nominations, and education.

Discussion followed on possible grant projects for 2010. It was decided to apply for grant funding to host a seminar on appropriate landscaping and gardening for historic houses: "Historic Landscaping: Repair & Rejuvenate Your Historic Home." Commissioner Stewart suggested that a portion of the workshop could be a history of Cheney parks. Commissioner Stewart made a motion to submit a grant application for an educational program as discussed. Seconded by Commissioner Lauritsen; motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Flinn announced that she is engaged to be married; the wedding will be on June 7.

Commissioner Stewart reported that there is a brick sale program at EWU right now; their engraved bricks are \$200 apiece.

Commissioner Hull reported that she participated as a judge in the regional History Day competition last month, and will be involved with the state History Day. She was disappointed that no students from Cheney were involved, and almost none from Spokane. There was a bus load of 63 students from Pasco, and other communities were well represented.

Commissioner Mutschler reported that he is involved with the melodrama that is being presented on campus this month. His department at the University is putting up the first of the transcripts for the "Women in a Small College Town" oral history project on the EWU web site. There will be a reception next Tuesday at noon in the Women's Center lounge, and three of the original oral history project participants will be in attendance.

Commissioner Wilbanks said that he had a wonderful time at the Lauritsens' concert last night, and a number of brick order forms were taken.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chairman Hull adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Approved:

Bettye Hull, Chairman

Susan Beeman, Secretary