MINUTES
Cheney Historic Preservation Commission
March 6, 2008

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

Commissioners Absent: Chris Stewart.

Staff Attending: Susan Beeman.

Councilpersons Attending: None.

Call to Order: Chairman Hull called the meeting to order at 5:19 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Chairman Hull cited Robert's Rules of Order which specifies that minutes do not have to be voted on; if there are no corrections, they stand approved as read. Chairman Hull asked if there were any corrections to the minutes; hearing none, she stated that the minutes were approved as distributed.

Citizen Participation: Commissioner Hull welcomed Ann Heehn and Joan Mamanakis of the Cheney Historical Museum, and Jim Moeller, Eastern Washington University.

Old Business: Hargreaves Hall Remodel Project.
Jim Moeller, EWU Construction & Planning Services, gave an update on progress of the renovation at Hargreaves Hall. he reported that the bid was awarded on January 7, 2008, to Lavernier Construction. The bid was $1.2 million less than they expected it to be, so they were able to accept all 5 bid alternatives that were proposed. Most of these had to do with improvements to historic features, or replication/replacement of historic features of the building.

Mr. Moeller reported that one of the bid alternatives allowed an extra $131,000 to purchase windows with mullion patterns more closely patterned after the originals. Another upgrade affects floor tiles, where an existing vinyl and mineral composition floor tile was badly scarred and needs to be replaced. A $61,000 bid alternative allows installation of terrazzo tile, which will be polished in place to virtually eliminate visual grout lines. It will also require less maintenance than the original option, while keeping within the historic look of the building.

Mr. Moeller described the selection of light fixtures for the reading room. The reading room did not originally have ceiling lights. The only available photos of the reading room are taken during the daytime, and the room appeared to be lit by bankers' lights which set on the library tables, or by lights on top of the book shelves that reflected off the walls. Mr. Moeller said that the original layout included 35 or 36 tables, and there certainly were not that many electrical outlets in the room. They think the room may have closed at night. While ceiling lights were

not original to the reading room, they are necessary to provide adequate light for the kind special events that will be taking place in this space, such as dances, dining events, or other gatherings requiring large, open space. The selected light fixture will hang from the structural bays of the ceiling, approximately 15' off the floor, and will be made of ornamental bronze, which is consistent with a number of other building elements, such as grills for return air, radiator covers and the front doors.

Mr. Moeller reported that the last upgrade allowed by the bid windfall was a replication of the original doors. The original doors were bronze, with grillwork to match the transom above the doorway. There were three doors of equal size. He explained that the replacement doors would be 1.5" less in width than is required under current building codes, but they are going to request some leeway from the building inspectors for the sake of historic preservation.

Mr. Moeller explained that they are taking extreme precautions to protect the existing marble floors and stairs during the construction activities. Original materials are being saved in order to re-use them. In the removal of the marble tiles, only one piece was broken, and that was already broken while hanging on the wall; that also is being repaired and will be re-used. The contractor has built a wall out of plywood that stands a foot off the remaining marble walls, in order to protect the materials. The main stairways have been completely sealed off from use to keep the marble intact during construction.

The third floor that divided the reading room in the 1967 remodel has been removed. The structural steel and concrete were cut into short lengths and carefully removed through a window opening on one side of the building. In removing the Palladian window so the construction debris could be disposed of, they discovered that the original windows were tinted a light cobalt blue. This is not a color that is available today; the blue that is found today is an azure blue. He explained that the blue tinted glass is used most commonly in the East, while green tinted glass is more common in the west. The blue glass would have had to be purchased in Florida, shipped to California to be fabricated into window panels, and then shipped to Spokane at an added cost of nearly $50,000. Since no one, including the architects, the University staff, or the public, had been aware that the windows were tinted, they opted not to incur the additional expense. The money saved was put back into items that would be more noticeable, such as the bronze doors.

Mr. Moeller described some of the structural challenges they have been dealing with. Removal of the stairs to the third floor left beams unsupported. Some of the plaster work on the beams in the reading room will have to be re-created, which is expected to be costly. Some of the walls lack structural integrity, being clay tiles covered by an inch of plaster. It is the plaster holding the walls in place.

They expect most of the demolition to be complete by the end of next week, and at some time after that point, Mr. Moeller offered to arrange a tour of the facility for members of the Commission.

Chairman Lauritsen asked if anyone had looked at other examples of this type of building to see how they handled the lights in the reading room areas. Hargreaves Hall was designed to emulate the Boston Public Library, and there were a number of similar buildings around the country.

Commissioner Emerson commented that he thought the lighting alternatives sound appropriate for the space, and he is looking forward to seeing the reading room as it was originally designed to look.

Chairman Hull thanked Mr. Moeller for the update, and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to tour the building later this spring.

New Business: Request for Qualifications – Preservation Planning Consultant.

Ms. Beeman explained that we sent out about 40 emails and mailed another dozen RFQ packets to architects whose names have been associated with preservation projects in the Spokane area. We received just one Statement of Qualifications, from Ernie Robeson. She added that she and Mr. Robeson, along with one of the building inspectors, had walked through the Sterling-Moorman House earlier this week.

The Commissioners reviewed Mr. Robeson's application packet and discussion followed. Commissioner Emerson speculated that the larger firms may have declined to submit applications for this because it is a rather small project.

Chairman Hull asked Ms. Beeman to schedule a time for an interview with Mr. Robeson.

New Business: Heritage Capital Grants Fund. Ms. Beeman reported that she attended a training session last week for the Heritage Capital Grants Fund. This is a pool of state money that is available for heritage projects, and the Sterling-Moorman House project may be a good candidate for this source of funding.

Commissioner Reports: Commissioner Wilbanks reported that he and Commissioner Lauritsen attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Cheney Flooring Company, 113 F Street.

Commissioner Hull announced that there will be a conference at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans in April, the "Real to Reel Conference," on WWII in the news and movies.

Commissioner Flinn added that she had visited this museum in 2004, prior to Hurricane Katrina, and while the storm did substantial damage to the museum, it had been a very worthwhile display when she saw it.

Commissioner Emerson reported on the sesqui-centennial celebration at the Steptoe Battlefield to be held this spring. This is a commemoration of the Indian battles involving Col. George Wright which began near Steptoe Butte. Many of the activities will be held at the Corbin Senior Center, but there will also be tours of the battlefields at Rosalia and Four Lakes.

Commissioner Flinn reported that she recently completed a local register nomination for a modest house in West Central Spokane last month. She is also taking on a Section 106 project for a low-income housing project along Broadway Avenue. One of the houses slated for demolition has been determined eligible, so the non-profit group involved with the housing project will be required to work with the State to mitigate that adverse effect.

Commissioner Hull noted that March is Women's History Month.

Staff Reports: Ms. Beeman reported that the City has hired a secretary for the Light Department who will begin work next week. Applications are being received for the position of Community Development Director, to fill the vacancy being left by Tom Richardson's retirement. The Comprehensive Plan update process is in full swing, and there is opportunity for involvement with the Citizens' Advisory Committee, which meets next on Wednesday, March 19 at the Public Library at 6:00 p.m.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chairman Hull adjourned the meeting at 6:12 p.m.

Approved:

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Bettye Hull, Chairman Susan Beeman, Secretary