

MINUTES

Cheney Historic Preservation Commission

May 1, 2008

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

Commissioners Absent: None.

Staff Attending: Susan Beeman.

Councilpersons Attending: None.

Call to Order: Chairman Hull called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. following a tour of Hargreaves Hall.

Approval of Minutes: Chairman Hull asked if there were any corrections to the minutes; hearing none, the minutes of the April 3, 2008 meeting were approved as distributed.

Citizen Participation: None.

Old Business: Sterling-Moorman House Project Preservation Plan.

Mr. Robeson reported that he is progressing on the as-built drawings. He has been doing some research on the style of the house, and found photos of a house in Oregon that is very similar, described as a 'Western farmhouse.' He noted that when it comes time to re-create the stair railing, there is a photograph of a very similar stair available to use for a model.

Mr. Robeson said that the big issues in the rehabilitation of this building will be the mechanical and electrical systems. He suggested that the best way to approach this will be to insulate the crawl space and call that a basement, put a vapor barrier on the ground, and let that be a warm space, avoiding moisture problems. The electrical service can be brought into the building there, and the mechanical equipment will be in the basement. He believes the interior walls have less redeeming characteristics than the exterior, so we will probably want to add insulation on the interior.

The existing electrical is very primitive, and he recommended using wire mold, a narrow metal channel that would hide the electrical wires, allowing them to be surface-mounted. Mr. Robeson noted that there is no attic access, and maybe we need to add one.

The front door is 31" wide, and two inside doors are 29" and 30" wide. There is really no handicap access through the front, but the kitchen door is 32" and could provide handicap access to the building. Mr. Robeson noted that the rest of the house seems to be very sound, structurally; we could add some diagonal bracing to the floor joists to remove a little bounce in

the living room floor. There are places with some deterioration in the siding, but nothing significant.

Mr. Robeson explained that the next step will be to settle on preservation objectives: is this a true restoration, or are we simply trying to make the building usable? How do we envision use of the building? Is it a background prop, or a functioning space? Do we need to return the kitchen and bathroom to use, or to have a period working kitchen and functioning wood stove?

Mr. Robeson continued with his recommendations, suggesting that the concrete block foundation be insulated with rigid insulation, so we can avoid putting insulation between the floors. He explained that the ceilings are all composed of a board covered with a combination of horse hair and cement, varying from 1/4" to 1/8" in thickness. We can keep that in place, insulate above it, and put new paper on. It might need to be disturbed for attic access or for light fixtures.

The windows are in remarkably good condition, but some repairs are necessary. He recommends putting some wood sash storm windows on the outside of the building; we will still have some heat loss, but we can minimize that with felt tape. The doors also have some issues, and he recommended removing the doors to strip paint and get them fitting well.

The roofing is in good shape now, with composition shingles. Maybe in 20 years we could look at putting cedar shingles on the steeply pitched parts of the roof, and metal on the low sloped parts. The siding needs some repairs, especially to cover two new plates at the top of the concrete wall.

Mr. Robeson said that the experts are now recommending that the paint be scraped, then using an oil-based primer and a latex top coat. The front porch and steps need a little bit of work.

Discussion followed.

Chairman Hull suggested that it would be good to plan on using the kitchen door as handicap access, because that will have the least impact on the front of the building. She believes we should plan to heat and cool the second floor of the building, because even if it is not used as public space, it still might be used for offices.

Commissioner Stewart asked about the procedures when you suspect there may be asbestos-containing materials, or lead-based paint. Mr. Robeson said that samples should be taken and tested, to determine what percentage it is. If we're not going to disturb it, but just encapsulate it in new materials, we won't have to do anything with it. Commissioner Stewart noted that the house was painted by Bob Strampe about 10 or 12 years ago, and Mr. Robeson said that the topmost layer of paint will not have any lead in it.

Discussion continued.

Ms. Beeman will organize a meeting with some of the City staff to address the questions Mr. Robeson raised regarding direction and priorities for rehab of the building.

New Business: Grant Applications – Update.

Ms. Beeman reported that we will be taking a grant application for the Washington Heritage Capital Grants Program to City Council on May 13 to request funding for the Sterling-Moorman House rehab work. The application must be postmarked on May 14 for consideration for funding in the next biennium. She reviewed financial details of the grant application.

Staff Reports:

Ms. Beeman reported that Tom Richardson has stepped down as Community Development Director, and his replacement, Brian Jennings, started today.

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Mutschler reported on the NW History Conference in Corvallis, Oregon, where he chaired a session on digitization.

Commissioner Lauritsen reported on his recent visit to Minnesota, which included attending the local historical society meeting.

Commissioner Wilbanks reported on last month's Pathways to Progress meeting. One item that was discussed was that the IOOF building has a date on it; they felt it would be beneficial to have signs on all the historic downtown buildings showing the name and date of construction.

Chairman Hull reported that she served as a judge at the State History Day on the UW campus, working again with documentaries. She shared about the Italian prisoners of war who were sent to Washington and other areas of the Northwest during WWII.

Commissioner Emerson reported on a national register nomination he has been working on for the Chapel Car, a traveling railroad car that was used to take the Gospel around the country. There were several denominations using that form of communication.

Commissioner Flinn reported that she has been promoted to the rank of E-6, and has been working on a preservation project with Commissioner Emerson.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chairman Hull adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.

Approved:

Bettye Hull, Chairman

Susan Beeman, Secretary