

## **MINUTES**

### **Cheney Historic Preservation Commission**

**June 1, 2006**

**Commissioners Attending:** Bettye Hull, Martin Seedorf, Fred Lauritsen, Nikki Gamon, Steve Emerson, Aimee Flinn and Chris Stewart.

**Commissioners Absent:** None.

**Staff Attending:** Paul Schmidt and Susan Beeman.

**Councilpersons Attending:** None.

**Call to Order:** Chairman Hull called the meeting to order at 5:23 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Lauritsen, to approve the minutes of the May 4, 2006 Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission as distributed. Motion carried unanimously.

**Citizen Participation:** None.

**Old Business: Moorman House Update.** Ms. Beeman reported that the City Council's General Government Committee had met and considered the proposal to move the Moorman House and rehabilitate it for use as a museum. The committee asked for some additional information on maintenance costs and funding sources, which staff is working to provide.

There are a number of community museums in Washington which are products of agreements between a city, which owns the facility, and a non-profit organization, which owns and manages the museum collection. Samples of some of these agreements have been provided to the Tilicum Club, and we have obtained a copy of an Attorney General opinion which indicates this is a legal sort of arrangement.

Ms. Beeman said that another meeting of the General Government Committee will be scheduled within the next week or so, and members of the Commission are welcome to attend. The timeline for making an effort to save the Moorman House is quite short, as the property owner intends to begin construction of an apartment complex on that site by August 1. If the City is unable to commit to moving the building, he intends to have it demolished as a practice burn by the Fire Department. He has already taken out demolition permits at this time. The Fire Department needs to conduct any sort of practice activities by approximately the middle of June, before the summer fire hazard gets too high.

Mr. Schmidt noted that it has been a lot of work has been done to try to come up with a plan to save the Moorman House. It appears that there could be funds available from the hotel/motel tax to cover maintenance and operations of the house if it is used for a museum. Revenue from that source will increase as the new Holiday Inn Express starts up this summer.

**Old Business: Survey Report.** Ms. Beeman reported that the data entry is underway, and the GIS mapping has been completed. Mr. Emerson reported that fieldwork for the first 20 or so properties on their survey list has been completed, and they will be looking at possible survey candidates from Commissioner Gamon & Commissioner Hull's lists to round out the 25 properties to be surveyed.

**New Business: Design Review Guidelines.** Tim Garceau explained that he has been working in an internship at Pathways to Progress since last September, and his main project has been to work on design guidelines for the historic downtown. These guidelines would pertain to all properties within the C-1, Commercial zone. One of the goals with these guidelines is to promote mixed use development with retail at street level, and residential upstairs.

Mr. Garceau reviewed the reasons for implementing design guidelines. Cheney's downtown is a distinct part of our local and regional heritage, and most of the buildings are on the local, state or national register of historic places. The downtown is seen as focal point of the community, and it is in the community interest to create a place that is inviting. Design guidelines are tools for monitoring the character of change, and for providing practical standards that the community can use in making design decisions. They are a way of making sure that proposed changes fit within the existing historic context.

Mr. Garceau emphasized that the goal of the design guidelines is not to take the downtown "back in time." Instead, the goal is to move the community forward while reinforcing historical traits and creating visual continuity. This is done by requiring repetition of elements such as building setbacks, height, form, rhythm of window and door openings, rhythm of horizontal building lines, colors, textures, and styles.

The design guidelines process would use the Historic Preservation Commission as the design review board. As the draft is written, projects with a value less than 5% of the total assessed value of the property would require a staff decision. Projects with a value of 5% to 50% of the total assessed property value would be heard by a subcommittee of 3 or 4 members of the Commission. A project with a value over 50% would be heard by the full Commission.

Mr. Garceau showed examples of recommended design characteristics, and also of designs that would be discouraged.

Commissioner Gamon asked how final this document is. Mr. Garceau said that he was just starting to add illustrations, but the text is fairly final. Changes and recommendations are still welcome. This will be presented to the Planning Commission within the next month for further review and discussion, and for comments from the public.

Commissioner Gamon said that she felt this was very well done, and well written. Commissioner Emerson agreed, and said that he had looked at the references, and was impressed that these guidelines are built off what other people have done while being fine-tuned for downtown Cheney.

Mr. Garceau reminded the Commission that the first Farmers' Market of the year is tomorrow, and it will be open on Fridays from noon to 4:30 through the summer.

**Commissioner Reports:** Commissioner Gamon reported that she has started at new job at the Court of Appeals.

Commissioner Stewart distributed handouts on the new exhibit at the Cheney Historical Museum on Cheney businesses.

Commissioner Hull announced that the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions will hold a conference in July in Baltimore, Maryland, that would be well worth attending. She also had copies of a membership application for the National Trust Forum. Discussion followed on the possibility of having the City join the National Forum Trust; Ms. Beeman will check with Mr. Richardson to see if that is a possibility.

Commissioner Hull reported on her visit to the museum in Auburn, which is one of the examples of a city-owned building where the museum collection and operations are the responsibility of a non-profit corporation. They also had certain displays which were funded by donations from local members.

Commissioner Emerson reported that his employer, Architectural & Historical Services, has been working with the City of Rosalia for several years on documenting the Battle of Steptoe (1857). An old Texaco gas station has been refurbished and opened as a visitor center, winning statewide recognition for the restoration project. This weekend is Rosalia Battle Days, which will feature a parade, and the interpretive center will be open for visitors. Two brochures are available on the Battle of Steptoe, including one for an auto tour of the area.

**Staff Reports:** None.

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

**Approved:**

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Bettye Hull, Chairman

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Susan Beeman, Secretary