

MINUTES

Cheney Historic Preservation Commission

June 7, 2007

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

Commissioners Absent: Nikki Gamon and Steve Emerson.

Staff Attending: Tom Richardson and Susan Beeman.

Councilpersons Attending: None.

Call to Order: Chairman Hull called the meeting to order at 5:16 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Motion was made by Commissioner Mutschler to approve the minutes from the May 3, 2007 regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission, as distributed. Seconded by Commissioner Lauritsen; motion carried unanimously.

Citizen Participation: Chairman Hull welcomed Jim Moeller.

Old Business: Hargreaves Hall Remodel Plans. Mr. Moeller distributed copies of a computer-generated sketch of the latest Hargreaves remodel plans, in which the new entry is much less prominent than on earlier designs. He explained that they were trying to be sensitive to the comments of the Commission, and added that they had the same concerns about the scale and massing of the new addition, and compatibility with the historic district. Mr. Moeller described efforts they are making to appropriately restore the original portions of Hargreaves. The architect has contacted two plaster restoration contractors, one of which flew in from New York City to advise them on the plaster work. They have received input on the best methods for restoration of the 3rd floor ceiling, and have determined how to do the restoration properly, and cost-effectively. The masonry is in good condition so they will simply clean the brick with a light brush cleaning, and re-seal the brick.

Mr. Moeller said that they have located the quarry in Tennessee from which the original marble was taken, and are obtaining samples to find the best matches of color and grain patterns. The goal is to put the marble back to the fullest extent possible in the original portion of the building, and then stop it as you enter the new building. He noted that the original drawings of the building included a notation containing the name and address of the quarry the marble was taken from. That quarry is still in operation.

Regarding windows, they have talked to contractors who do hazardous material abatement, and they will recondition the windows in place which will be to the interior of the new addition,

using ceramic material sandblasting to remove the putty and the lead-based paint. They would like to replace the exterior windows with something that is energy-efficient, that is operable and seals tight. They have found a window that will be indistinguishable from the originals from the street view.

Mr. Moeller described the 3-D model of the Hargreaves update. He said that they tried to reduce the amount of glass, and the height of the glass. The other thing that came up in earlier discussions was the approach to the building. Essentially, the center of campus has shifted since the construction of Hargreaves, and today, most students approach the building from the back side. When they did the renovations on Monroe Hall, they actually paid someone to be stationed at the side of Monroe Hall, and discovered that over 80% of the people entering the building were approaching from the rear. That was the reason for the new entry.

There will be a redesign of the adjacent parking areas, and while they lose 11 spaces to the new addition, they are gaining 25 spaces due to improved efficiency in the configuration of the remaining parking space.

Mr. Richardson asked about the flat roof, and whether that is less expensive than a pitched roof, or if that was chosen to be less distracting to the historic portion of the building. Mr. Moeller said that it was chosen in deference to the historic building. It is not cheaper to build flat roofs, but they are also going to be using internal drains to collect the rainwater from the building into an underground collection container. That reclaimed water will be used to irrigate the campus.

Commissioner Flinn asked what level of LEED certification they are aiming for. Mr. Moeller said that expect to attain a Gold level; they are mandated get get at least Silver, but they are actively pursuing the Gold level.

Discussion continued.

Mr. Moeller showed where a large maple tree is located which has been designated 'The Sacred Tree,' and explained that it serves to obscure an entire area of the building from the main portion of campus, leaving the appearance of the original Hargreaves on one side of the tree, and the new addition on the other. All the existing trees, including those in the parking areas, will have islands constructed around them for protection.

Commissioner Mutschler said that he believes this will fit in much better than the earlier designs, and thanked Mr. Moeller for his extra work. Commissioner Stewart agreed that the changes to the original designs have been a substantial improvement from the preservation perspective.

Mr. Moeller added that contrary to earlier comments, he does not believe that they were late in the design, and that they are now following the appropriate process for these reviews. The early negative comments were made on preliminary schematic designs, which had not even been seen by the university president yet.

Chairman Hull asked if this design will be subject to further change, or if this is pretty much what it will be. Mr. Moeller said that he expects any further changes to be relatively minor.

Mr. Richardson asked about potential uses for the old Reading Room. Mr. Moeller said that space was likely to be used by the President, and by University Advancement. They will be able to seat 300 people for dinners there, and there are kitchen facilities to support it.

Chairman Hull thanked Mr. Moeller for bringing this latest update to the Commission.

Old Business: Workshop Debriefing. Ms. Beeman read a note of appreciation from Mr. and Mrs. Halasey, who are owners of a historic Cheney building which live in Hawaii. They attended the workshop and felt it contained very helpful information as they begin to plan renovations to their building.

Commissioner Lauritsen commented that he thought the workshop went very nicely. It was well attended, and the room we used for the general sessions could only have held about 5 more people.

Chairman Hull agreed, and said that we might have drawn more attendees in the winter months, when people are not working outside. But it went well for the people who came, and it would be good to do again.

Commissioner Flinn noted that we were also competing with the Mothers' Day tours hosted by Spokane Preservation Advocates (SPA) and the Museum of Arts and Culture (MAC). But their participation numbers were down on Saturday, as well, possibly because it was one of the first really pleasant spring days we have had this year.

Commissioner Mutschler said that he heard good comments about the sessions he did not attend, and thought the ones he attended were well organized and well presented. He considered it a very successful event.

Commissioner Stewart asked about the breakdown of how many people attended each session. Ms. Beeman reported that the vast majority of the participants were interested in residential rehab, rather than commercial buildings. Commissioner Stewart suggested that we consider sponsoring a similar workshop on a regular basis, such as every 3 years.

Discussion continued.

Commissioner Stewart said that she would like to see more information about the state funding available for preservation of historic barns, since there are a number of them in our area. She also mentioned that during Michael Houser's presentation, there were several instances where he asked, "Are you inventorying these?" There are further opportunities for inventory work here.

Commissioner Lauritsen suggested that as work continues on the Moorman House, we should continue to document each step with thought given to a future workshop presentation. Are there any sort of annual reports that this Commission presents to City Council?

Mr. Richardson said that the bylaws call for an annual report to Council, which is typically given early in the year, during February or March. A report just prior to budget time would certainly be appropriate. That would be sometime before October 1. It might also be helpful to bring a property owner who has benefitted from this Commission's assistance. Discussion continued.

New Business: Moorman House Preservation Plan. Ms. Beeman reported that we will be receiving approximately \$8,600 to develop a preservation plan for the Moorman House. This is the federal money that is distributed by a competitive grant process each year through the Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation. This year, the total grants requested were less than the dollars available, so we have been notified that we will receive our request without having to present it by a telephone interview with the Grants Advisory Committee. The money will be available after October 1, 2007, but we could begin preliminary meetings with our key constituents this summer, to begin gathering input on concerns and priorities. It would be helpful to begin some of the preliminary discussions prior to involving the architect, who will be billing us at professional rates.

Commissioner Stewart asked if this will be a bid process. Ms. Beeman said that it is similar, but instead we will request Statements of Qualifications, inviting architectural firms to explain to us why they are the most qualified to work on a project of this nature.

Mr. Richardson explained the Request for Qualification process, and said that this process applies to architects, landscape architects, and engineers.

Ms. Beeman suggested that we begin this summer to bring together a citizens' group to discuss needs and desires for the building, so that we have a fairly good idea of the direction we want to ask the architect to go.

Commissioner Lauritsen volunteered to represent the Commission in these meetings; Ms. Beeman will contact representatives from the Tilicum Club and try to schedule a meeting for mid-July.

Discussion continued.

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Mutschler reported that he is now duly tenured and promoted. Members of the Commission congratulated him on his accomplishments.

Commissioner Lauritsen announced that he would like to invite members of the Commission to his house following a meeting later in the summer. He also mentioned concerns about upkeep of some of the yards and lots around town. Ms. Beeman noted that the City has a code enforcement officer who will contact property owners and request maintenance and needed upkeep. Complaints can be made at the Community Development office; just contact Ms. Beeman and she will put you in touch with the appropriate person.

Commissioner Hull announced that her son will be graduating from EWU with a Master's degree in June.

Commissioner Flinn announced that she will be leaving for Norway in less than 48 hours for her annual Naval Reserve duty, supporting a weapons exercise in a NATO-based unit.

Staff Reports:

Ms. Beeman reported that Virginia White, local author of the Cheney history book 'Dreamers and Schemers,' is interested in meeting with the Commission for an exchange of information on Cheney history. We discussed a potluck lunch meeting to be held on a Friday in July. Ms. Beeman will confirm details later in the month.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chairman Hull adjourned the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

Approved:

Bettye Hull, Chairman

Susan Beeman, Secretary