

MINUTES

Cheney Historic Preservation Commission July 10, 2008

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

Commissioners Absent: Aimee Flinn & Scott Wilbanks.

Staff Attending: Brian Jennings & 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 asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. Hearing none, the minutes of the June 5, 2008 meeting were approved as distributed.

Citizen Participation: None.

Old Business: Sterling-Moorman House Preservation Plan – 90% Draft Document.

Commissioner Mutschler stated that he thought this was a very good document, with a lot of detail. Commissioner Stewart said that she appreciated Mr. Robeson's enthusiasm for the project. Chairman Hull agreed, and said that we were very fortunate to have him on this project, as he is obviously doing this kind of work because he enjoys it.

Ms. Beeman summarized the remainder of the work to be done by the Commission, including a section on the history, chain of ownership, and the significance of the property and the persons associated with it, and a chronology of changes to the building. We have some additional information on Frank Sterling, courtesy of Joan Mamanakis and the Cheney Historical Museum.

Commissioner Mutschler offered to review the Sanborn maps to try to document precisely when early changes were made to the building. He will also check the Eastern Washington Archives to see what the county assessor's file contains. Commissioner Stewart will contact the previous owner to inquire about a title report which would document changes in ownership. Chairman Hull will work on incorporating any new information into a narrative history.

Discussion continued. Ms. Beeman noted that Mr. Robeson has done extensive research about items such as the date that residential electricity became available in Cheney, and about the appropriate use of oil base or latex paints. He has already contacted people at DAHP in the course of his research, and has received clarification on several items prior to submitting his 90% draft report.

Commissioner Emerson said that he expects that DAHP has seen lesser versions of historic structure reports, and this one is really over the top in terms of quality and detail. Commissioner Mutschler agreed, and said that this is one of the most complete packages he has seen, particularly in the way Mr. Robeson has documented development of the architectural style and colors. All the documentation to support his conclusions makes this a really outstanding document. He has even made recommendations regarding appropriate landscaping details.

Commissioner Stewart made a motion to approve the draft report as submitted. Seconded by Commissioner Lauritsen; motion carried unanimously.

Staff Reports:

Ms. Beeman reported that she recently attended training offered by the City's insurer that covered various aspects of using volunteers for City projects. This will be directly applicable to the Sterling-Moorman House project.

Mr. Jennings greeted members of the Commission and explained the Community Development Department's current emphasis on code enforcement issues.

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Stewart reported that Commissioner Mutschler's tour of the EWU historic district made the newspaper. She shared an article by David McCullough about how history is dropping in importance in the U.S. curriculum. It follows that a lack of knowledge of geography is also becoming predominant.

Commissioner Emerson reported that the State Advisory Council meeting in July will be held in Dayton, and four of the nine agenda items are his. Two are pioneer homesteads in Okanogan County, one is the Messenger of Peace Chapel Car that he mentioned last month, and the last one is the Battle of Walla Walla. He is still working on the inventory of the Canon Hill neighborhood in Spokane.

Commissioner Hull reported on her recent trip to Pahrump, Nevada, and stated that she has a renewed appreciation for green, growing things.

Commissioner Mutschler reported that the walking tour of the historic Cheney Normal School campus was well attended. He has been working with Jay Rea on research related to the history of the university, and has been invited to be a co-author of that work.

Commissioner Lauritsen reminded everyone that next Wednesday evening is the Pathways to Progress annual meeting and potluck, and the Cheney Friends of the Library book sale begins tomorrow.

Commissioner Stewart reported that she had been in the one-room schoolhouse on the EWU campus recently, and suggested that it would be an interesting location to visit as a commission. She suggested that perhaps the August or September meeting might be held there, and offered to check into reserving the room.

Staff Reports - continued:

Mr. Jennings reported that he has been asked by the Mayor and City Administrator to look into signage issues, particularly for businesses in the downtown, and this has led to a general study of ‘wayfinding’ in Cheney. Wayfinding would be defined as how you manage the experience a visitor has to your city, from the time they leave the main highway to the time they reach their specific destination. In general, the experience a visitor has right now in regards to signage is not very positive. He would like to bring a report on this issue to the commission next month.

Mr. Jennings noted that the process of rewriting the comprehensive plan is ongoing. Staffing levels within the department have led us to the point of writing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a consultant to help us with the remainder of the project.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chairman Hull adjourned the meeting at 6:18 p.m.

Approved:

Bettye Hull, Chairman

Susan Beeman, Secretary