

MINUTES

Cheney Historic Preservation Commission

August 6, 2009

Commissioners Attending: Bettye Hull, Scott Wilbanks, Vance Youmans, Charlie Mutschler and Fred Lauritsen.

Commissioners Absent: Aimee Flinn and Chris Stewart.

Staff Attending: Brian Jennings and Susan Beeman.

Councilpersons Attending: None.

Guests: Ann Heehn and Dave Teller.

Call to Order: Chairman Hull called the meeting to order at 5:20 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the June 4, 2009 meeting were approved as distributed.

Citizen Participation: None.

Old Business: Sterling-Moorman House – ‘Walls Are Talking’ Articles.

Ms. Beeman reported that the newspaper articles have been well received, and a number of people have commented on them. Articles of 300-500 words are needed at approximately two week intervals.

Old Business: Sterling-Moorman House – Open House Opportunities.

Ms. Beeman reported that our open house during Rodeo Weekend was attended by over 100 people. Commissioner Stewart had identified several other opportunities that might be appropriate to open the house, such as during Homecoming week, or at Freshman orientation time. Discussion followed on ways to invite new residents to the community to participate in the project. Ms. Beeman will prepare additional brochures to leave at the EWU Visitor Center, and possibly the Post Office, and the Holiday Inn Express.

Old Business: Sterling-Moorman House – Work Day – August 15.

Ms. Beeman reported that we will have some assistance at the next work day from Rudy Torres of the Cheney Building Department. He has volunteered to provide labor and materials to improve the structural support under the porch area. This will be a good opportunity for people who have a bit of building skill to participate, but we will not put out a general call for assistance this time.

Staff Reports:

Mr. Jennings apologized for missing the last month's meeting, and explained that he was on a trip to Martha's Vineyard. He remarked on the reverence for historic buildings that is evident in that area, as well as the heavy regulations on what you can or cannot do with a historic building. He offered to bring a slide presentation at a future meeting.

Mr. Jennings reported that he and Commissioner Mutschler spoke to City Council about the Northern Pacific Depot. There was general agreement that the building is worth saving, but we need to determine whether it can be moved, and what the cost would be. The building is approximately 30' by 120'. Mr. Jennings visited the building with Mike Rubert of Mountain Home, who moved the Sterling-Moorman House, and he believes the building can be moved. It is more challenging than the Sterling-Moorman House because it does not set on a foundation, but is placed directly on a concrete slab. It would have to be moved in three sections. The railroad requires a flagger to be on site at all times while we are working on the building. He expects to report back to City Council at the second meeting in August.

Commissioner Mutschler said that he spent an afternoon taking photos of the depot about 30 years ago, and may still have the negatives. He also has a set of blueprints that were drawn by a gentleman who wanted to build a model of the building.

Commissioner Youmans asked if we have a potential site for the depot if it were to be moved. Mr. Jennings said that there are several possibilities, including the old gas station site on 1st Street. Some communities have successfully developed brownfields sites, such as the Town of Rosalia and their restored Texaco station, which is now used as a visitor center.

New Business:

Ms. Beeman reported that the recent articles in the Free Press seem to have raised awareness about the Cheney Register of Historic Places, and she has received several inquiries about register listing. Two of these are likely to result in nominations in the near future. The first, the Guyle & Ella Frost House at 628 I Street, is being purchased by a couple from Western Washington who plan to make it their home. The second is the yellow house at 803 2nd Street, and it is being purchased by a young man from the Cheney area.

Ms. Heehn said that she is familiar with some history for both of these addresses, and offered to be a resource for the people who are researching the history of these buildings.

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Wilbanks reported on a recent trip to the Kalispell area, where he visited the Bibler Gardens, a European-style 3-4 acre garden. The garden is privately owned, but is opened to the public 2 or 3 times a year.

Commissioner Lauritsen reported that the grand opening for Hargreaves Hall will be held on September 10. The former Pathways organization, now known as Historic Downtown Cheney

Partnership, has raised enough money that they will be able to start the first mural in the downtown. They are planning a fundraising event in the fall, a black tie event with a silent auction.

Commissioner Lauritsen asked if anyone was aware of plans for the Cheney Christian Church building. Commissioner Mutschler said that there appear to be none so far. There has been some talk about using it as a graduate center, or a self-contained seminar center, but that was before money was so tight at the university. The building has some structural issues, and will need asbestos abatement.

Commissioner Mutschler noted that historic preservation is something of an issue in some places, and not an issue at all in other places. He spent most of the last month working on a project related to large regional universities and smaller local community organizations. He reported on his recent experience in Forks, where the Makah Tribal Museum is really exceptional. The University of Washington is partnering with the Makah Tribe to make available many of their resources through the university's digital archives.

Commissioner Youmans reported that he has another trip to London coming up with SFCC students. On this trip they will be staying in the Clink, the old Central London Jail, which has been converted to a hostel.

Chairman Hull reported on her recent trip to Texas and Tennessee where she was doing family research.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chairman Hull adjourned the meeting at 6:26 p.m.

Approved:

Bettye Hull, Chairman

Susan Beeman, Secretary