

MINUTES

Cheney Historic Preservation Commission September 3, 2009

Commissioners Attending: Bettye Hull, Scott Wilbanks, Chris Stewart and Fred Lauritsen.

Commissioners Absent: Charlie Mutschler, Aimee Nechanicky and Vance Youmans.

Staff Attending: Susan Beeman.

Councilpersons Attending: None.

Guests: Judy Tripp, Ann Heehn, and Joel & Lynnette Tyndell.

Call to Order: Chairman Hull called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. immediately following a tour of the Guyel & Ella Frost House, 628 I Street.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the August 6, 2009 meeting were approved as distributed, with a minor grammatical correction.

Citizen Participation: None.

New Business: Guyel & Ella Frost House – Local Register Nomination.

Chairman Hull opened the public hearing at 6:02 p.m. and called for testimony on the nomination.

Ms. Beeman noted that the public hearing was properly advertised as called for in the Cheney Municipal Code. She reviewed the nomination criteria for listing on the Cheney Register of Historic Places.

Ms. Beeman noted that the Tyndells have made it clear that they intend to do some work on the house prior to moving in to it next spring/summer, including replacement of the roof, and will be applying for a Certificate of Appropriateness for that proposed work in the near future. She suggested that if there are any questions about their plans for the property, this would be an appropriate time to discuss those changes, since the Tyndells may not be back in Cheney at the time the Certificate of Appropriateness comes up on the agenda.

Discussion followed. Commissioner Lauritsen noted that the foundation is described as a stone wall in one location, and as poured concrete in another. Which is correct? Mr. Tyndell said that the foundation shows as stone from the interior of the basement, with mortared joins, but it appears as poured concrete from the outside.

Ms. Beeman noted that we would like to round out the narrative portions of the nomination a bit, and requested that, with the Tyndells' permission, the public hearing be continued to the October meeting to allow time for some additional interviews related to Guyel & Ella Frost's roles in the community. The Frosts owned the Cheney Free Press between the late 1940s and 1970. The local register nomination is based on both the architectural integrity of the building, and also on the association with the Frosts.

Ms. Heehn offered to see if she could locate some photographs of the Frosts. Ella was in the Tilicum Club, so there may be something in a Tilicum scrapbook.

Commissioner Stewart related a story about Ella Frost from the days of the Community Service Council. Commissioner Lauritsen commented that he was impressed with the amount of information provided in the nomination.

Commissioner Lauritsen asked about the plans for the new roof. Mr. Tyndell said that it will look as much like a cedar shake roof as possible, using gray architectural composition material. When they replace the roof, they will also replace a beam to repair a sagging area over the kitchen. He said that he would eventually like to put on a larger garage, and noted that the present garage is not original to the property.

Commissioner Stewart suggested Ernie Robeson, the architect who worked with this Commission on the Sterling-Moorman House preservation plan, if the Tyndells are in need of architectural services. He has a sensitivity to historic building issues, and was very good to work with. Mr. Tyndell emphasized that they like the house as it is, and want to retain the character of the house while making some needed repairs.

Commissioner Lauritsen mentioned that some of the neighbors in that area are identifying themselves as a 'historic neighborhood,' and meeting from time to time to pursue common goals. He offered to provide contact information to the Tyndells.

Ms. Beeman read for the record a letter of support for the nomination from Meta Gibbs, 5 6th Street. She reported that she had also received a phone call from Scott Hutsell, who owns two houses directly to the west of the Frost House, and he also supported the nomination. Teresa Frost, the former owner of the house, is also fully supportive of the local register designation.

Chairman Hull continued the public hearing to the October meeting.

Old Business: Sterling-Moorman House Project – Update.

Ms. Beeman reported that brick sales were continuing to trickle in. She reported that Mr. Jennings had included our grant revenues for next year's budget, both the \$5,000 from Spokane Preservation Advocates, and also the \$87,000 from the Washington State Historical Society. We still need to raise approximately \$48,000 from other sources to leverage the full amount of the matching grant from the Washington State Historical Society.

Commissioner Stewart asked if there is a possibility of applying for funds from the Hotel/Motel Tax Fund. Ms. Beeman said that is still a possibility; we will need to prepare an application.

Ms. Beeman reported that part of our match for the State of Washington grant was in the form of donated labor, and we are right on track with the estimated hours invested. She noted that Rudy Torres, an employee in the Building Department, is donating his time and also some materials for structural support under the porch and front corner of the house. The porch decking and joists were removed at our last work day, and the decking was saved to be re-used. The joists will be replaced at our work day on September 19.

Commissioner Stewart suggested the possibility of approaching the Spokane Community College building trades classes for help with the next phases of the project. Ms. Beeman will make an inquiry.

Discussion followed on the timing of when electric service will be needed. For the next stages of construction, we can probably get by with an extension cord from the Police Department, as we have the last couple of work days.

It was agreed that we would plan an open house for the Friday & Saturday of Homecoming Week, which will be the 3rd week in October.

New Business: Preserve America Application.

Commissioner Stewart described the Preserve America criteria, and explained why she believes the community meets that criteria. She cited a memo detailing the Historic Preservation Commission's grant activities, and noted that in the last 10 years, historic preservation activities initiated by this commission have brought in grants totaling \$37,270. That has had a substantial impact on the community. Prior to the early 1990s, the Commission had an annual operating budget of \$400 per year, but that went away with the budget pinches of the early 1990s. So in the past 10 years, in place of the \$4,000 that might have been budgeted for preservation activities, the Commission has been responsible for bringing in almost \$40,000 in grant money to preserve historic resources and promote preservation. She commended the commissioners on the resourcefulness and initiative demonstrated in these efforts.

Commissioner Stewart explained that if we pursue designation as a Preserve America community, that would open up another possible funding source for 'brick and mortar' projects, such as the Sterling-Moorman House. Applications for that designation are accepted on a quarterly basis, with the next deadline for submission on December 1, 2009.

Discussion followed. Ms. Beeman noted that this commission voted several years ago to support a Preserve America application, but the application was never submitted. The Community Development Director at that time felt that we lacked the successful historic preservation project to hold up as an example of the community's valuation of historic heritage. His idea was to wait until substantial completion of the Sterling-Moorman House project, and then use that to represent our application. Ms. Beeman suggested that Commissioner Stewart's reasoning was a

fresh way of looking at the application. Mr. Jennings has given his support and approval for a Preserve America application. Discussion continued.

Commissioner Stewart made a motion to prepare and support an application to be a Preserve America Community. Seconded by Commissioner Scott; motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Lauritsen suggested that a historic homes tour might be a good fundraising activity for the Sterling-Moorman House.

Commissioner Lauritsen reported on the comp plan rewrite effort, and said that he is a member of the Arts & Culture task group, which had a brainstorming session yesterday. The museum and the Sterling-Moorman House were both mentioned. Their vision statement included a reference to having a professional staff person within the next 20 years. Discussion followed about various other cultural amenities that exist in the community. Commissioner Stewart mentioned a nice display in the Science Building. Ms. Beeman noted that there are several very active fiber arts guilds in the area, including quilters, spinners and weavers.

Commissioner Wilbanks referred to his visit to the Bibler Gardens in Kalispell, Montana, and recommended a visit to their web site: www.biblergardens.org

Commissioner Hull mentioned the Psychic Garden in London that she had heard about, which was started in 1673, and is still in existence. She was able to provide some information to Commissioner Youmans, and hopefully he will be able to visit the garden on this trip.

Commissioner Stewart reported that she and Ms. Heehn had both been in Hargreaves Hall yesterday. Ms. Heehn said that the renovated Hargreaves Reading Room is very much the way she remembers it. She grew up on the EWU campus, and the campus school was the only elementary school in Cheney until she was in the 4th grade. Ms. Heehn was impressed by how the addition had been added on to the back of the building, but the original Hargreaves Hall is essentially the same. She felt the renovation was very tastefully done.

Staff Reports: None.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chairman Hull adjourned the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

Approved:

Bettye Hull, Chairman

Susan Beeman, Secretary