

## **MINUTES**

### **Cheney Historic Preservation Commission**

**October 1, 2009**

**Commissioners Attending:** Bettye Hull, Aimee Nechanicky, Scott Wilbanks, Chris Stewart and Vance Youmans.

**Commissioners Absent:** Charlie Mutschler and Fred Lauritsen.

**Staff Attending:** Susan Beeman.

**Councilpersons Attending:** None.

**Guests:** Becky Thomas, Cheney Free Press.

**Call to Order:** Chairman Hull called the meeting to order at 5:26 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the September 3, 2009 meeting were approved as distributed.

**Citizen Participation:** None.

#### **New Business - Continued: Guyel & Ella Frost House – Local Register Nomination.**

Chairman Hull re-opened the public hearing at 5:26 p.m. Ms. Beeman explained that we are still working on compiling some additional research on Guyel & Ella Frost, and their involvement in the community. She asked that the public hearing be continued one more month to allow completion of the narrative.

Chairman Hull continued the public hearing to the November meeting.

#### **Old Business: Sterling-Moorman House Project – Update.**

Ms. Beeman reported on the last work day at the house. Rudy Torres from the City of Cheney Building Department has donated his time and materials, and has been overseeing the installation of an additional support beam under the porch, and replacement of deteriorated floor joists in the porch. A crew of 11 volunteers met and worked on the porch, and also on restoring one of the wood window frames that had a broken sash bolt. All windows in the house have now been made operable, although additional work will be required on a number of them.

Ms. Beeman reported that most of the cleanup and preparation work that can be done by unskilled helpers has been completed. She reported that our legal department has advised that we are not going to be able to offer public tours of the house until the stair railings and porch accesses have been completed.

**New Business: Special Valuation Tax Program – Halasey House, 213 C Street.**

Ms. Beeman reported that Joseph & Cynthia Halasey have applied for the Special Valuation Tax Incentive Program, and will be submitting their documentation on expenses before the middle of October. The Historic Preservation Commission will be asked to schedule a public hearing to consider whether the applicants have met the program requirements, and to make a recommendation to City Council. She stated that we have not been through this process in the last 12 or 13 years, so it will be a new process for both staff and commission members.

Discussion followed on how the Special Valuation program works. Commissioner Flinn noted that the assessed value of the house is not frozen for the 10-year period; it may continue to gain value, but the cost of approved restorations is subtracted from the new assessed valuation. The owners are likely to still have property taxes to pay, but at a reduced rate.

Ms. Beeman explained that the City of Cheney will not see a reduction in tax revenue because of properties on the Special Valuation program. Any reduction in the property tax on a special Valuation property is offset by an increase in the amount collected from all the other properties in the city. In essence, it is the public that helps to fund the Special Valuation incentive, which is the reason that City Council approval is required.

**Staff Reports:**

Ms. Beeman reported that the museum will begin moving into its new home at 420 1<sup>st</sup> Street this coming Saturday. If anyone has time to lend a hand, they would appreciate volunteers.

Ms. Beeman reported on the Choices for Cheney public meeting that was held at Betz Elementary last night. There will be at least two additional public participation opportunities throughout the comprehensive plan update process.

**Commissioner Reports:**

Commissioner Wilbanks reported on a recent visit to Heyburn State Park in Idaho, near Plummer. There are a couple of cabins available to rent, and quite a lot of local history to explore. He described the large rock and timber recreational structures that were built by the CCC and the WPA for use by patrons of the railroad.

Commissioner Stewart shared copies of The Easterner article entitled ‘Small Town, Big History.’

Commissioner Nechanicky gave a report on her life since she was last able to meet with this group, and her expanding family (baby expected in February).

Commissioner Youmans gave a video report on his visit to Greenwich, England last month. He visited the Royal Maritime College & museum, built in the 1700s, which now houses the

University of Greenwich. He showed photos of the Temple Church, which was consecrated by the Knights Templar in 1185.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, Chairman Hull adjourned the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

**Approved:**

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Bettye Hull, Chairman

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Susan Beeman, Secretary