

MINUTES

Cheney Historic Preservation Commission

November 1, 2007

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

Commissioners Absent: Aimee Flinn, Charlie Mutschler.

Staff Attending: Susan Beeman.

Councilpersons Attending: None.

Call to Order: Chairman Hull called the meeting to order at 5:47 p.m. following a site visit to 325/327 1st Street, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Building. Chairman Hull welcomed Scott Wilbanks, the newest member of the Commission.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the October 4, 2007 meeting were approved with corrections.

Citizen Participation: None.

Old Business: Moorman House Request for Proposals. Ms. Beeman said that she hopes to finalize the RFP document within the next few weeks, and advertise before the end of the year.

Public Hearing: Local Register Nomination – 213 C Street / Joseph & Cynthia Halasey House.

Chairman Hull opened the public hearing at 6:09 p.m. Discussion followed. Commissioner Emerson stated that this is one of the oldest houses in Cheney, and many of the original construction materials are still present. Register approval does not usually take into consideration building condition. He believes that register listing is appropriate for this building.

Commissioner Wilbanks noted that the building is very typical of the late 1880s for people of that economic class. Commissioner Stewart thought that it is very interesting that some rafter materials still exhibit bark.

Mr. Emerson said that even though the owner has removed 5 layers of roofing and is making repairs, he is being careful to retain the original roofline, and it is perfectly acceptable to reshingle the roof with asphalt shingles. The building retains excellent integrity.

Chairman Hull asked for public comment. Tom Davis, 2610 Bethany, said that he recalled sledding down the C Street hill as a youth, and visiting the residents of that house to drink hot cocoa.

There being no further comment, Chairman Hull closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Stewart made a motion to recommend to City Council that the Halasey House, 213 C Street, be listed on the Cheney Register of Historic Places. Seconded by Commissioner Emerson; motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing: Local Register Nomination – 325/327 1st Street / Independent Order of Odd Fellows Building (IOOF).

Chairman Hull opened the public hearing at 6:18 p.m.

Tom Davis, 2610 Bethany, representing the building owner Steve Emtman, reported that they have received a report from a structural engineer, and the building needs a lot more work than originally anticipated. The second floor of the building is wavy, and for that portion of the building to be used, exiting issues have to be addressed. He explained that Mr. Emtman is committed to the revitalization of the downtown area, and is willing to invest in repairs to the IOOF Building. Mr. Davis discussed possible uses for the building, and added that Mr. Emtman has also purchased the three brick commercial buildings located at the corner of College and 1st Street. He is interested in restoring those buildings, as well.

Discussion followed on significant features of the building. Commissioner Emerson noted that obviously, the brick storefront, window configuration, and cornice line are defining features of the building. The window arches on the sides of the building, as well as the wainscoting on the second floor, and the tin ceiling, would all be considered character-defining features.

Commissioner Wilbanks added that the pocket doors leading to the second floor meeting room are notable, and that some of the light fixtures on the second floor appear to be original to the building. While not an inherent portion of the building, there is a painting hanging in the second floor cloakroom area that is signed 'Dusty' and dated 1930 which would be of historic interest. When he was in the building a year or so ago, there were still boxes of historical records from the IOOF stored in a closet. Commissioner Stewart suggested that we check with the Tilicum Club, to see if they now have custody of those records.

Commissioner Lauritsen made a motion to recommend to City Council that the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Building, 325/327 1st Street, be listed on the Cheney Register of Historic Places. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart; motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Reports: Commissioner Emerson said that he had thought his term on this commission was coming to an end, but in looking at his appointment letter, his term is not over until December 2008. He will continue to serve to the end of his term.

Commissioner Stewart asked if we have filled the Planning Department intern position, and where we are with filling the city administrator vacancy. Ms. Beeman explained that the intern position is still vacant, although we have contracted with several EWU students to complete specific projects, and the search for a city administrator is ongoing.

Commissioner Lauritsen reported that he had attended the candidates' night at Cheney High School. He noted that the missions of Pathways to Progress and the Historic Preservation Commission are really very interconnected. Our activities really do support the Pathways vision for the future of the downtown.

Mr. Davis suggested that the Ice Age Flood Institute will be a key player in redevelopment of the downtown, too. They should have a web site on line soon. The local group has about 80 members, and they are working on an information brochure.

Commissioner Wilbanks reported that he has completed creation of an art studio in his garage.

Staff Reports: Ms. Beeman reported that the Pathways to Progress Executive Board has an opening, and they are inviting someone from the Historic Preservation Commission to fill that vacancy. If interested, please contact Tom Richardson.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chairman Hull adjourned the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

Approved:

Bettye Hull, Chairman

Susan Beeman, Secretary