

MINUTES

Cheney Historic Preservation Commission

March 2, 2006

Commissioners Attending: Bettye Hull, Martin Seedorf, Fred Lauritsen and Chris Stewart.

Commissioners Absent: Nikki Gamon, Steve Emerson and Aimee Flinn.

Staff Attending: Glenn Scholten and Susan Beeman.

Councilpersons Attending: None.

Call to Order: Chairman Hull called the meeting to order at 5:27 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Motion was made by Commissioner Seedorf, seconded by Commissioner Stewart, to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2006 Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission as distributed. Motion carried unanimously.

Citizen Participation: Chairman Hull welcomed Tim Garceau.

Old Business: Consultant Selection. Ms. Beeman reported that she had contacted Charlie Mutschler about the survey project, and while he is not able to undertake the survey himself, he has a class in spring quarter that could do some historic inventory work for us. They would not be able to complete the work in time to provide finished product before the grant deadline. We are in the position we were in last year, where we have advertised and contacted a number of people directly who might be qualified to perform the survey for us. None of those people has indicated availability. Under the City's purchasing rules, the City may now enter into a contract with any person the Commission deems qualified to do the work.

Ms. Beeman noted that last year, the Commission determined that Steve Emerson and Aimee Flinn are well qualified to perform this sort of work, and recommended that City Council enter into an agreement with them to complete the survey called for under the Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP) grant. Mr. Emerson and Ms. Flinn have indicated that if we are unable to find a consultant to perform the survey, they are willing to step in and complete the survey again this year.

Ms. Beeman noted that although this was not the preferred method for completing the historic survey, it was allowed last year under DAHP rules. She suggested that the Commission again recommend contracting with Mr. Emerson and Ms. Flinn to perform the survey, with the understanding that they would recuse themselves from discussion or voting on the grant project.

Ms. Beeman reported that Mr. Mutschler's class would like to have the experience of completing roughly 25 historic surveys, and she proposed that they be given another 25 addresses to

research, beyond the 25 that would be surveyed under the grant project. This would allow us to inventory a total of 45-50 properties this year.

Chairman Hull asked if there will be another grant opportunity before we finish this survey project. Ms. Beeman said there would be, and the 2007 grant cycle will not have the requirement of matching dollars from the local jurisdiction. There is a possibility that there will be more competition for grants from smaller cities who cannot provide the usual dollar match.

Discussion followed on possible grant projects for 2007, such as a workshop to provide training to local homeowners, additional signage for the Central Cheney Historic District, or additional survey work. The application deadline is March 26, 2006. Commissioner Seedorf said that he likes the idea of a workshop, possibly involving Pathways to Progress and the public history department at EWU.

Commissioner Hull agreed that a workshop that addressed ways to salvage the historic qualities of their buildings, or economical ways to restore historic character to existing buildings. Commissioner Lauritsen asked if our target audience would include the owners of homes we are presently surveying. Ms. Beeman said that we should issue invitations directly to owners of homes in the survey area, but we could also open it up to interested members of the public. A grant could cover the cost of facilities and refreshments, speaker honorariums and travel expenses, etc. Discussion continued.

Commissioner Hull if a grant could be obtained to put together a pictorial history of Cheney, with photos of the buildings and their stories? Ms. Beeman said that the priorities that DAHP has established are included in the grant announcement, and our chances of receiving a grant will be improved if we align our goals closely with those of DAHP. We could also tie a workshop into the concept of design review and the commercial downtown, offering information on how to restore commercial buildings under the new design guidelines. Chairman Hull said that she thought there was a need for information on restoration of older residential buildings, so some of the houses that are being converted to rental apartments could fall under that.

Ms. Beeman said that she was hearing a consensus that we are interested in hosting a workshop on restoration techniques as a grant project for 2007. Commissioner Seedorf agreed that the principles of preserve, restore & revitalize would be appropriate topics. Possibly a one-day workshop on the EWU campus, with a catered lunch, would be workable. Commissioner Seedorf offered to look into arrangements for such an event – possibly at Showalter Hall, or at Tawanka Commons. Chairman Hull agreed that providing lunch for the attendees would be desirable, because the conversation and sharing over lunch is a valuable component of this type of meeting. Discussion continued. Ms. Beeman will work up a draft of the grant application and send it to commission members for comments.

Commissioner Stewart made a motion to recommend to City Council that the City contract with Mr. Emerson and Ms. Flinn to complete the survey of 25 historic properties as detailed in this year's grant project. Seconded by Commissioner Lauritsen; motion carried unanimously. Ms. Beeman noted that the same guidelines as last year will apply, in that Mr. Emerson and Ms.

Flinn will have to recuse themselves from discussion on the grant project, except when reporting on the survey progress.

Commissioner Stewart noted that having Mr. Emerson and Ms. Flinn available to do this work is really a blessed answer to this problem. Chairman Hull agreed, and said that she wished it was possible to have someone else begin to gain some experience by assisting them in the survey, so that we could have someone else in training.

Old Business: Moorman House Update. Ms. Beeman reported that we appear to have support in the City administration for the concept of moving the Moorman House approximately 2 blocks down G Street to a vacant city-owned lot, and restoring it for a museum. We have received an estimate of \$14,000 for initial moving costs, not including construction of a foundation or restoration of the building.

Discussion followed on availability of parking in the downtown. Ms. Beeman said that the City will be looking at parking as part of a larger study. Chairman Hull asked if renovating the Moorman House for a public use might be something we could find grant money to finance. Ms. Beeman said there are grants available, including a Washington State program called the Heritage Capital Grants Fund, which targets construction projects for heritage buildings. That program could provide money to restore the house, but we will need to raise money to move the house before then.

Ms. Beeman noted that the house must be moved before July.

New Business: Design Guidelines for Downtown. Tim Garceau, Pathways to Progress, reviewed a first draft of design guidelines that he has been working on for the Mixed Use zone. Mr. Garceau explained that he is looking for comments and suggestions, particularly those that will make the document a personal fit for Cheney.

Mr. Garceau explained the process he has used in development of the design guidelines. Charlie Dotson, director of Pathways to Progress, was formerly a planning director for the City of Spokane, and one of his last projects there was development of design guidelines for the downtown. The Spokane document provided a starting place, and Mr. Garceau has been researching guidelines in other jurisdictions, and ideas from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Cheney's Mixed Use zone has been identified on the land use map, but zoning regulations for that zone have not been adopted yet. Mr. Garceau explained that the draft design guidelines are intended to guide development in the downtown by encouraging or requiring that building exteriors, placement on lots, and building characteristics enhance the historic look and feel of the downtown.

In the draft guidelines, Mr. Garceau suggests that the standard for the downtown be one-half of the required parking called for under CMC 21.40.040. Most of the guidelines are intended to

make new development fit in visually with the historic buildings. The appendix will have some information on architectural styles found in the downtown.

Discussion followed on appropriate awnings for the downtown. Mr. Garceau noted that historic storefront design included canvas awnings, such as is found on the Tree of Knowledge Bookstore now (the Pomeroy Building). Ms. Beeman asked if a maximum sign height had been spelled out in the guidelines; we should make it clear that the preferred location for signs would be hanging below the awnings, such as Art ²0 has set out.

Commissioner Seedorf asked if these guidelines were adopted, would existing storefronts be grandfathered? Mr. Scholten said that was usually the case, although the City could opt to put a 'sunset date' in the ordinance, by which time everyone would need to comply with the new design guidelines. Mr. Scholten said that uses are usually grandfathered, but design attributes often have sunset clauses.

Mr. Garceau suggested that the maximum sign height should be established in the zoning code. Mr. Scholten said that we are working on some revisions to the zoning code now, and he will address that.

Commissioner Stewart expressed a concern that too many restrictions will discourage development; nobody will want to purchase a property if they cannot have some freedom in design. Didn't we look at a draft of a document a year or so ago? Ms. Beeman said that a draft of the downtown sub-area plan had been sent out about a year ago for review and comments; that has not been adopted yet. It was a more general plan for the downtown. The design guidelines will be very specific about sign height, materials on building exteriors, position of the building on the lot, etc. Discussion continued.

Ms. Beeman noted that we already have some guidelines that people may feel are subjective in nature, but the zoning code prohibits flashing signs and animated billboards. These restrictions are a way to reflect community values and preferences.

Mr. Garceau asked for input on what would trigger a design review, whether a land use permit or a building permit. One possibility would be to require design review for a 'major remodel,' or anything with a value of more than 5% of the building's assessed value. A 'minor remodel' might be exempt from design review.

Ms. Beeman asked if the most recent amendment to the parking standards in the C-1 zone was reflected in this draft; it lifted the off-street parking requirement for most commercial and retail uses in the downtown. Mr. Garceau said that he had included a parking requirement that equaled half of what was required in the Mixed Use zone.

Mr. Scholten explained generally how landscaping requirements are set out in the C-1 and C-2 zone.

Ms. Beeman noted that a modified Mansard roof shape was to be 'discouraged,' and asked for the reasoning behind that. Mr. Garceau explained that this was probably lifted from the Spokane

code, which assumes larger buildings and more rectangular, box-like lines in the downtown. Chairman Hull said that she was not sure it would matter if a building had a Mansard roof; we are a pretty eclectic community. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Stewart asked if there are any lots left to be developed in the downtown. Ms. Beeman said there were several, including the lot next to the Sweet Savoy. Chairman Hull mentioned the lot adjacent to the STA bus stop that is vacant now. Ms. Beeman mentioned the space where the Pix Theater used to be. Discussion followed on where the Mixed Use zone should go. Mr. Scholten said there has been some discussion on removing the Mixed Use zone altogether, and applying these regulations to the C-1 zone.

Mr. Garceau asked if sidewalk signs, such as the one outside of Kafka, are regulated. Mr. Scholten said that they are regulated in the sign code. Ms. Beeman asked if this draft addresses signs which are lettered onto the windows. Mr. Garceau said that there is a limit to how much space they can take up.

Mr. Garceau asked for additional comments to be emailed to him. Chairman Hull thanked Mr. Garceau for his work on this project.

Commissioner Reports: Commissioner Stewart shared copies of Mrs. Seedorf's latest work, a coloring book featuring stories written by a class of gifted 5th grade students about living in the days of the one-room schoolhouse.

Chairman Hull shared some photos from the Tilicum Museum collection. She noted that March is Women's History Month, and shared an article on ways to celebrate women's history. Commissioner Stewart suggested that copies of the public service announcements be shared with the Cheney Free Press.

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

Approved:

Bettye Hull, Chairman

Susan Beeman, Secretary