

# AGENDA

## Historic Preservation Commission

Thursday, November 3, 2016  
City Hall Council Chambers  
5:15 p.m.

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1. Call to Order / Introductions
2. Approval of Minutes (September 1, 2016 Regular Meeting)
3. Citizen Participation
4. Old Business:
  - a. Written Decision – Local Register Nomination & Special Valuation Application: 520 4<sup>th</sup> ST
5. New Business:
  - a.
6. Commissioner Reports
7. Staff Reports
8. Adjournment

- **REMINDER:** *If you will be unable to attend, please call Susan at 498-9240, no later than noon on the day of the meeting. Thank you!*

## **MINUTES**

### **Cheney Historic Preservation Commission September 1, 2016**

**Commissioners Attending:** Scott Wilbanks, Martin Seedorf, Bettye Hull, Richard Donley and Fred Lauritsen.

**Commissioners Absent:** Charles Mutschler and Tom Balderree.

**Staff Attending:** Todd Ableman, Brett Lucas and Susan Beeman.

**Councilpersons Attending:** None.

**Call to Order:** Vice Chairman Wilbanks called the meeting to order at 5:16 p.m.

**Citizen Participation:** Chairman Wilbanks welcomed Jeff McClure, Cheney School District; Joan Mamanakis, Cheney Historical Museum; Janet Wilbanks; Sean Barnes, Eastmark Capital Group; Craig Conrad, MMEC Architects; and John McCallum, Cheney Free Press.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the April 7, 2016 regular meeting and the June 2, 2016 regular meeting were approved as distributed.

**Old Business:** None.

#### **New Business: Local Register Nomination & Special Valuation Application: 520 4<sup>th</sup> ST, Old Cheney High School / Fisher Administration Building**

Ms. Beeman explained that Mr. Barnes is in the process of purchasing the building, but at this time, the Cheney School District still holds title. The School District has offered a letter expressing their consent to the nomination to the Local Register. The question before the Commission is two-fold: 1) whether the Old Cheney High School meets the criteria for listing on the Cheney Register of Historic Places, and if so, 2) will the Commission grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work Mr. Barnes is proposing to do to convert the building for residential use.

Ms. Beeman noted that the building is a contributing property to the Central Cheney Historic District, a national register district that was established in 2000. The Commission has already identified the structure as having significance, and has declared that it contributes to the integrity of the historic district. She noted that Mr. Barnes has also prepared an application that has been submitted through the Washington Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP) to the National Park Service. The August HPC packet contained a copy of that 79-page application which details specific changes he is planning to make to the building. She noted that the application for the federal tax credit program is still somewhat general, and suggested that if the Commission votes to grant the Certificate of Appropriateness, they might choose to reference this application "or any changes hereafter approved by the National Park Service."

Mr. Ableman noted that the staff report references a management agreement which will be entered into with Mr. Barnes once he holds title to the property.

Ms. Beeman noted that when the local register package is presented to City Council, it will include the written recommendation from the Historic Preservation Commission, along with a management agreement that is entered into between the property owner and the City, wherein the property owner agrees to follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards in treatment of the building from this point forward. That management agreement is then filed with the county as a covenant against the property.

Commissioner Lauritsen asked if the Certificate of Appropriateness should be approved as a series of steps, or as a package deal. Ms. Beeman suggested that if it was approved as a package deal, then Mr. Barnes would not have to come back before the Commission for approval as the project moves forward. She suggested that the CofA could reference "renovations to the Old Cheney High School as described in the National Park Service 'Historic Preservation Certification Application' dated 6/12/2016 or as hereafter amended." She added that the National Park Service standards are generally more stringent than the local standards, and if the NPS signs off on a proposal for the building, it would almost certainly be acceptable to the local commission.

Commissioner Lauritsen made a motion to recommend the listing of the Old Cheney High School on the Cheney Register of Historic Places, and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for renovations to the building as described in the National Park Service 'Historic Preservation Certification Application' dated 6/12/2016, or as hereafter amended. Discussion followed.

Scott Barnes, Eastmark Capital Group, introduced Craig Conrad of MMEC Architects. Mr. Barnes explained that when he first came to Cheney, he appreciated the building and its resemblance to an elementary school he attended. He has always envisioned it as student housing. As he dug deeper into it, he began to understand its historic relevance in the community. He noted that aside from the grain elevators, it is the largest building in town, and probably the most beautiful building in town. His intent is to convert it for use as student housing, but to retain as many of the historic features as possible, including the terrazzo flooring, and portions of the gymnasium and auditorium as communal spaces for the building residents. From an exterior perspective, they want to keep it intact, with the exception of the modular addition on the west side of the building. He noted that renovations will be extensive, everything from fire life safety upgrades, to new plumbing and mechanical systems. Their desire is to do this in a way that matches the quality of the original construction. Mr. Barnes expressed a desire to provide a high quality living experience for EWU students while monitoring the treatment of the building carefully. This is not going to be a building for people to beat up. If you beat it up, you will have to pay for it, and your parents will be unhappy. Mr. Barnes said that his goal is to have the building functioning and useful for the next 100 years.

Commissioner Seedorf asked if this is intended to be used exclusively for student housing. Mr. Barnes said that it is intended for students, following a model developed about 20 years ago for 'purpose-built student housing.' Essentially, several bedrooms share a living room and kitchen, and then there are more community spaces within the building, as well. Commissioner Seedorf asked Mr. Barnes to elaborate on some of the plans for the larger communal areas.

Mr. Barnes said it was important to them, as well as to the National Park Service, to retain some of the historic character and volumes of spaces in the common areas. In their preliminary plans,

approximately 50% of the gymnasium will be retained for use as a game room with pool and ping pong tables, and about 30% of the auditorium will be retained as a study hall.

Craig Conrad, MMEC Architects, explained that his firm has had experience with buildings like this, and he has had personal experience with this building as a client of Cheney School District in the 1990s. His firm was involved with the Hargreaves Hall addition/remodel on the EWU campus, as well as Hutton Elementary and Finch Elementary in Spokane. A very similar project to this one is the conversion of the Chronicle Building to residential use, which is going on now.

Mr. Conrad reviewed the conceptual drawings in detail, noting that the units are organized in a way that takes advantage of the existing building shape. He explained that after the portable is removed, they found a way to use the west side of the building for an ADA entrance that provides accessibility by elevator to all levels of the building. The west side of the building is the one that faces College Avenue, which lines up with Showalter Hall, so the accessible entrance opens onto College Avenue. Mr. Conrad explained how they are retaining the high windows that let natural daylight into the center of the building, especially in the student lounge space. He pointed out a roof deck that is accessed off the second level, and showed how classroom spaces are being converted for residential units. He noted that they are retaining existing bearing walls throughout the building, and are trying to really take advantage of the high ceilings.

Commissioner Seedorf asked how the locker rooms are being addressed. Mr. Conrad explained that the locker rooms were added in what they refer to as the 1951 building which will be retained, and those units will be some of the nicest in terms of the views. All of those units face Showalter Hall and the trees across the street.

Commissioner Donley asked how many students the building will house at completion. Mr. Conrad said that they are planning 36 units with about 90 bedrooms. Commissioner Lauritsen asked how they are addressing parking needs. Mr. Conrad explained that they will be using existing parking spaces, and adding as many spaces as possible, taking advantage of compact car allowances. They will also supplement the 61 parking spaces with bicycle parking areas.

Chairman Wilbanks noted there was a motion on the table to recommend to City Council that the Old High School be listed on the Cheney Register of Historic Places, and to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the renovations as described. Seconded by Commissioner Hull, and the motion carried unanimously.

### **New Business: Cheney Historical Museum Collaboration Opportunity**

Joan Mamanakis explained that the museum has prioritized answering the questions of why this town is here, where did the name come from, and why we are still here. They use a timeline inside the museum to help tell the story, and she is looking now at ways to use maps to help tell the stories of particular places to the “casual historian.” She is wondering if the Historic Preservation Commission might be interested in a collaborative effort that adds a focus on our historic buildings in telling the story of the community.

Ms. Mamanakis reviewed a couple of options she has been looking at for using maps to tell stories. All the sites she is considering are web browser-based, and adapt for use by mobile devices. The first, [www.historypin.org](http://www.historypin.org), is picture-oriented, and lets you post sound and video.

She demonstrated the site, showing some Cheney pins that have been entered. You can break things into collections, and you can send people on virtual tours, or even physical tours, if they are out there with a mobile device. One limitation is that it only allows one element per pin, so if you have sound, story and picture, you would have three pins. One possible advantage is that anybody can join historypin and begin adding things to the site.

The next site she has explored is [www.theclio.com](http://www.theclio.com), developed by Marshall University. She described this site as a little more scholarly, with citations and links to sources. They prefer that the people who are posting be part of a recognized institution. Clio also has a mobile app, and allows you to have multiple images and associated text under the same link. Ms. Mamanakis explained that the Cheney Historical Museum has established an institutional account and is beginning to add some things to the map. TheClio is set up for multiple editors, but both sites have some opportunities for collaboration.

Ms. Mamanakis explained that at this time, they are doing the research and pinning the information to both sites, as the research and verification is the time-consuming part. The effort is in making sure that the historic information and the location information are accurate. She explained that in the long term, she would like to see this information added to the EWU site to make it available to prospective and incoming students, as well as to families to may be associated with an EWU student.

Ms. Mamanakis suggested that there is an opportunity to collaborate here, looking at architectural history in the community, and at historic districts. Discussion followed. Ms. Mamanakis explained that both sites are free, and both can have multiple contributors. She is not looking for a firm commitment at this time, but wanted to invite the Commission to begin thinking about the idea. She added that there could be opportunities to do some interesting 'memory projects' with [www.historypin.org](http://www.historypin.org), inviting members of the public to contribute memories and photos. She suggested that Commission members might want to begin by exploring both sites, and responding to her with their impressions on navigation, ease of use, and preference of one over the other. Eventually, she thinks we might narrow the focus down to one site or the other.

Mr. Lucas described some interesting projects he has run across using story maps to tell the history of Highway 99 through the state of Washington, and the historical development of the town of Bellingham. Extensive discussion followed, and the Commission members thanked Ms. Mamanakis for her presentation.

### **Commissioner Reports:**

Commissioner Hull reported that she had just returned from a really excellent 3-day genealogy workshop in Arlington, Washington.

Commissioner Donley reported on a recent visit with a friend, a former Jesuit priest who has written extensively on the Catholic experience in America.

Commissioner Wilbanks reported on the opening weekend of the rail museum at Reardan. The grand opening was well attended, and the facility is very nicely done.

**Staff Reports:**

Mr. Lucas reported that he also attended the opening of the rail museum.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

**Approved:**

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Charles V. Mutschler, Chairman

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Susan Beeman, Secretary