

Landmark Commission Meeting
Mantua Village Hall
May 7, 2016

Call to order

Chair Nick Ehlert called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Roll Call

Commissioners: Eric Hummel, Hal Stamm, Terri Vechery, Helen Hazlett, Carole Pollard,
Nick Ehlert and Renee Henry

Mayor Linda Clark

Public: Linda Ehlert, Alex Strub, Jacob Dengg.

Reading of the Minutes

Renee had e-mailed everyone the March 5, 2016 Minutes for review.
Nick asked if there were any corrections. There was one. Terri motioned the Minutes be approved as corrected. Carole seconded. All approved.

Nick asked that for this meeting the meeting order be changed so that New Business comes before Old Business because Helen Hazlett needs to leave at 11:00. Terri moved that the meeting order be changed and Carole seconded. All approved.

New Business

Helen began by passing out samples of brochures for the Landmark Commission that she has created. They were printed on both white and parchment paper. She showed several covers which feature a border around a house or the old Methodist Church, now her home, in Mantua Village. The second sheet has three bullet points that will need text added to them. She asked that someone from the Commission, perhaps Terri or Carole could help fill these in.

She also had created a small color ad that can be used by local journals or newspapers to advertise Chas Boebinger's talk. A large flyer advertising the talk was printed in black and white and color.

Historical Architecture Talk

The talk will take place on Saturday, June 4 at 6:30 pm at the Hilltop Christian Church in the lower level. Chas will speak on the historical styles found in the Western Reserve and specifically about the styles found in Mantua Village. He may discuss other styles like Georgian, Greek Revival and log homes which are found in Mantua Township.

Before discussion on covering printing costs, Nick asked for an update on the Landmark Commission's budget. Terri reported that she had attended the Village Council meeting where they had agreed to \$500 for this year and \$600 for 2017 to cover any expenses. All receipts are to be given to Terri Vechery and she will get the reimbursement.

Advertising the talk

Flyers

200 will be printed initially. 50 will be in color and 150 in black and white.
The color flyers will be distributed to local businesses
Mayor Linda Clark will see about getting the flyers printed by the Village printers
Nick and Terri will see about getting the flyers distributed to businesses and homes

Several can be left at businesses and monitored in case they need more

Communities and Organizations

Local communities: Garrettsville, Aurora, Hiram, Mantua Village Council.
Historical Societies: Aurora, Hiram, Mantua, Portage County
Local churches
Aurora Landmark Commission

Print

Record Courier
Community Journal
Villager
Life and Times

The distribution of the flyers especially to businesses and organizations should take place as soon as possible. The print articles may take place closer to the time of the talk.

Setup at Hilltop Church on June 4 (expecting about 60 people)

Landmark Commission members should arrive early to help setup.
Please bring 2 dozen cookies
Ice tea and water will be offered
Helen will get paper products and table cloths
Nick will coordinate with Jeff at the church

Nick Ehlert will give a brief introduction about the Mantua Village Landmark Commission.
Helen Hazlett will introduce the speaker.

Nick asked for a motion to provide refreshments and the required provisions. Terri motioned and Renee seconded. All approved.

Old Business

Business owners: soliciting requests for Landmark Listing.

Charles English
Eddie Benner
Jodie

While distributing the flyers advertising the Historical Architectural talk, can reach out to local owners about requesting Landmark Listing.

Internship

There will be no interns during the summer. Terri will continue to research during the summer on her own.

Terri introduced Alex Strut and Jacob Dengg who were able to attend today's meeting. Bishop, who was not able to attend, has had to bow out due to his course load. Another intern, Anthony, is a senior and is graduating. Jacob is also graduating this year. Alex will carry on in the fall. Other interns will be recruited then.

Terri said she had met on Thursday, May 5 with the grant provider and discussed the program. She felt he was more interested in commercial internship opportunities. However, the internship program also includes nonprofits and is an excellent experience for teaching records research and documentation. These skills will be very useful in many of the interns later professional positions.

Terri has been working with Beth Hudson. Sharon France in the Records office has been very helpful as

well. She met with Bonny Howe last Tuesday who has provided Terri with her own copy code to get copies at a discount. Terri will turn in the receipts and no longer depends on a go between for the copy discount.

The interns contacted the abstractor, Beth Hudson. She took them to the records room and showed them how to do the searches. The searches can be complicated by the original owner's offspring or siblings and many changes of ownership. Lots that began as large ones have been split over the years and the records do not record when this happened. Therefore, there needs to be a lot of back tracking before going forward. However, people who work for companies and are doing research, have been helpful as well.

Jacob spoke and thanked the commission for the opportunity to work on this project. This is Jacob's last week.

- More interns are needed because although it is not difficult, it is time consuming to search through the big books.
- The final step, that he'd like to do yet this week, is to look at property taxes (archived at the Homeland Security building on Infirmary Rd - only open 4 hours a week).
- The properties have been traced back to the initial land owners
- To determine when the property was improved by the erection of the home, you have to look at the tax records.
- Time limitations have to be taken into consideration. For example, the Record office closes at 4 pm sharp and is not open on Saturday.
- One chain he was able to follow through to 1803, but others end in the 1890s.
- If someone gets stuck, he or she asks the others to look the information over to see if they see something he or she may have missed.

Jacob passed around a finished inventory he had done with an Excel cover sheet listing the property owners (from whom to whom) and dates and pages where the deeds can be found. There was a copy of the most recent deed and the first deed found. To cut down on costs, the other deeds in between the first and last were not copied, but where to find them is noted on the excel sheet.

Terri will take the information and enter it into the Landmark Commissions' Inventory sheet and attach a picture.

Hal Stamm recommended looking at Fire Insurance maps that are kept at Portage County and Kent State University Library. Hal will consult with his daughter, an historical preservationist, on where find the maps and let Terri know. The maps show every house or building in a community (on a yearly or five year basis). They may go back to the 1800's. If a building appears, then they can note the year and search that year in the records. Eric offered to help research these maps.

In the future when the inventory is setup, future property owners may be interested in getting copies of these records. Real estate agents may be interested as well. The Village may choose to charge a small fee to recoup expenses if copies are requested.

Terri has gotten very positive and interested responses when she talks to people in the community about the inventory work the interns and she have been doing. People are amazed to learn about the project and very excited to learn about it. Also, the Portage County personnel have been very helpful and are excited about the project as well.

Historical note: Early on a few people bought up large amounts of land and as people moved into the area or children got married and needed homes of their own, the parcels were divided off. Sometimes lots were sold back and forth between individuals several times. Sometimes the records only list initials and not full first and last names, which complicate the research. Also, each township has lots 1 through 30 and you must be sure you're in the correct township. Although the Inventory forms for the Landmark

Commission will cite the building's address, the records cite lot numbers.

The most important information is to establish what year the house was built and by whom and the chain of ownership from then on to today.

Mayor Clark asked how many sites have been completed. Jacob replied that 4 sites that he has worked on are definitely done. 10 to 12 others are probably done, but need some final checks and verification. Others need more research and are complicated for various reasons already discussed. Alex added that there are about 5 more done including properties that he, Anthony and Bishop have worked on. Alex has found stumbling blocks when one deed lists the property as lot 22, for example, but later on he finds the property referred to as lots 23 and 24; however, there's no record to when lot 22 was divided into these smaller ones.

The next phase for the Inventory project will be

- a. Get pictures of the verified properties
- b. Terri to reassess best way for new interns to enter data
 - The deed data is on an excel worksheet
 - Inventory sheet is on MS Word
 - Get the data onto one database
 - Review current data that is still in process and notate what still needs to be done so that the next intern can carry on the research.
 - As time goes on and property changes ownership, if the property is researched again in 25 or 30 years, the researcher will be able to start from 2016 or 2017 on. The present day information (1979 on) is searchable online.
- c. Terri will continue to gather data on Woodford Street (north side)
- d. The interns are working on the 39 properties that had been on the Inventory from the mid 1970's. Once these are done, the work will continue in a methodical manner according to a street by street plan.

Later, when the Landmark Inventory is done and it comes time to list the properties with the State, then an official abstractor will be hired. They can use the data already gathered by Terri and the interns and verify the chains. The Landmark Commission will get a grant from the State of Ohio to hire the abstractor.

Hal asked if the Landmark Commission should look into getting a couple notebooks that the interns would be able to take with them to use on the field. They would be able to input data directly, take pictures and document their work immediately. Right now the interns have to return to their own pcs or laptops, which they can't take with them into the field or into records offices.

Renee suggested if they find that a property has a Century Home plaque on it, the records of the chain of deeds will already be on file at the Mantua Historical Society. The Century Home plaques were offered beginning in 1976. Home owners could do their own research and apply for the plaque or her father, Charles Alger, who worked 2nd shift and had mornings available to search records, did the research for them. In exchange the property owner would give a donation to the Mantua Historical Society. The Mantua Historical Society includes the Township and the Village. She suggested that the files at the Historical Society can be looked at and copied.

Nick thanked the interns for their hard work and expressed our appreciation for taking on this project.

Terri suggested that in a few years' time once more of the Inventory is finished, the Landmark Commission could offer an educational program on the history of Village homes or businesses and invite the public. The community could then see the work that has been done.

Renee mentioned that depending on the locality, some Ohio county Historical Societies offer Historical Plaque options. Others are not county-based; instead the local Historical Society offers the Plaques. Portage County Historical Society does not have a plaque program. Some websites offer the plaques for

a certain amount and if the property owner wants to pay an additional amount, the society arranges for the research. If the Mantua Historical Society again offers the plaques, and the research has already been done for a property in the Village, then the property owner could pay a fee to access that data already collected. That way the Village could recoup some of the expense of the Inventory being done now.

The next Landmark Commission meeting is June 25 10:30 am.

Renee motioned to close the meeting and Hal seconded. All approved.

Nick Ehlert, Chair

Renee Henry, Secretary