



CITY OF MUSCATINE
215 SYCAMORE STREET
MUSCATINE, IA 52761
PH. (563) 264-1550 • FAX (563) 264-0750

CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

For more information contact:

Kevin Jenison
Communication Manager
E-Mail: kjenison@muscatineia.gov
Phone: (563) 264-1550 • Fax: (563) 264-0750

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUGUST 9, 2018

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH TO BEGIN ON FAIR OAKS NEIGHBORHOOD

State grant to help fund \$25,000 nomination project for Muscatine's third historic district

MUSCATINE, Iowa – Fair Oaks, a subdivision of Muscatine next to Weed Park, took a step closer to being placed on the National Register of Historic Places when it was announced that the City of Muscatine has received a \$17, 245 Historical Resource Development Program (HRDP) grant from the State of Iowa.

Working in conjunction with the Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission, the City of Muscatine will now move forward with a project to prepare the nomination forms for the Fair Oak Historic District.

“This would be the third historic district in Muscatine and the first since 2008,” Dave Gobin, Community Development Director for the City of Muscatine, said. “This neighborhood has a history and collection of architectural styles that makes the district unique and significant. Every home will be profiled as to its style and condition.”

One of the benefits to being placed on the National Register of Historic Places is that building owners can qualify for tax breaks and financial assistance programs for rehabilitation projects.

“Like the other two districts (Downtown and West Hill), having Fair Oaks placed on the National Register will help preserve the historic nature of this district and of this town,” Gobin said.

The Fair Oaks Historic District is centered on the southwest portion of land historically owned by Dr. James and Mary Weed including their two story brick Gothic revival house built in 1852-54.

The Fair Oaks Addition was laid out in 1908 with 101 lots including two with pre-1865 houses. The overall design and promotion of the addition reflects ideals of the period including curvilinear streets, proximity to a park (the 72-acre Weed Park was donated to the City of Muscatine in 1899 by the Weed's), and landscape improvements. In October 1926 the Fair Oaks Addition and perimeter additions were named Muscatine's first "restricted residence district" in 1926 to help protect its residential qualities.

An April 2013 architectural and historical survey prepared for the Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission by Spark Consulting laid out the preliminary boundaries of the Fair Oaks neighborhood (east of Park Avenue, north of Washington Street, immediately west of Weed Park, and south of the community college property on the east side of Muscatine). A total of 135 properties were identified and surveyed as part of the project.

The survey evaluated the history and the architecture of the neighborhood and determined that it would be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination process will begin with final research of the historic district by a group of volunteers and Spark Consulting.

"This is a \$25,000 project," Gobin said. "The \$17,000 state grant is matched by a monetary donation from the Friends of Muscatine Historic Preservation and the in-kind work of the many volunteers."

Building on the research completed in 2013, additional research will be completed on individual properties to identify their history, significance, and integrity. The research will also include gathering more data on Weed Park and determining the final boundary and contributing resources for the historic district.

A public meeting will be held on the project this fall for neighborhood residents and interested community members to outline the steps for the nomination process and the benefits of a



CITY OF MUSCATINE
215 SYCAMORE STREET
MUSCATINE, IA 52761
PH. (563) 264-1550 • FAX (563) 264-0750

National Register listing. The listing would not place any additional restrictions on property owners in the historic district. All property owners will have an opportunity to comment on the nomination and potential historic district before it moves forward.

The process to nominate the Fair Oaks Historic District to the National Register will span over a year. If the nomination moves forward as anticipated, research will be completed this fall, and Rebecca McCarley of Spark Consulting will work on developing the nomination this winter. An initial draft will be available in spring, and it will be reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Additional revisions and review at the state level will continue through 2019. If approved at the local, state, and national levels, it is anticipated that the historic district would then likely be listed in early 2020.