Ms. Fogarty - Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:32 pm, introduced the Commission members and staff. She explained the procedures for hearing the cases. There were six members present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Aultz moved to APPROVE the July 7, 2016 minutes as submitted. Mr. Witzenburg seconded the motion.

AYES: Killian, Aultz, Pence, Suarez, Witzenburg, Fogarty

MOTION CARRIED: 6-0
At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on August 10, 2016, Patrick Thompson (Restoration Exchange Omaha) appeared before the Commission on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. Thompson presented several photographs of Holy Sepulchre Cemetery which is separated into various sections by curvilinear roads. It is filled with mausoleums and monuments of various sizes. Included were pictures of the front and rear entrance gates, the original entrance near 48th & Leavenworth, the Priest’s Circle and several of the sections. The contributing building structures include the Itnyer-McGinn, Connor, Chiodo, DiStefano, Hynes, Finocchiaro-Fanciullo, Piccolo and A.C. Nanfito mausoleums.

Mr. Thompson explained that the Holy Sepulchre Cemetery qualifies for a historic designation under Criterion A due to its association with the social development of an immigrant city and a Roman-Catholic enclave in the Midwest. The cemetery served as the primary burial location for the city’s growing Catholic population throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The period of significance begins in 1873 when the cemetery was created and extends to 1966. Holy Sepulchre was created when the first Catholic cemetery near St. Mary’s convent became overcrowded. He noted that the Italian population brought with them their own burial customs such as the use of carved figures, box tombs, ledger stones, and the use of curbing and fencing to delineate the sacred spaces. The cemetery also served other religious populations in addition to the Catholic population.

The cemetery also qualifies for a historic designation under Criterion B due to its association with individuals that are significant at local, state and national levels. Six prominent Nebraskans that meet those qualifications are Thomas Brennan (local), Edward Creighton (national), John Creighton (local), Thomas B. Cuming (state), General George M. O’Brien (state), and General John O’Neill (national). The period of significance for these individuals is from 1884 to 1912.

Thomas Brennan, an Irish nationalist who was executed, was buried at the cemetery. He requested that no monument be erected at his burial site until Ireland became a free country. The Emmett Monument Association was formed in his honor, with its members also requesting that no monument be erected at their burial sites.

Edward Creighton built a telegraph line between Omaha and St. Joseph, Missouri, which connected the city to the east coast. He also lobbied to have Omaha serve as the eastern terminus of the transcontinental railway. His brother, John Creighton, founded Creighton College with his sister-in-law and donated most of his fortune to philanthropic causes which included the construction of churches and hospitals.

Thomas Cuming served as Acting Governor on two separate occasions. He determined that the territorial capitol should be placed in Omaha instead of Bellevue. He also called for the building of the transcontinental railroad through Nebraska, along the Platte River.
General George O’Brien served several positions in the Army and was also a member of the local Emmett Monument Association. General John O’Neill made several unsuccessful attempts to invade Canada before turning his attention to settling Irish immigrants into Midwestern towns. He founded the town of O’Neill in 1874.

Finally, the Holy Sepulchre Cemetery qualifies for a historic designation under Criterion C for its landscape architecture. It is an example of the type of landscape that was developed in the late 19th Century by the Bishop of Omaha and its managing board. It was designed according to the popular “rural cemetery” movement which featured curvilinear drives, various monument sizes, styles and materials, and a landscape plan with a natural park-like appearance. This style was a result of the romanticism of death and dying and a renewed appreciation of nature and green space.

Ms. Fogarty verified that Thomas Rogers Kimball was the designer of the gate entrance and fence but not the caretaker’s or gate house. She also inquired as to why John Albert McShane had not been added as a person of significance. Mr. Thompson responded that Mr. McShane could be added before the nomination was presented to the State.

Ms. Aultz commented that the cemetery attested to the ethnic community at the time and showed how the Italian and Irish differed in the burying of their dead. She mentioned that many people and groups are interested in genealogy and spend a lot of times in cemeteries studying the history of a particular community. She added that the fact that many Catholic priests, soldiers and relocated individuals are buried at the cemetery adds another level of significance to the site.

Kristine Gerber stated that the goal of the Catholic Cemeteries of Omaha is to let the public know about the history and significance of Sepulchre.

Mr. Witzenburg moved to APPROVE the National Register nomination. Ms. Aultz seconded the motion.

AYES: Killian, Aultz, Pence, Suarez, Witzenburg, Fogarty

MOTION CARRIED: 6-0

**ADJOURNMENT:**

It was the consensus of the Board to ADJOURN the meeting at 2:24 p.m.