

BISMARCK HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
April 21, 2021

The Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission met on April 21, 2021, at 3:30 p.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room in the City-County Office Building, 221 North 5th Street. Due to ongoing public health concerns related to COVID-19, the meeting was held via Zoom.

Commissioners present were Steve Bakken, Walt Bailey, Blake Dinkins, Calvin Grinnell, Beth Nodland and Amy Sakariassen.

Commissioner Tory Jackson was not present.

Staff members present were Sandra Bogaczyk – Office Assistant II, Jannelle Combs – City Attorney, Will Hutchings – Planner, Kim Lee – Planning Manager and Gabe Schell – City Engineer.

Guests present were Rich Garman, Melissa Barth, Westin Dressler, Tina Stanger, Annique Lockard – Members of the 2021 Leadership Bismarck-Mandan Class.

MINUTES

Chair Sakariassen called for consideration of the minutes of the March 17, 2021 meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Dinkins to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2021 meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nodland and with Commissioners, Bailey, Dinkins, Grinnell, Nodland and Sakariassen voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Sakariassen asked if there were any public comments.

Mr. Garman, representing Members of the 2021 Leadership Bismarck-Mandan Class, addressed Commission members on the idea of enhancing past projects and building partner relationships with the Commission. Mr. Garman described the Talking Trail project where a recorded history can be heard by those interested in learning about many Bismarck historic places by using a smart phone application or by connecting with a smart phone. Mr. Garman also suggested that an app could be used to enhance interactive qualities for a visitor's experience at Art Alley. He stated that the 2021 Leadership Bismarck-Mandan Class is requesting the Historical Preservation Commission to offer advice for developing an app or series of apps which would merge art and historical interests and grant monies to develop 10 to 12 historical locations to build talking trail projects, possibly in the following areas:

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- Rail Depot
- Belle Mehus Auditorium
- Former Governor's Mansion
- Patterson Hotel
- Capital Theatre Building
- Weather Beacon on the Provident
- St. Alexius
- World War Memorial Building
- Bismarck Veterans Memorial Library
- Cathedral District

Mayor Bakken joined the meeting at this time and asked if the intention is to begin the project in the city core and then expand the project scope outward. Mr. Garman stated that there is a scope in mind and that due to the flexible aspect of the technology, the scope can be expanded to include more sites. He added that phase I of the project could include the historic points mentioned and Art Alley.

Chair Sakariassen asked if staff had any grant information. Mr. Hutchings stated that all three projects that the commission applied for have been fully funded, which included an interpretation signage project. He added that the draft contract must be reviewed by staff and reviewed by City Commission prior to any procurement. Mr. Hutchings has requested an amended timeline from the State to allow for City timelines to coincide. He asked for any additional feedback from Commission members so that he could schedule this request on a future meeting to discuss which sites would be included in the final request for approval.

Ms. Nodland suggested that the subcommittee discuss this at the May 18th meeting of the Historic Preservation Plan Subcommittee. Chair Sakariassen agreed.

Mr. Garman thanked the Commission for listening and expressing interest in working with and combining funding with Members of the 2021 Leadership Bismarck-Mandan Class. Chair Sakariassen stated that she looked forward to working as a larger group to take action on this priority Commission item and thanked the group for addressing the Commission. She mentioned that it was a good sign that the community shares the same goals as the Commission and ready to take action.

There being no public input Chair Sakariassen resumed the meeting.

REVIEW OF PROPOSED DOWNTOWN STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Mr. Hutchings stated that the City of Bismarck is requesting the Historic Preservation Commission to review and comment on roadway and streetscaping improvements to segments of East Thayer Avenue, East Broadway Avenue, North 4th Street, North 5th Street and North 6th Street. The Concrete and Pavement Repair (CPR) project would be funded in

part through the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT). Mr. Hutchings listed several components of the improvement plan and stated that the plan was already reviewed and approved by the Renaissance Zone Authority at their April 8th meeting. The City Commission will review when placed on the agenda. The City Engineering Department proposes to complete final designs of the project this summer and initiate construction in the Summer of 2022. Mr. Hutchings added that because this plan uses federal highway funding it is subject to Section 106 review. Mr. Hutchings gave an overview of the project outlining the scope and on-line story map provided by the Engineering Department.

Ms. Nodland stated that because she is a property owner within the project boundary she is uncomfortable commenting on some aspects of the project but can respond to any historic preservation questions and is happy to participate as long as there is no objection. Chair Sakariassen stated that she is very comfortable acknowledging Ms. Nodland's expertise. No objections were made to limit Ms. Nodland's involvement in discussion.

Mr. Bailey asked if new downtown areas have been surveyed for their historical and architectural value and if they have been found eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Chair Sakariassen stated that the project area is within the Historical District but questioned if the resources are as detailed as Mr. Bailey would like. Ms. Nodland stated that the survey was completed quite a while ago and sites would need to be updated, especially if the project area is outside the historic district.

Mr. Bakken asked if any discussion or consideration has been given to the utility boxes which have been wrapped in DWAC (Dakota West Arts Council) images. Mr. Schell stated that the existing wrapped utilities would not be removed and they are not included in the scope of this project. Mr. Bakken asked if they were to be modified that DWAC be consulted.

Ms. Nodland described the preservation work that has been done. She noted several expectations of exposing some aspects of Bismarck's past, which project managers might find while excavating or moving street works.

Chair Sakariassen stated that aspects of Urban Renewal must be taken into account and deemed as historical evidence and added that it is a complex project.

Chair Sakariassen asked if it is an NDDOT project or a City project with a federal nexus. Mr. Schell stated that the project is federally funded through two separate urban grants the City was competitively awarded. The City is leading the effort of environmental clearance and design and construction administration but it does have NDDOT oversight and Federal funding.

Chair Sakariassen asked if watermain work was part of the project. Mr. Schell stated that non-participating items are listed on the grant and sanitary/sewer and watermain projects do not tend to get federal highway funding and instead is funded through the City's water rates.

Mr. Dinkins complimented the story map maker for its execution and found it very useful. Chair Sakariassen agreed.

Ms. Nodland stated that the most impactful issue for Historic Preservation Commission is that the project is slated to occur at the same time the City will be celebrating its sesquicentennial events. She noted that it should be a celebration of a lifetime to bring people downtown to celebrate 150 years of progress but instead will be a difficult menagerie of displaced parking, curb construction and detours which would deter people from visiting the downtown celebrations. She asked that the street project be delayed one year to allow the celebration to occur unhindered. She stated that the celebration is a huge economic opportunity for the City and is surprised that the project was slated to occur at the same time. Ms. Nodland also asked where events would be held if not in the downtown due to construction. Chair Sakariassen agreed that the timing is most unfortunate and asked if the grants could be delayed.

Mr. Schell stated that the funding could not be redistributed in later years, that the grant would be lost. The application was made for the entire downtown in one year instead of separating the work into two years so that annual funds could be combined.

Chair Sakariassen stated that since the timing of street works overlapping the sesquicentennial is unfortunate she asked if there was some way communication could improve. Mr. Hutchings suggested that once submitted, Section 106 reviews follow set deadlines but stated that any wishes of the Historic Preservation Commission and the Engineering Department may be communicated at the time.

Ms. Combs stated that the request by the City is for the Historic Preservation Commission to consider any impacts of the proposed project. No approval is needed at this time. The historic items listed previously is good information for the various stake holders to consider for a comprehensive implementation.

Chair Sakariassen stated that she knows the NDDOT will be developing discovery plans and she is glad to inform the public of elements of the process which the Historic Preservation Commission advises to consider.

Mr. Schell stated that he is very appreciative of the Historic Preservation Commission's advisory comments which allows the Engineering Department to create a more comprehensive plan which highlights some risks in beneficial ways. He added that the scope of the work is mostly surface work.

PARTICIPATION IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH ACTIVITIES

Mr. Hutchings stated that at the request of Chair Sakariassen the City of Bismarck recognize that May of each year be dedicated as National Preservation Month. Also known as Historic Preservation Month, the month celebrates the nation's heritage through historic places. Mr. Hutchings listed events and activities planned by the City, local organizations and the State

for the month. Staff recommended discussing upcoming opportunities and considering desired level of participation.

Chair Sakariassen commented on several activities and events being considered. Commission members addressed various planned projects.

Ms. Combs suggested that since Mayor Bakken was addressing an audience about Bismarck history and that he could highlight some of the sesquicentennial events planned by the Historic Preservation Commission. Mayor Bakken asked staff and Commission members to work with him so he could highlight items in a press release. Chair Sakariassen thanked Mayor Bakken for his request.

OTHER BUSINESS

SECTION 106 CONSULTATION INFORMATION GUIDE

Mr. Hutchings stated that Community Development will be adding a Section 106 Consultation information document to the City's website and asked that any comments or suggestions be directed to his office so he could improve the document as recommended.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES MAP

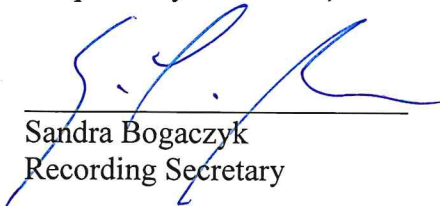
Mr. Hutchings demonstrated a new GIS (Geographic Information Systems) online map showing all planning development activities for the City of Bismarck and how points on the map are linked to staff reports and other public material including projects, permits and hearing dates to be accessed by the item's location.

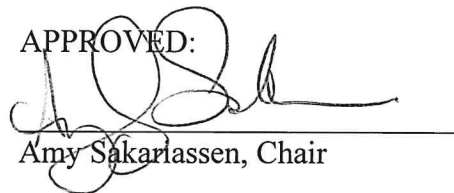
Chair Sakariassen stated that the City of Bozeman made a similar project for its historical buildings and thanked staff for the great work.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Sakariassen declared the meeting of the Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission adjourned at 4:48 p.m. to meet again on May 19, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,


Sandra Bogaczyk
Recording Secretary

APPROVED:

Amy Sakariassen, Chair