

BISMARCK HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

March 19, 2025

The Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission met on Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room in the City-County Office Building, 221 North 5th Street. The meeting was held in person and via Zoom. Dakota Media Access was present to record the meeting and archive on freetv.org for public viewing.

Commissioners present were Matthew Hull, Amy Sakariassen, John Swanson, Greg Zenker, and Chair Damita Engel.

Commissioner Beth Nodland was present via Zoom.

Absent was Commissioner Scooter Pursley.

Staff members present were Annie Hojian – Office Assistant and Lauren Oster – Planner.

MEETING INFORMATION

Historic Preservation Reports

MINUTES

Chair Engel called for consideration of the minutes of the February 19, 2025 meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Sakariassen to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2025 meeting of the HPC. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Zenker and with Commissioners Nodland, Sakariassen, Hull, Zenker, Swanson, and Chair Engel voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved.

2023 HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANT UPDATE

Ms. Oster updated the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) on the status of downtown banner designs and pending meetings. Commissioner Nodland is working on this and will update the commission at next month's meeting. No action is required at this time.

2024 HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANT UPDATE

Ms. Oster stated requests for proposals for the South Capitol Survey opened on January 14, 2025, and closed February 21, 2025. Two proposals were returned and the selection committee, consisting of Commissioners Swanson and Hull, as well as Planning Manager Daniel Nairn, recommends South Fork Historical Research to conduct the Class I and Class II for the South Capital Survey Project. Based on the selection committee's recommendations, staff recommends the HPC in selecting South Fork Historical Research to conduct the Class I and Class II for the South Capital Survey Project. Commissioner Sakariassen and Chair Engel recused themselves from discussion. No discussion ensued.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Hull to approve South Fork Historical Research to conduct the South Capital Survey Project Class I and Class II. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Swanson. With Commissioners Zenker, Hull, Nodland and Swanson all voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved. Commissioner Sakariassen and Chair Engel recused themselves from the vote.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH IDEAS

May is Historic Preservation Month. Ms. Oster presented a sample flier in the agenda packet to the HPC of the selected events scheduled to celebrate Historic Preservation Month.

Commissioner Sakariassen has been in contact with staff at Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library. Library staff is currently working with Commissioner Sakariassen on developing a list of local authors and their works, as well as bookmarks listing this information to be distributed to library patrons. These works will include all genres. Commissioner Sakariassen graciously offered to fund printing costs related to this endeavor as she feels this is very important information to share with the community. The HPC expressed gratitude.

Commissioner Nodland has graciously offered window space at her property located on North 4th Street to be used to promote local literature and authors during Historic Preservation Month. Members of the HPC expressed gratitude and will begin working on a display, possibly consisting of enlarged book covers of local works.

Commissioner Hull did reach out to staff at Camp Hancock regarding any events the HPC may partner with regarding restoration or maintenance of historic properties, but he has not received a response by the time of this meeting. Commissioner Sakariassen stated she and Emily Sakariassen, Architectural Historian with South Fork Historical Research, hosted a window restoration workshop a few years ago and it was well received. It is unknown if the HPC would have adequate time to plan to host a workshop regarding window or door restoration at Camp Hancock. Commissioner Hull stated he will reach out to staff again regarding this. Ms. Oster has spoken to Johnathan Campbell with the Former Governor's Mansion, who agreed to a presentation on the site's wallpaper restoration.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Hull presented an idea for placing signs on historic buildings in the downtown area, especially on Main Avenue. He stated when he lived in Oregon, the town had signs that listed the original name of the building or business, the year built, a photo of the original building and 2-3 paragraphs about the original building. He has reached out to building/business owners on the 400 block of West Main Avenue, but he has only received a reply from one business owner. This business owner would be interested in displaying a sign of this sort if one was created.

The signs were discussed and the HPC feels this would be an opportunity to encourage the community to visit downtown more and learn about the area. Commissioners discussed sign materials and it is a general consensus that these signs should be made of a hard plastic and permanent. They can be placed on the building in a way that would not interfere with traffic or current business. Participation would be voluntary, and it is suggested that this should be done in phases, possibly starting with the center of downtown.

Commissioner Zenker stated the Renaissance Zone Commission should be invited to this discussion, as well as Planner, Isak Johnson, regarding Downtown Design Review and specific requirements. Amy Munson of the State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND) has been contacted and she has no objections if state funds awarded through future grant projects are used for signs of this nature. It should be noted that awards and funding sources regarding federal, state and city funds may change in coming years.

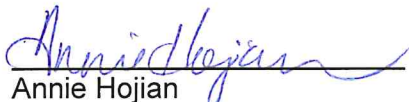
Commissioner Zenker believes the South Capital Survey the HPC has just selected South Fork Historical Research to conduct, would be a good step towards finding out which properties are original or could be included in this endeavor. He is under the belief this should only be available for original buildings. Commissioner Nodland reminded the HPC there is only one original building in the current Downtown Historic District, Camp Hancock, due to the Great Fire of Bismarck on August 8, 1898. Historic structures are much more recent than the origins of Bismarck due to the fire. Discussion ensued as to what buildings would be eligible to have a sign placed. It was noted that this project would tie in well as the HPC is already revisiting the downtown area and considering additional locations.

Questions arose as to where the signs would go and who is responsible for them, as well as who would write the text and find the photos to share. The HPC should also find out how many property owners would be interested. Chair Engel feels the addition of signs may alter the design and information desired on downtown banners the HPC is currently working on. The signs would be a positive addition for particular historic buildings, but the banners could then explore themes and what a particular location meant, rather than just what a building is. In bringing both the idea of signs and banners together, more historical information can be displayed and presented to the community.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Engel declared the meeting of the Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission adjourned at 3:22 p.m. to meet again on April 16, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room.

Respectfully Submitted,



Annie Hojian
Recording Secretary



Damita Engel
Chair