

BISMARCK HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

February 19, 2025

The Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission met on Wednesday, February 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, Beth Nodland, Amy Sakariassen, Scooter Pursley, and Chair Damita Engel.

Absent were Commissioners John Swanson and Greg Zenker.

Staff members present were Annie Hojian – Office Assistant, Daniel Nairn – Planning Manager and, Lauren Oster – Planner.

MEETING INFORMATION

Historic Preservation Reports

MINUTES

Chair Engel called for consideration of the minutes of the January 15, 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 Hull and with Commissioners Nodland, Sakariassen, Hull, Pursley, and Chair Engel voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved.

2023 HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANT UPDATE

A remaining \$15,441 in Historic Preservation Fund grants must be utilized by September 30, 2025. The Cathedral Area Historic District banners (quantity 25) have been designed but have not been produced. Hardware and installation will be needed for this area. The Downtown Historic District Area banners (quantity 20), have not been designed or produced, but hardware is already on the street lights for these banners and can be installed by staff. Some structures in outlying areas, such as the Warehouse District, may not have existing hardware on streetlights and therefore minimal hardware may need to be installed. Banners can still be installed by staff. The designs for the Downtown Historic District should be brought to the attention of the Downtowners as a courtesy. Commissioner Nodland stated there are several city related entities that will need to approve of banner designs for the Downtown Historic District Area also. Ms. Oster has confirmed with other staff that the Downtown Design Review would not need to make a formal motion to approve, but it is a courtesy to include them in banner approval.

A budget of \$11,800 has been allocated for the banner project for these two areas. Staff has waited to get quotes until a design is further along for the Downtown banners as better rates

may be available if banners for both the Cathedral Area and Downtown are purchased together. Staff recommends the HPC decide if design services will be needed to create the Downtown Historic District Area banners and provide direction to staff for the next steps of this project. Design services for creating the Cathedral Area banners was approximately \$3,000 and design services had been decided by a solicitation process.

Commissioner Nodland is interested in finding individuals that have knowledge of the Downtown Historic District Area to help with banner design and information regarding themes of the structures. She stated no recent subcommittee meetings have been held regarding banner review and design. She asked that she be given until the next scheduled HPC meeting in March to hold a subcommittee meeting regarding the banners. If a banner subcommittee meeting cannot be held before the next scheduled HPC meeting, Commissioner Nodland requests to be excused from this duty and another Commissioner take over. Chair Engel, as well as the rest of the HPC, is in agreement to table this until the next regularly scheduled HPC meeting. Commissioner Nodland did affirm design services will be required, but if anyone has any design ideas, volunteer submitted designs, or mock-ups, it is asked they be submitted before the next meeting.

It was suggested that Commissioner Swanson may be available to help find entities that have information on the history of downtown. The HPC discussed what information should be included on the banners. Several ideas were shared including providing information on the context and meaning of the structures, as well as using the banners as a way to help interpret the national historical themes of the Downtown Historic District. Due to this, a more complex design may be required. Different photographs of a building that represents a historical theme may also be used on the banners, but it was discussed that a standardized design and text could also be utilized. Bozeman, MT was referenced as an example to view potential banner design ideas.

The banners would be placed only within the boundaries of the planned historic district. It is anticipated that the new banners would replace the existing 150th Anniversary banners and the HPC banners would be included in a rotational basis with other entities/event banners within the downtown area.

Commissioner Sakariassen has finished drafting text information for the brochures of the Highland Acres walking/driving tour maps. Staff has created maps that may be used for portions of the tour in the brochure. Staff is still compiling photos to attach to various text portions of the brochures. The information will all be sent to the printing company, who will then place the items into the draft brochure layout, and the HPC will be able to review the proposed brochure. The State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND) will also have to review and approve the brochure before any printing can be done. A budget of \$3,000 has been allocated for the brochures.

2024 HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANT UPDATE

Ms. Oster stated requests for proposals for the South Capitol Survey opened January 14th, 2025 and will close on February 21, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. The proposed consultant selection will be presented at the next HPC meeting in March. The selected consultant and their proposal will need to be approved by the City Commission as well. If all is approved, work on this survey can tentatively commence in mid-May 2025. Staff recommends the HPC provide direction as to who

will participate in the selection committee for this and recommends the following be included: Planning Manager, Daniel Nairn, Staff Coordinator for the HPC, Lauren Oster, and Commissioner Swanson, who has background in architecture, review proposals for the South Capitol Survey. Commissioner Sakariassen has recused herself from being involved in this selection. Chair Engel can also serve as a reviewer and as of now has no knowledge of any conflicts. If a conflict is found, she will recuse herself and Commissioner Hull will serve as a reviewer.

Four subcommittee meetings have been held so far for the local history education resources project between 2024 and 2025. Based on discussion and experience provided by subcommittee members, it was determined that two education resource kits will be created. One will focus on the fourth grade and one will focus on the eighth grade. The kits will not be limited to these grades only and other members of the community will be able to use them as well. A general topic of the Great Depression in Bismarck from the 1930s-pre-World War II will guide the creation of each kit's resources. Additional information pertaining to this project will be presented to the HPC as work progresses.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH IDEAS

May is Historic Preservation Month. It was established in 1973 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and provides an avenue to promote historic places, events, and activities for the purpose of instilling national, regional and local community pride by promoting heritage tourism and highlighting the social and economic benefits of historic preservation to the community. A review of events the HPC hosted, or partnered with other agencies, last year was presented. Ideas were discussed on how the HPC can be involved again this year, including promoting literature written by Bismarck residents. Other ideas included presenting information that provides historic preservation ideas, or Bismarck's history, through a series of social media posts; holding a preservation scavenger hunt highlighting locations, objects and people similar to what was offered as part of the sesquicentennial celebration; how-to workshops that could include topics like weatherization or window, door, or siding repairs to historic properties; partnering with other local historic preservation groups on activities, events, or projects; creating coloring pages of historic properties with fun facts attached to them; or hosting a history documentary movie night.

Staff requests the HPC give direction on how they would like to celebrate Historic Preservation Month so that adequate time is available to coordinate possible volunteers or partnerships with other agencies in activities and locations for set-up and execution of planned activities. Trivia at Laughing Sun was well received in 2024 and the Bismarck Historical Society plans to host a Founder's Day trivia event this year as well. Ms. Oster has a meeting already scheduled with them regarding other topics and can inquire about the HPC partnering with them with their event this year at the meeting. Commissioner Sakariassen stated several Bismarck residents have been published and she will reach out to the Bismarck Veteran's Memorial Public Library regarding posting or sharing a list of authors, and their works with their patrons, as well as the possibility of a display of books within the library. Discussion ensued on creating a display in the entryway cases of the Bismarck Veteran's Public Library, as well as reaching out to Barnes and Noble to see if they would be interested in creating a display of Bismarck authors in May.

Commissioner Hull stated the Former Governor's Mansion is always looking for ways to boost visitor numbers and they may be interested in a partnership with the HPC in hosting a workshop

regarding window and door repair on historic properties. He will reach out to an indirect connection with the State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND).

Commissioner Nodland would volunteer the month display again. She believes this would be a fairly easy way to promote historical preservation as the information is already available and using the website would cast a wide reach. Regarding local authors, Commissioner Sakariassen suggested blowing up some book covers to be framed or placed on an easel as it would be a relatively cost-effective way to promote literature in a visual format. Commissioner Nodland also stated that the Bismarck Historical Society has been working on history documentaries and has recorded some additional family histories. It would be worth reaching out to them to see how the HPC can assist in continuing to promote past as well as new episodes.

Ms. Oster will create a list of all activities so that the HPC can promote not only their events, but also the events of the Bismarck Historical Society and other groups during May.

The HPC discussed different walking tours and Ms. Oster feels attendance would be popular if the HPC were to create and host a tour this year.

Chair Engel stated that at a subcommittee meeting for the plan, an idea came up for May 2026 regarding having a Historical Preservation Event. As it would be larger, it does require more planning, but would have the capacity to include many different booths and groups. Some examples include weatherization, genealogy, or panel discussions. It could be called a Preservation Fair and include many entities involved in all different aspects of historic preservation.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Oster did provide Talking Trail engagement numbers from beginning 2022 to end of year 2024. Rates have risen from 99 to 319 and does include website interactions. It is noted website interactions may include more than one interaction, but only one interaction can be logged at a time. This also includes the mobile app and the dial-in option. Also, interactions for specific points are tracked. The Prince Hotel had the most interactions, followed by the Bismarck Rail Depot and the Patterson Hotel.

Talking Trail staff reiterated to Ms. Oster they are currently working with other clients to create a more formal brochure as they do see an increase in usage numbers if a brochure is available. They do charge \$350 for the design of the brochure but that does not include the cost to print the brochure. The client would be responsible for distribution of any brochure created. This can be accomplished by providing brochures in a similar fashion as others the HPC has, handing them out at events, or using the rack system the State of North Dakota has with other brochures. It would be a Talking Trail brochure of the Bismarck Talking Trail points. This was presented to the HPC for information purposes only and if the HPC would like to have a brochure in the future to be cognizant there will be additional costs associated.

The Northern Plains National Heritage Area has created postcards, including a QR code link to the Bismarck Talking Trail app, and has included the HPC's Talking Trail locations. This may also be another option to engage the public and promote interest in the history of Bismarck.

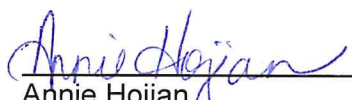
The next renewal point for Talking Trail resource will be at the beginning of 2026. When previously renewed, it was done for a two year term, including 2024 and 2025. This cost for this is \$1,200 per year. It was previously funded by remaining 2022 Historic Preservation Fund Grant funds. It is possible there may be 2023 Historic Preservation Fund Grant funds and 2024 Historic Preservation Fund Grant funds remaining to finance this starting in 2026. As of now, there are no funds budgeted for this in the 2025 Historic Preservation Fund Grant Application and no revisions can be made as the application has been already submitted. Funds allocated for the Cathedral Area and Downtown walking tour maps has not been fully used and it is possible the HPC can utilize those funds for this projected expense for the 2026 year. Then, when re-applying for grant funding for 2027 expenses, this can be included in the new grant request.

Commissioner Sakariassen did state the HPC should be cognizant of reductions in federal funding. It would be beneficial to reach out to the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Office to have an occasional update and find out how this is/will affect them, and in turn, any funds that may be utilized to help the HPC. The HPC would then have time to find appropriate funding sources for projects.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Engel declared the meeting of the Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission adjourned at 3:45 p.m. to meet again on March 19, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room.

Respectfully Submitted,


Annie Hojian
Recording Secretary


Damita Engel
Chair