

**BISMARCK HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 18, 2024**

The Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission met on Wednesday, September 18, 2024, 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. Chair Sakariassan presided.

Commissioners present were Damita Engel, Tory Jackson, Beth Nodland, Scooter Pursley, and John Swanson.

Commissioner Greg Zenker was not present.

Staff members present were Annie Hojian – Office Assistant, Sandra Bogaczyk – Office Assistant, Lauren Oster – Planner and Stephanie Pretzer – Assistant City Attorney.

Guest present was Aaron Barth – Executive Director, Northern Plains Heritage Foundation and Fort Abraham Lincoln Foundation.

Present via zoom was Rowena DeFato – Regional Environmental Officer, Seattle Regional Office, Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce.

MINUTES

Chair Sakariassan called for consideration of the minutes of the July 17, 2024, and August 21, 2024, meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Pursley to approve the minutes of the July 17, 2024, meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Swanson and with Commissioners Engel, Jackson, Nodland, and Chair Sakariassan voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Engel to approve the minutes of the August 21, 2024, meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jackson and with Commissioners Nodland, Pursley, Swanson and Chair Sakariassan voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Sakariassan asked if there were any public comments.

There being no public comments, Chair Sakariassan resumed the meeting.

SECTION 106 REVIEW – 1600 RIVER ROAD

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) has been notified by the Northern Plains Heritage Foundation (NPHF) of the proposed project at 1600 River Rd. Ms. Oster stated the proposed project would renovate Bismarck's Keelboat Park and boat ramp and transform it into the

Bismarck Riverfront Park and Festival Grounds. The City of Bismarck has been part of the planning process for this endeavor since approximately 2022. The NPHF and the Fort Abraham Lincoln Foundation (FALF) are co-applicants of an Economic Development Administrative (EDA) EDGE grant, and the EDA has designated the NPHF as the EDA's non-federal representative, for the purpose of consulting with interested parties, such as the Bismarck Certified Local Government (CLG). A map and two letters are attached as part of this review. The HPC reviews all Section 106 review projects submitted to the City of Bismarck for evaluation and comment. The HPC evaluates the proposed project and provides a recommendation to the submitting agency and State Historic Preservation Office. During the review, the HPC may also provide comments regarding the identification of historic sites, effects to historic sites and ways to mitigate or avoid adverse effects to historic sites.

Staff recommends commission review submitted documents for Section 106 for review, the proposed project, and provide comments and recommendations on it.

INTRODUCTION TO AARON BARTH – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NORTHERN PLAINS HERITAGE FOUNDATION (NPHF) AND FORT ABRAHAM LINCOLN FOUNDATION (FALF).

Mr. Barth confirmed letters did go out August 30, 2024 to tribal historic preservation offices.

Chair Sakariassan asked if any proposed mitigation or monitoring is anticipated. Mr. Barth is a permitted architectural historian, and historian through the State Historic Preservation Office, and is also overseeing this project. This is a known place of “pre-history” for traditional gardens of Mandan, Hidatsa and First Peoples, as well as a known place for the steamboat warehouse. Monitoring would be appropriate to preserve the history of the area.

Commissioner Nodland asked what the role of the HPC was and stated she does not feel HPC is in a current position to make an approval, as questions arise as to what historic preservation has been done in this area, if any, and is the information available. Mr. Barth stated a preliminary Class I file search has been done by Deirdre Bostyan with Metcalf Archeological Consultants. Commissioner Engel recused herself as she participated in the Class I file search. Mr. Barth will follow up with a catalog of results from Metcalf Archeological Consultants.

Chair Sakariassan believes HPC role is to comment and make recommendations. HPC recommends keeping in touch and opportunities to explore interpretation of the site going forward. HPC would like to continue to be involved in adding any possible relevance to the project. Mr. Barth proposed bringing updates according to a schedule of upcoming commission meetings.

Commissioner Nodland requested built in, designated funding for study and research to be conducted at the start of the proposed project, and throughout the project, rather than hoping funds are still available at the end of the project. It is unknown what the funding may be at this time. She also requested of the built environment have interpretation, regarding the history of Bismarck's steamboat and ferry. Commissioner Nodland expressed concern for the keelboat that is currently located in the park. Although the keelboat is a replica and less than 50 years old, it is the only visual, interpretive item in the area. There are few dramatic, physical examples of a previous time in Bismarck's history and a plaque does not generate the same physical expression or engagement with the public. Discussion ensued on traditional means being utilized or new digital platforms being incorporated with traditional interpretive things.

Chair Sakariassan stated research and history into the First Peoples would also be done and included in the interpretation of the site. She feels this would be a great opportunity for HPC to recommend interpretive information to be included in this project, as it develops, and would be a positive way to bring the past into people's minds. HPC will be kept apprised of developments and information gathered through other parts of the 106 process. HPC would make recommendations to ensure the history of the space is being incorporated with its contemporary and planned use.

Commissioner Pursley reminded all that this area has been paved over for some time. Chair Sakariassan did not recall anything specifically in the past where a lot of studies have been done; due to the fact that there has not been a project that has been disruptive enough, or included federal monies, however, now that opportunity is available. Mr. Barth stated that possibilities are open regarding interpretation and studies and limited only to funding and materials.

Commissioner Jackson questioned where this project is at currently. Mr. Barth stated this project is a multi-jurisdictional location. Due to this, many agencies are involved and the project is progressing at a reduced pace. Current permitting layers are in various stages. Due to The Department of Commerce stating a 106 needs to be started, Mr. Barth is still awaiting information.

Commissioner Pursley inquired about the proposed buildings to be placed in the park. Mr. Barth stated two buildings will be available for all 12 months for activities, including public restrooms, and also a storage building for seasonal items. It is a goal that one building be for rented community space and another separate building for administration and information regarding events. It was confirmed this is only a riverfront park and festival grounds. There is another site being looked at for a future amphitheater, and still another for hotel and commercial properties. Lands would be owned/overseen by non-profits and be on City of Bismarck lands or if a land transfer continues, it would go to FALF for review.

Due to the need for utilities to be placed at the park, deep trenching will offer some opportunities for excavation, research, and historical studies. Gabe Schell, City Engineer, has reviewed the footprint of the buildings and it is found that the current lift station nearby can handle the increased load.

Questions arose regarding the existing Grant Marsh Bridge, Interstate-94, and possible relocation of the bridge or future roadways. The ND Department of Transportation has been contacted regarding this concern and as of now, no information is available for future roadway projects in this location.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Barth for appearing.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Nodland to draft a letter from the HPC to NPHF, approving of the proposed project and ongoing monitoring/mitigation efforts by HPC, to include historical interpretation to the built site throughout the project, with assistance/recommendation from staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Swanson. Commissioner Engel recused herself from this vote. With Commissioners Jackson, Pursley, and Chair Sakariassan voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved.

2024 HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANT UPDATE

Staff has been working with Amy Munson from the state Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND) regarding the CLG conference October 7th. Invitations have been sent and an RSVP is requested by September 27, 2024. Rather than a poster, a five minute update from each CLG will be presented at the request of the NDSHS. Staff is working on getting small conference bags with brochures and information to CLG and NDSHS. Commissioners Engel and Pursley will speak at the conference.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD

Staff was requested to work with Commissioner Pursley and Commissioner Swanson at the July HPC meeting, with regard to reworking the guidelines and nomination form for a potential Historic Preservation Award. This meeting was held August 16, 2024.

A potential timeline for implementing this award was established. Eligible projects must be completed by December 31 of the previous year and an eligible project would need to have been completed within the last three years. Three categories for the award were established: building or site, education, and public awareness. Eligible projects would be evaluated based on how well the project demonstrated historic or architectural significance and how well they aligned with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. This is fairly common amongst other community's preservation awards that focus on this type. Eligible projects submitted under the education category would be evaluated based on how well the project increased the knowledge about Bismarck's history and/or historic preservation. Examples could include events, such a public lecture, or include educational institutions or programs. It could also include those individuals in the community that have gone out of their way to document history and provide that knowledge through different means to the public. Eligible projects submitted under the public awareness category will be evaluated based on how the project provided awareness about Bismarck's history and/or it's historic preservation efforts. This would be directed towards resources that provide awareness such as historic markers, brochures, pamphlets, arts and culture that provide awareness to difficulties or achievements regarding historic preservation.

The format of the award was discussed, and it was decided that it should be brought to the full commission for further discussion. Potential funding for the award could be included in yearly CLG grants. Staff recommended two actions. The first is for HPC to review the updated draft nomination form and guidelines. The second is to determine the format of the award.

Chair Sakariassan requested artwork to be included as an eligible submission under an educational project. Commissioner Swanson requested "craftsman" to be included under building or site.

Commissioner Nodland requested a deadline for submissions be imposed. March 30 at 5:00 pm was proposed, with instructions on how to submit. Ms. Oster stated a form will be made available on the City of Bismarck website and will follow other groups' nomination forms.

Commissioners selected to serve on this committee would be selected at the beginning of the year, when the form opened, and could change every year if needed. Discussion occurred regarding whether nominations should be reviewed by the full HPC or a subcommittee. It was determined a subcommittee should be created to review submissions. They would then present their recommendations to the full HPC for consideration.

Discussion occurred on award limitations. It was determined that the award goes to the most deserving with no limits placed on who/how many times someone can win. An example of Grand Forks' Historic Preservation Commission award was provided. Criteria includes very vague language as to how the nominees have enhanced or participated in historic preservation. HPC determined leaving language more open to interpretation and less restrictive would encourage more participation.

Determining the winner will be very subjective, with no metric put in place, however nominations themselves should adequately demonstrate why they should be considered for the award.

Commissioner Nodland requested all nominees to be recognized somehow in order to promote interest. Ms. Oster stated Fargo does provide a map of nominees/sites. Chair Nodland would like the nominee to have the choice to opt out if they so choose.

Discussion ensued as to how the award will look. A certificate, with a plaque and name plate added yearly as well as a digital certificate to be developed for addition to websites for non-profits and businesses, was suggested. Ms. Oster will speak with Ben Ehreth, Community Development Director, regarding placement of the proposed plaque outside Community Development offices. Due to a city/county shared building, another location within the city may be selected.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Swanson that the guidelines discussed, including additions of art and craftsman to be added as eligible submissions, be adopted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Engel and with Commissioners Jackson, Nodland, Pursley and Chair Sakariassan voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Nodland that the award be given in the form of a physical certificate and a digital certificate, with the option of a single plaque that be can updated annually with staff assistance. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pursley and with Commissioners Engel, Jackson, Nodland, Swenson and Chair Sakariassan voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved.

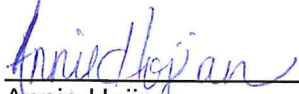
OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Engel updated the commission regarding the subcommittee's meeting last week. They developed a "threat list" with endangered areas that may be subject to more teardowns. There may be some survey work to be done in those areas in future years. No raw survey data has been processed as of yet. Commissioner Engel has half of the RFP drafted for the upcoming survey and it will be sent to Commissioner Nodland for her review. It will be presented to HPC next month for review.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Sakariassan declared the meeting of the Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission adjourned at 4:25 p.m. to meet again on October 16, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room.

Respectfully Submitted,



Annie Hojian
Recording Secretary



Amy Sakariassan
Chair