

BISMARCK HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

September 17, 2025

The Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission met on Wednesday, September 17, 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, Scooter Pursley, Amy Sakariassen John Swanson, Greg Zenker, and Chair Damita Engel.

Staff members present were Annie Hojian – Office Assistant, Daniel Nairn – Acting Community Development Director, Lauren Oster – Planner, and Joshua Jyring – Assistant City Attorney.

MEETING INFORMATION

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made or submitted for the current agenda or prior August 20, 2025, agenda. Chair Engel closed the public comment period.

MINUTES

Chair Engel called for consideration of the minutes of the August 20, 2025, meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Zenker to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2025 meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sakariassen and with Commissioners Hull, Nodland, Pursley, Sakariassen, Swanson, Zenker and Chair Engel voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved.

2024 HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANT UPDATE

Ms. Oster provided an update for the Local History Education Resources Project under the 2024 Historic Preservation Fund Grant. The last update on this project was provided in February 2025 at the regular meeting. The overarching topic of the kits is the Great Depression in North Dakota, with two kits being created, one for K-5th grade and the other 6th-12th grade. Subcommittee work is still ongoing for this project and commissioners had no comments or suggestions to share at this time.

2025 HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANT UPDATE

Ms. Oster provided an update on the 2025 Historic Preservation Fund Grant. The City of Bismarck was awarded \$34,790 in funding from the 2025 Historic Preservation Fund Grant to perform a Downtown District Survey as well as finalize the Historic Preservation Plan. A minimum match of \$23,193 is required with donated labor being eligible. Commissioners will need to review items outside of the regular commission meetings and this time can be used for labor match calculations. Commissioners are asked to keep track of their review time. The goal of the Downtown District

Survey is to review and update properties within the current boundary of the Downtown Historic District, as well as conduct a survey of properties surrounding that boundary, including those properties south of the railroad tracks. City Staff anticipates setting up a meeting with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to discuss the request for funds (RFP) and what the project would include, including a timeline for the project. To stay on track with the tentative timeline, staff plans to include a draft RFP for the October 15, 2025, Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) meeting for commissioners' review. Staff recommends commissioners determine who will assist in drafting the RFP and suggests no more than two commissioners.

Commissioner Engel asked for clarification on the total number of properties to be assessed. Ms. Oster informed commissioners that the 151 properties is based on the current parcel data, however based on discussions with the state going into the RFP, it may be adjusted based on costs. Commissioner Engel also asked for clarification on the budget table and determining a consultant's scope of work as she wants to ensure the consultant is doing both the site forms and the updates and the HPC is just doing review. Ms. Oster confirmed this. Commissioner Engel also asked if the consultant will be asked to attend any meetings, as with a Class III Evaluation, this is not usually done. She found this to be very helpful when South Fork Historical Research was present at the August 20, 2025, meeting. Attendance at a meeting(s) was expressly in the contract with South Fork Historical Research. Ms. Oster stated that the way the reconnaissance is currently being conducted, a consultant may attend some meetings if requested, but it would be based on the scope of work detailed in their contract, as well as the RFP that would be provided. Commissioner Engel and Commissioner Pursley volunteered to work on the RFP.

Commissioner Hull asked for clarification regarding the decision on where to draw the boundary line for the expanded survey area. He is concerned about expending resources on properties, such as a parking garage, where potentially nothing of value will come from researching the property. Ms. Oster explained that while they did want to create a broad scope to encompass as many properties as possible, it was with the understanding some properties may be exempt on a case-by-case basis.

At the last meeting, commissioners requested an update on the progress of the Historic Preservation Plan. As a reminder, the most recent subcommittee was created in 2024 to finalize the work previously conducted on this plan. Recent work has included the creation of an Implementation Table for the goals and objectives, inclusion of the Threats to Historic Resources section, and editing to the previous plan. Work will begin on the digital copy at the next scheduled subcommittee meeting on October 9, 2025. Staff recommend the HPC provide comments or suggestions on the plan or the project timeline.

Commissioners discussed the items on the Implementation Table and determined commissioners should review goals and objectives, evaluate and assign a priority level, and add/delete any information prior to a final draft and printing. Commissioner Zenker stated this could be accomplished at the next, or a future meeting, during the meeting rather than a separate meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Oster gave an update regarding the 250th Anniversary of the U.S. Staff and Commissioners Hull and Pursley met with members of the Bismarck Historical Society and staff from the Bismarck City Administration on September 15, 2025, to begin discussing the celebratory efforts for the 250th anniversary. Discussion revolved around events and activities potentially utilizing funding from the North Dakota 250 Community Initiatives Grant. Ideas included a story walk

component utilizing portions from the Bismarck Timeline and the information that is already available can be updated as necessary to accommodate the overarching 250th history of the U.S. This could be accomplished through a display for events throughout the next year, potentially at the Bismarck Event Center. Other ideas were to host a symposium, or Chautauqua, creating educational cards, similar to trading cards, utilizing portions of the Bismarck Timeline. This could create an opportunity to hand out educational material during the 4th of July *Red, White and Boom* event that is held at the Bismarck Community Bowl. Staff will verify with the state if this would be an eligible expense for an educational material item. The Bismarck Timeline could also be reframed and turned into a short history series, potentially utilizing Dakota Media Access. The discussion involved identifying how the city should be involved, and one idea was that instead of applying for the funds itself, the City could support other groups in the community who would be applying for grant funding and assistance with those associated historical narratives or information.

Another idea included having the city apply for a specific project, and other community organizations applying for their own, but combining the various projects to be cohesive. The group included having City staff reach out to other groups in the community to gain knowledge of anything they may be planning for next year and determining if there is potential to tie those projects together. The Bismarck Historical Society is going to verify with their board what they'd like to do, and they will give staff an update. Staff reached out to several sign companies regarding the story walk display to see the different sign materials and options that could be utilized. Staff is researching potential funding options for the trading cards. The group, the City of Bismarck and the State Historical Society, would apply for the grant funds from the North Dakota 250 Community Initiatives Grant, however it would be submitted for the next review cycle which begins January 1st. This allows some time for the city to bring it to this board if they'd like to apply for grant funding, as well as obtain city commission approval as needed. The National Endowment for the Humanities Celebrate America Grant has extensive application requirements and due to this, application for these grant funds may be a secondary option and would be dependent on funds not being available, or not received from the state grant, or if the project's proposed budget be higher than anticipated, expenses could be covered under the state.

Commissioner Sakariassen received a phone call from Jan Webb with the Bismarck Art & Galleries Association (BAGA) requesting a meeting to see if the HPC would be interested in developing an exhibit at BAGA using the funds available with the North Dakota 250 Community Initiatives Grant. It was suggested an exhibit of artwork, or photographs related to Bismarck, encompassing buildings or architectural details or people and somehow tying art and the community together. Commissioner Sakariassen will meet with Ms. Webb and bring any information discussed to the HPC at the next meeting. It is anticipated BAGA would write the grant and the HPC would be involved with planning and advisement of subject material. Commissioner Hull asked if BAGA would be interested in any display that is created being moved to another location upon the end of the exhibit, much like the proposed signage for the story walk moving to the Bismarck Event Center.

Commissioner Pursley stated the HPC could do letters of recommendation to attach to other groups' grant applications, or create as many community partnerships as possible, rather than the HPC themselves applying for grant funds.

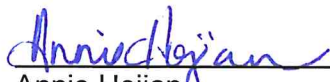
Commissioner Swanson suggested the HPC send out congratulatory letters to property owners that have had their properties listed on the National Register. It could also apply when a district is nominated.

ADJOURNMENT

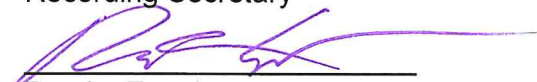
There being no further business, Chair Engel declared the meeting of the Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission adjourned at 3:52 p.m. to meet again on October 15, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REPORTS

Respectfully Submitted,



Annie Hojian
Recording Secretary



Damita Engel
Chair