

**BISMARCK HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 20, 2024**

The Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission met on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room in the City-County Office Building, 221 North 5<sup>th</sup> 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 Sakariassen presided.

Commissioners present were Michael Connelly, Beth Nodland, Scooter Pursley, Amy Sakariassen and John Swanson.

Commissioners not present were Damita Engel and Tory Jackson.

Staff members present were Sandra Bogaczyk – Office Assistant, Ben Ehreth – Community Development Director, Daniel Nairn – Planning Manager, Lauren Oster – Planner, Stephanie Pretzer – Assistant City Attorney and Steve Salwei, Public Works Service Operations Director.

Guests present were Thomas J. Turck and Lorna Meidinger – SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) and Emily Sakariassen – South Fork Historical Research and Board Member of the Bismarck Historical Society.

## **MINUTES**

Chair Sakariassen called for consideration of the minutes of the February 21, 2024, meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission.

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

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Sakariassen asked if there were any public comments.

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

## **INTRODUCTION TO STEVEN SALWEI AND PUBLIC WORKS SERVICE OPERATIONS DIVISION**

Chair Sakariassen welcomed Mr. Salwei who introduced himself and presented to the Commission what Public Works Service Operations is and does and how his department might work with the Historic Preservation Commission in the future.

There was discussion about how the Commission could have helped resolve problems with the Cathedral District trees had they been contacted before utility companies became involved.

Ms. Nodland requested that Historic Preservation Commission be contacted when ground disturbance is projected so members can help.

Suggestions were made about how the Commission and Public Works Operations could work together for the benefit of the community.

## **NRHP NOMINATION REVIEW – HIGHLAND ACRES HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARY INCREASE**

Ms. Oster summarized the history, progress and current status of the nomination of Highland Acres Historic District Boundary Increase.

Ms. Nodland asked if National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) solicited for public comment like it did when the City requested historic recognition of Highland Acres. Ms. Meidinger stated that because this request was solicited by a private citizen and not a public entity her office would not request additional public comment outside of the normal review process. She further explained NRHP's remaining process. She mentioned that the public can follow the process at [history@nd.gov](mailto:history@nd.gov).

Mr. Connelly requested that NRHP please list [history@nd.gov](mailto:history@nd.gov) on the City website. Ms. Meidinger and staff agreed to post to the website.

There was discussion about what meets and does not meet criteria for designating a building to be a significant historic building.

Chair Sakariassen stated that she found the request justified given the neighborhood feeling that has historically been understood in the area surrounding Highland Acres.

Ms. Meidinger stated that the Secretary of State determines if federal monies can be used.

Mr. Pursley asked for clarification of integrity issues mentioned in the NRHP report. Ms. Meidinger explained that any structure built outside of the dates mentioned in the original historical designation request would not be included as part of the boundary due to its historical insignificance given the dates of the original request.

There was discussion about the history of covenants and their enforcement and the distinction between the boundaries of the historic district and the recognition of significant structures within the historic district. Ms. Meidinger stated that the covenants are separate from NRHP parameters.

There was discussion about sidewalks in the historic district. Mr. Ehreth stated that the City Commission decided not to pursue the installation of sidewalks but at future commissions that could possibly change.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Nodland to approve that staff prepare a letter highlighting the Historic Preservation Commission's support of the nomination and include the following:

1. the role of accessory dwelling units

2. the criteria of non-contributing structures
3. the process for property owners to inquire about their property's integrity to support potential nomination to the National Register

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Connelly and with Commissioners Connelly, Nodland, Pursley, Swanson and Chair Sakariassen voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved.

## **QUESTIONS ABOUT BELLE MEHUS REHABILITATION**

There was discussion about the history of the rehabilitation project at the Belle Mehus Auditorium. Chair Sakariassen requested that NRHP provide updates or include the Historic Preservation Commission in further actions and requests regarding alterations within the building. Ms. Meidinger described her experience working on the project and Chair Sakariassen stated that members appreciate her work and judgement on the project.

Chair Sakariassen asked Ms. Meidinger for some context of the renovations planned for the Provident Building which is in the Downtown Historical District. Ms. Meidinger listed various people involved in discussions about a renovation of the building and stated that no updated plans have been submitted. She mentioned that SHPO has stated that the beacon on top of the building is historically significant and is a key feature of the building.

There was discussion about keeping or removing the revolving doors.

Ms. Meidinger stated that any public building, including the Provident Building, could be nominated to be listed as historically significant by any member of the public because the manager of the building is considered a caretaker of the building, not an owner of the building.

Ms. Meidinger offered a contact for commissioners to communicate with about any future building renovations.

## **DOWNTOWN BISMARCK ARTIFACTS**

Ms. Oster stated that construction and cultural resources fieldwork was conducted in six blocks of downtown Bismarck within the Bismarck Downtown Historic District and named the associated funding. She further described the methodology, locations and history of the area, as included in the memorandum in the agenda packet, and described artifacts found in the fieldwork. Ms. Oster stated how and where the artifacts are currently and temporarily being stored and asked commissioners to provide direction about what to do with the artifacts.

Ms. Oster stated that Ms. Engel was the principal investigator on this project and would be the contact regarding any aspect of the collection.

Ms. Nodland volunteered and asked for assistance to create an exhibit for a window display located downtown in conjunction with Historic Preservation Month for May, 2024, and then for permanent display at the SHPO.

There was discussion about where to contain and how to preserve and present the artifacts.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Connelly to have staff inquire with the State Historical Society to determine if they have any interest in the artifacts and if duplicates exist, those be reserved for another purpose. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Swanson and with Commissioners Connelly, Nodland, Pursley, Swanson and Chair Sakariassen voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Swanson to approve that Historic Preservation Commission members prepare an exhibit for Historical Prevention Month focusing on downtown history to be displayed in a downtown business window. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pursley and with Commissioners Connelly, Nodland, Pursley, Swanson and Chair Sakariassen voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved.

### **2022 HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANT UPDATE**

Ms. Oster reminded members of the progress made in creating street banners for the Highland Acres Historical District and what actions remain to be determined.

There was discussion about the design, size and height of the banners.

Ms. Nodland asked staff if it is possible to extend the deadline to determine the final design. Ms. Oster stated that another month could be used for this determination.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Swanson to approve Commissioner Swanson working with a designer at Indigo Signs to refine a banner design. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nodland and with Commissioners Connelly, Nodland, Pursley, Swanson and Chair Sakariassen voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved.

Staff agreed to provide the sign company contact to Mr. Swanson.

### **2023 HISTORIC PRESERVATION GRANT UPDATE**

There was discussion about how to use any remaining funds.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Nodland to approve the use of any remaining funds to print additional Bismarck Timeline books. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Connelly and with Commissioners Connelly, Nodland, Pursley, Swanson and Chair Sakariassen voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved.

There was a consensus to send Ms. Engel and Mr. Pursley with staff to Florida for a professional development conference.

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION GUIDE FOR NEIGHBORHOOD REINVESTMENT INITIATIVE**

Ms. Oster stated, as noted in the agenda packet, that commissioners were asked to help create an historic preservation information guide to help support Bismarck's Neighborhood

Reinvestment Initiative whose goal is to provide information to community members about preservation and rehabilitation.

There was consensus that members loved the initiative and agreed to support.

There was discussion about various aspects of the draft document included in the agenda packet including using local images and Chair Sakariassen thanked staff for the super job achieved in creating the draft.

Mr. Connelly suggested appending the document to City's website. Ms. Oster stated that it will be accessible on the Neighborhood Reinvestment Initiative (NRI) web pages, currently being reorganized.

Chair Sakariassen reiterated that there is a consensus that the document is acceptable.

### **UPCOMING HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH**

Ms. Oster reminded members that May is Historic Preservation Month and, as stated in the agenda packet, this event promotes historic places, events and activities for the purpose of instilling national, regional, and local community pride and awareness of historic preservation.

There was discussion about various possible actions members could take to promote Historic Preservation Month including but not limited to an exhibit, a National Guard presentation, walking tours of historical districts, identifying examples of good rehabilitation practices in historical districts and creating a proclamation for City Commission.

Ms. Nodland and Chair Sakariassen asked if the Bismarck Historical Society has any additional information

Ms. Emily Sakariassen stated that Founders Day falls in May and stated that the Bismarck Historical Society is holding a fundraiser and trivia night at Laughing Sun Brewery on May 13, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. to raise awareness of Bismarck history and her organization. She asked members to support that event or build a team if interested and said that any partnership between their organizations would be welcomed.

Staff suggested members make a proclamation of the Historic Preservation Commission plan for Historic Preservation Month by next regular meeting so that it could be announced at City Commission in a timely manner.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Nodland to develop a plan for events and activities in observance of Historic Preservation Month. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pursley and with Commissioners Connelly, Nodland, Pursley, Swanson and Chair Sakariassen voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Swanson asked if a City director was on the agenda to appear next month. Ms. Oster stated that there is a speaker tentatively scheduled. Mr. Swanson asked if a representative from the Downtown Design Review Committee could present their activities. Mr. Nairn stated

that Chair Christianson could be asked to present. There was consensus that members would like to invite Chair Christianson to present board activities for the Downtown Design Review Committee.

Ms. Oster stated that the Historic Preservation Survey to gauge citizens' interest in historic preservation is available on-line on the City's webpage at [bismarcknd.gov](http://bismarcknd.gov) and at Dakota Media Access until May 8, 2024. When asked, she stated that over 60 responses have already been made.

## ADJOURNMENT

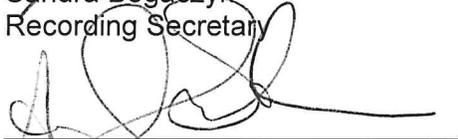
There being no further business, Chair Sakariassen declared the meeting of the Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission adjourned at 5:22 p.m. to meet again on April 17, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Sandra Bogaczyk  
Recording Secretary



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Amy Sakariassen  
Chair