



MINUTES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION - REGULAR SESSION THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2025, 5:00 PM

The Historic Preservation Commission convened in regular session at 5:01 PM, March 20, 2025. Chair Sarah Lindenbaum called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Greg Koos	Commissioner	Present
Paul Scharnett	Commission Vice Chair	Present
Sarah Lindenbaum	Commission Chair	Present
Dawn Peters	Commissioner	Present
Mark Adams	Commissioner	Present
Emma Meyer	Commissioner	Present
John Elterich	Commissioner	Present

City Staff present included: Jon Branham, City Planner; Alissa Pemberton, City Planner; John Myers, Assistant City Planner.

Public Comment

No public comment was provided.

Consent Agenda

Items listed on the Consent Agenda are approved with one motion; Items pulled from the Consent Agenda for discussion are listed and voted on separately.

Commissioner Elterich made a motion, seconded by Commission Vice Chair Scharnett, to approve the consent agenda as presented.

AYES: Lindenbaum; Scharnett; Koos; Peters; Elterich; Meyer; Adams

Motion carried (viva voce).

Item 4.A. Review and approval of the minutes of the November 21, 2024, regular meeting of the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission.

Regular Agenda

The following item was presented:

Item 5.A. **BHP -02-25** - Consideration, review and action on a request submitted by Jim Neeley, for a **Certificate of Appropriateness** for planter box replacement on the property located at 33 Sunset Road, PIN 14-34-402-016.

Ms. Pemberton presented the staff report, with recommendation for approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness, as presented. She noted the Applicant was in attendance.

Commissioner Koos asked about the material composition and Neely explained they would use leftover stone from the recent rebuild of the accent wall along the front porch. The historical context of the planter box was discussed, noting that original photos didn't show a planter box, but one had been added over time. The Applicant confirmed the proposed structure is a hardscaping feature and will not be connected to the main structure.

There was some discussion about whether the review for a Certificate of Appropriateness was strictly necessary. Ms. Pemberton explained she felt it was appropriate given the historic significance of the property's landscaping as one of the called-out features in the Designating Ordinance.

Commissioner Peters made a motion, seconded by Commission Vice Chair Scharnett, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness, as presented.

Chair Lindenbaum directed the clerk to call roll:

AYES: Lindenbaum; Scharnett; Koos; Peters; Elterich; Meyer; Adams

Motion passed.

Old Business

The following item was presented:

Item 6.A. Update on downtown fire suppression status research (Downtown Streetscape Phase 1+)

John Myers provided an update on the Downtown Streetscape project. He reported that infrastructure mapping of Phases 1-6 and Phase 9 are completed, with Phases 7, 8, and 10 partially done. The key findings from the project include:

- 53% of downtown buildings have residential units
- 81% of buildings lack fire suppression
- 84 buildings do not have fire suppression
- Most water service lines are two inches in diameter

The update highlighted significant infrastructure and safety challenges in the downtown area, particularly relating to fire protection and water infrastructure.

Commission Vice Chair Scharnett noted that he met with the Livingston County EDC, who is having a very similar conversation about their fire suppression downtown and is working to develop a matrix for improving building safety without requiring full renovations. The goal is to create a performance compliance path that evaluates buildings based on multiple safety factors like egress capacity, separation components, and life safety features. This

approach would allow buildings to be graded on their overall safety, potentially avoiding the need for complete sprinkler system installations.

Commissioner Koos noted that building codes changed after the Great Bloomington fire, so post-fire buildings may have features that can be identified as intended for fire containment (evaluate for tin ceilings, fire shutters, etc.)

Scharnett noted the process will allow a building to be graded against a rubric, based on how great its egress components are, versus the separation components, versus the sprinklering or other life safety features, and use that “grade” to establish the safety parameters of the building, to try to bring it up to an expected level of compliance. When using these types of compliance pathways, there is an understanding that the fire department takes on a certain amount of risk, the people that are inside the building take on a certain amount of risk, but it is a nominal risk compared to even the most stringent of current buildings. This was used downtown for the Ensenberger Building. The goal is to find a pragmatic way to improve downtown building safety without making renovations prohibitively expensive or impossible for property owners.

After additional discussion, a suggestion was made to ask Staff to investigate the potential of forming a subcommittee with the Building Board of Appeals to develop a local version of the safety matrix, recognizing the need for a nuanced approach that balances historical preservation, safety requirements, and economic feasibility of renovations.

Staff agreed to fact find and report back.

New Business

The following item was presented:

Item 7.A. Discussion and planning for Heritage Awards 2025.

John Myers presented a plan for reinitiating the Heritage Awards, starting in 2025. He asked for the Commission to create an Awards Committee—of two Commission members, to which external parties may be added as appropriate—to review past practices, identify the categories for award going forward, and come up with a timeline and application review process. A slim amount of information is available as to how past awards were solicited, candidates identified, and results tabulated. Multiple unengraved plaques are still available.

Commissioner Chair Lindenbaum made a motion, seconded by Commission Vice Chair Scharnett, to form a two-member Awards Committee.

Chair Lindenbaum directed the clerk to call roll:

AYES: Lindenbaum; Scharnett; Koos; Peters; Elterich; Meyer; Adams

Motion passed.

Commission Vice Chair Scharnett nominated Commissioner Peters. Commissioner Peters nominated Commissioner Meyer. Both nominees accepted the charge.

Ms. Pemberton called for a vote on Commissioner Peters and Commissioner Meyer as the two-member Awards Committee.

AYES: Lindenbaum; Scharnett; Koos; Peters; Elterich; Meyer; Adams

Motion passed (viva voce).

Ms. Pemberton asked that the Committee to meet, discuss, and report back on ideas, needs, and timeline. She explained a potential timeline could be the creation of categories and acceptance of nominations over the summer, then review and award in the fall/winter; this would keep the entire award process in the same fiscal year. In the future, annual HP Month in May could highlight the awardees from the prior year and kick off nominations for the upcoming year.

The following item was presented:

Item 7.B. Presentation and discussion on Lead Based Paint Abatement rules, recommendations, costs, and barriers.

Ms. Pemberton reviewed the City's Lead-Based Paint Abatement Program, focusing on the complexities and challenges of addressing lead hazards in historic properties. She explained there are two different ways to address lead hazards: 1) "Abatement," or removal of the lead itself (extremely expensive and difficult), and 2) "Hazard Abatement," or reducing contact with lead through various methods.

Hazard abatement activities typical include:

- Encapsulation (painting over lead surfaces with a thick, elastomeric coating), or
- Removing and replacing materials on "friction" surfaces like windows and doors, or
- Preventing direct contact with lead-painted surfaces through coverings.

She highlighted the tension between preserving historic architectural details and implementing effective lead mitigation: materials removal can damage historic integrity, encapsulation can obscure original decorative features, replacement windows are often cheaper but destroy architectural character. She explained that full removal can easily cost over \$100,000 for just exterior work, while alternative methods like using specialized jam liners for windows can be twice as expensive as simple replacement due to material quality and labor cost differences. She noted that each property requires a unique, nuanced approach to lead mitigation, highlighting the complexity of managing lead in older buildings.

Commissioner Koos suggested a community-wide approach to lead abatement, potentially involving trade training programs and collaborative solutions. Pemberton agreed, noting

the potential for community education and proactive mitigation strategies. She recommended inviting the new Director of Community Impact & Enhancement (once hired) to join the Commission for a discussion on how efforts and interests might align.

Adjournment

Commission Vice Chair Scharnett made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Elterich, to adjourn the meeting.

AYES: Lindenbaum; Scharnett; Koos; Peters; Elterich; Meyer; Adams

Motion carried (viva voce).

The Meeting Adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON



Sarah Lindenbaum, Chair



Alissa Pemberton, Staff Liaison