

Historic Preservation Commission

Regular Meeting

February 13th, 2025 4:30pm

City of Mankato

Present: Jessica Potter, Tim Pulis, Mary Murray, John Zehnder

Staff: Sydney DePrenger, Bennett Hanson, Mark Konz

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 pm.

Approval of Agenda

Mary Murray moved to approve the agenda; John Zehnder seconded with all in favor.

Approval of Minutes

January 9th, 2025 Minutes:

Tim Pulis moved to approve the January minutes; John Zehnder seconded with all in favor

Old Business

CLG 2025 Grant Update

Today's Action Items:

- *No formal actions were taken by members of the Commission during the meeting.*
- *Sydney DePrenger will provide the CLG 2025 Grant application materials that she intends to submit to SHPO to the Commission on February 14th, 2025.*
- *Commission members will review the grant application materials and provide comments to Sydney DePrenger before Noon on February 18th, 2025.*
- *Sydney DePrenger will submit the final CLG 2025 Grant Application to SHPO on February 19th, 2025.*

Upcoming Action Items:

- *Identify the two locally designated properties to receive Locally Designated Plaques.*
- *Determine approach with Hubbard Mill Heritage Plaque.*
- *Identify alternative properties for Heritage Plaques.*

Minutes:

Sydney DePrenger stated that the 2025 CLG Grant is due the 21st of February. Sydney DePrenger indicated that she will be out of office for the 20 & 21st of February, and will therefore be submitting the grant application prior to the 20th. Sydney DePrenger stated that she submitted the draft application to Michael Koop with SHPO and that Michael had only minor adjustments he wished made to the grant application.

Sydney DePrenger stated that they were able to get the final estimates for the heritage plaques finished and the budget submitted to Michael Koop earlier today (February 13th, 2025). She clarified that Michael Koop had asked for detailed budget information during the initial draft submission and that submitting today allowed him to still review the budget prior to the submission of the final application. She reiterated that her intention would be to submit the final draft on February 19th after minor grammatical edits to the narrative portion of the application.

Jessica Potter recapped Sydney DePrenger's statements and confirmed what was stated.

Mark Konz asked if we had obtained sign-offs from the properties associated with the heritage plaques?

Sydney DePrenger stated that we received permission from Lincoln School for the installation of a heritage plaque on their property. Sydney DePrenger stated that the Hubbard Mill did not give their permission.

Jessica Potter clarified that Lincoln School provided authorization via an email to Sydney DePrenger. Jessica Potter stated that the Hubbard Mill will be up for sale likely by March and therefore the Mill did not want to commit to the plaque's installation as it would occur after sale of the Mill.

Jessica Potter stated that there are three options if we receive full funding: 1) Wait until the grant is awarded and then see where the Mill is with its new ownership. 2) Pick a different site for a heritage plaque and work through that new site. 3) Decline the funds for the second heritage plaque and continue on with Lincoln School.

Jessica Potter stated that if SHPO only provides partial funding, then they would proceed with the heritage plaque for Lincoln School.

Sydney DePrenger stated that the CLG Grant application included a request for funding for two additional Locally Designated Plaques from *Franklin Bronze Plaques*.

Sydney DePrenger stated that they would be awarded the CLG Grant in July, they would then order the plaques in December, followed by a 6-month wait for the plaques to arrive, meaning Spring of 2026.

Jessica Potter asked if the plaque companies provided timeframes for the plaques?

Sydney DePrenger stated that *Sewah Studios*, the provider of the Heritage Plaques, stated six months. Sydney DePrenger stated that *Franklin Bronze Plaques*, the provider of the locally designated plaques, stated 3-4 months.

Sydney DePrenger reiterated that on the timeline she provided to SHPO she has the award starting in July 2025 and the completion date as September 2026, meaning that the all plaques would be installed by September of 2026.

Jessica Potter stated that it would be reasonable for the Commission to have a better understanding of the situation with the Hubbard Mill by summer 2025 and they could then adjust accordingly.

Jessica Potter asked Sydney DePrenger whether she had identified the two locally designated properties to receive plaques?

Sydney DePrenger stated that she had not selected specific properties at this time and that the CLG grant did not include specification of the two properties.

Mary Murray asked why the Commission hadn't discussed the two locally designated plaques in the previous meeting? Mary Murray stated that she reviewed the minutes and did not see discussion of the two locally designated plaques, only the two heritage plaques.

Jessica Potter stated that the Commission sought and was awarded this CLG grant a couple years ago, but that they had had to return the funds for the two Heritage Plaques. She clarified that they were able to follow-through with the locally designated plaques at that time and that this 2025 CLG grant application is really a repeat of the previous grant proposal.

Sydney DePrenger stated that she remembered discussion of the two locally designated plaques in the previous (January 9th, 2025) meeting. Sydney DePrenger stated that Travis Johnson, the City Staff member that prepared the January 9th, 2025 meeting minutes recorded meeting audio. It was found in the previous minutes that Sydney would reach out to get quotes for the smaller plaques.

The commission discussed the possibility of ordering a plaque for the Hubbard Mill while the mill's new owners decided if they wanted the plaque. The commission agreed that if they did do this, it could be a waste of using the grant if the new owners do not agree in utilizing the plaque. The Commission also discussed the locations of the plaques, which these plaques would be on the property itself and not be within the public right-of-way.

John Zehnder asked if they don't get permission from the Mill, could they still pick a different site for a Heritage Plaque?

Jessica Potter stated that she thought it would be worth a shot, as once SHPO awards grant funds they do not want their funds returned, they want the work completed. She clarified that SHPO may be more forgiving considering they know the property is in the progress of changing ownership.

Mary Murray stated that she did not see the grant draft prior to its submission to SHPO and asked if that was not something that should be sent to the Commission?

Sydney DePrenger stated that she had not been asked to provide to the Commission, but that it is something that she could certainly provide to the Commission.

Mark Konz asked if City Staff had shared the previous grant submission to the Commission?

Jessica Potter stated that she did not recall, but that this submission did not get sent out.

Sydney DePrenger stated that she is comfortable providing the draft to the Commission and that she will send the grant draft to the Commission. She will send a draft when she has access to her work computer. Mark Konz asked that the Commission provide comments to Sydney DePrenger in response to the grant draft by Noon on Tuesday, February 18th.

Mark Konz stated that he believes it would be a good idea to have back-up Heritage Plaque locations identified and research completed on the locations, due to the situation with the Hubbard Mill.

Jessica Potter stated that they had discussed alternative locations during the previous meeting and that she had sent out a spreadsheet identifying which properties have plaques, are locally designated and have plaques, and those suitable for plaques. Jessica Potter stated that the Commission would just need to identify what property they would choose for the next Heritage Plaque.

Sydney DePrenger stated that she will send the Commission the materials that she intends to submit for the grant application next week and that the Commission should send her comments by Noon on Tuesday of next week.

Work Plan 2025

Today's Action Items:

- *No formal actions were taken by members of the Commission during the meeting.*
- *Staff Secretary for the Commission meetings will provide an overview of the actions taken and planned actions. This will be placed within the Meeting Minutes.*
- *Sydney DePrenger made a series of edits to the Work Plan during the meeting. Edits made mid-meeting have been reflected in the meeting minutes below.*
- *Sydney DePrenger will provide the Commission with an updated Work Plan reflecting the changes made during this meeting and provide that to the Commission on February 14th, 2025.*
- *Members of the Commission will review the Work Plan and materials and provide comments, feedback, and edits to Sydney DePrenger. It was suggested that this be done within a working document. This will be accomplished prior to the next Commission meeting.*

Upcoming Action Items:

- *Commission members have been tasked to consider what Work Plan items they wish to include in the 2025 Work Plan.*
- *Commission members were tasked to review relevant HPC documentation (Historic Context Study, Ordinance, Trainings, Design Guidelines, etc.) for the betterment of the 2025 Work Plan.*
- *At the upcoming HPC meeting, the Commission will review the Work Plan post-edits and work to fill-out target goals and action items/progress on the Work Plan.*
- *An easily publicly available list of all the locally designated properties should be created and maintained. This task may be dictated to a Work Plan Item.*
- *A centralized location for all HPC related documentation and records should be created. This task was not confirmed as Work Plan Item.*
- *Mary Murray intends to locate HPC related content using a Mankato resident's perspective and then detail the results to the Commission at a future meeting.*

- *The Commission will explore possible educational opportunities for the Commission members (state-wide training, member presentations, staff presentations).*
- *The Commission will coordinate with City Facilities Staff regarding interpretive signage, specifically for the Kern Bridge.*
 - *Commission would need to decide if the Kern Bridge signage would it be interpretive or heritage focused.*
- *Following updates to Mankato City Code, direct links to the Heritage and Local Designation Ordinances will be provided on the City of Mankato's "Heritage Preservation Commission" Webpage.*

Minutes:

Jessica Potter provided a recap of the previous Work Plan discussion. She stated that Commission had had a great discussion at the previous meeting, but that they had left without a "to do" plan for what should be done.

Sydney DePrenger explained that she sent a three-column agenda to the Commission, but that she had not had time to get content into the agenda prior to sending it out.

Sydney DePrenger stated that she had since began working on the Work Plan and displayed that version of the Work Plan on screen for the Commission. She stated that she removed a couple of the work plan items from the original and indicated those items on screen.

Sydney DePrenger presented the current Work Plan on screen and explained that she added "To create an updated Master List on properties that have designated plaques, interpretative plaques, & national register plaques."

Sydney DePrenger explained that she remembered Courtney Kramlinger receiving a grant to create the master plan years ago, but that she did not know if it had since been updated to reflect changes made. She explained that it would be useful to have the master list and a plan for updating the list as changes are made.

Sydney DePrenger explained that many of the other items on the Work Plan were retained from recent Work Plans created by previous HPC's. She gave the example of the target goal of installing two plaques and the progress item stating that the CLG grant that is being sought to fulfill this goal.

Jessica Potter stated that items 3 & 4 go together and that she would like to see the Work Plan identify what properties the two plaques are for and to add dates to the items in the progress column. She stated that this would help track the date of the grant submittal and maintain their plans over time.

Jessica Potter stated that for Target Goal she would like to see a "master goal", but also goals for the year. She also stated that she would like to see what had already been done spelled out as well.

Sydney DePrenger explained that Molly Westman reached out to Beth Heidelberg at MNSU to see if any of her students would be interested in historical property surveys, but that she had not heard back from Beth Heidelberg at this time.

Sydney DePrenger stated that she will change the number/order of the items as requested.

Sydney DePrenger stated that she removed a number of the work plan goals from the work plan she provided to the Commission as they were predominantly focused on items from previous years that had limited relevancy to the current Commission or Work Plan.

Jessica Potter stated that the partnership with the MN Main Street Program is still a possible partnership, it's called the "Downtown Partnership" instead of the "City Center Partnership", and explained that it would still follow the MN Main Street model. Jessica Potter stated to keep this Work Plan item, but to move it down the list.

Jessica Potter stated that a lot of the Work Plan revolved around education or awareness of what the HPC does.

Jessica Potter stated that she believes it would be useful to go back and find the last Work Plan and seeing if there were any items that the Commission was able to complete, or that were still outstanding.

John Zehnder asked if there are any alternative funding sources to hire consultants for surveys of historical properties?

Mark Konz stated that the City had received a CLG grant for the first twelve properties that were surveyed. He explained that since then, they have paid for one other survey, but otherwise Courtney Kramlinger was the one to perform the majority of more recent historical surveys. Mark Konz clarified that Courtney Kramlinger performed these surveys when she was in Sydney DePrenger's role, not her current role.

The commission discussed the cost of a survey. Mark Konz remembers the surveys cost about \$500.

Mary Murray asked that Sydney DePrenger flip back to the Work Plan that she was currently working on. She then asked if the six numbered items under "HPC Purpose" were the Commission's goals? And inquired if the Commission should be attaching Work Plan items to one or more of the six purposes?

Jessica Potter explained that the six purposes are the purposes of the Commission as outlined in the City of Mankato ordinance. Jessica Potter stated that she agrees with Mary Murray regarding building the Work Plan based on what the Scope of Work is.

Mary Murray stated that she believes the Commission is myopic on signage and that she sees much more to be done within the six purposes.

Questions about where to find the education documents and the location in the code that speaks to these six purposes were raised. Jessica Potter stated that in the January packet was the 2022 Work Plan and that it showed a Scope of Work from 2018 to 2022. Jessica Potter asked Mary Murray to remind her what materials she was referring to. Jessica Potter explained that many of their plans were on the website, including the Historic Context Study.

Mark Konz asked Sydney DePrenger to pull up the City of Mankato's "Heritage Preservation Commission" page. Mark Konz read down the page, stating that the Historic Context Study is the

first item, then the North Front Street Commercial Historic Design District Guidelines is another that this Commission worked on in the past. He also explained that the Statewide Heritage Preservation training items are both processed that the Commission and other organizations worked on at a state level to provide training to Commission members. Mark Konz clarified that they had went through all the training modules with Courtney Kramlinger when the training was published. Mark Konz stated that there were other tasks like Surveys that were completed by the Commission at didn't get published to the webpage online.

Mark Konz stated that he believes the Commission's guiding documents are the Mankato Historic Context Study and the Ordinance. Mark Konz explained that all the processes would either be in the Context Study or the Ordinance.

Mark Konz stated that the Ordinance is in City Code Section 10.82. Subd. 19 & 20. He explained that the city code will be changing soon, so the code number will likely change. Mark Konz stated that staff can link the to the Ordinance on the Webpage once the code has been updated to reflect the new format.

Mark Konz explained that Section 10.82 Subd. 20 is the list of designated properties. Shown as "Designated heritage preservation landmarks and districts."

Jessica Potter clarified that if the Commission were to add any more properties as locally designated then they would need to go to the City Council and ask that they that update this ordinance to include the new properties.

Jessica Potter stated that she believed a "reset" of the Commission for 2025 should occur. She explained that the Commission should go through the Ordinance, Historic Context Study, and founding documents to refresh the organization's reason for existence and purpose.

Mary Murray stated that they brought that up after the December meeting. She explained that going forward they thought they should have an educational module associated with each meeting.

Tim Pulis changed the topic. He stated that number nine on the Work Plan included in the agenda, titled: *"Review City retention of historic documents such as maps, plans, and others."* Is an item that he thinks is important. Tim Pulis referenced an old railroad map that was disposed of by City Staff ten years ago. He stated that there needs to be a way to preserve this historical documentation. Tim Pulis clarified that maybe the documents should come before the Commission when facing disposal.

Jessica Potter stated that one of the pieces of the Work Plan was to review Commission minutes to ensure that they have actually been doing what they said they wanted to do.

Jessica Potter questioned if a "meeting recap" should be included within the Meeting Minutes.

Mary Murray stated that it should list the "To Dos".

Jessica Potter stated that it should highlight actions taken by the Commission. She then explained that this would be added to the recap as items that need follow up for the next meeting. Jessica Potter explained the Commission often has great conversations, but that this

sometimes does not carry on through the next discussion. She explained that this would help to maintain the moment and mitigate the need to continuously restart over with each meeting.

Jessica Potter explains that if they can build a better foundation for the Commission then they would be able to focus more on grassroots efforts beyond their typically focus on promotion of the HPC's purpose.

Mark Konz stated that the priorities included in the previous Work Plans were written and defined by a different HPC. He explained that many of said priorities were not prioritized even by the Commission that created them. Mark Konz questioned if it made sense for this Commission to go exclusively through the old list and ask "what did we do, what didn't we do?", or if it would be better to say "this is what we, as this Commission, would want to do"? Mark Konz explained that it would still be useful to look at the previous work plan and determine if any of the same priorities remain with this Commission, but he cautioned that this Commission should still determine what it is that they want to prioritize. Mark Konz stated that the Commission should create their Work Plan based around what they are energized to accomplish and what makes them want to show up and make an impact for the community. Mark Konz clarified that the previous Work Plan absolutely contains prioritizes that that should remain, like looking for properties to designate and looking for ways to educate.

Mark Konz stated that the function of the Commission is the preservation of history and heritage through the designation of properties and through education of the community. He went on to say that anything the Commission does should be fall within their function and the six purposes, as defined in the Ordinance and at the top of the Work Plan. Mark Konz explained that there are things that the Commission can do, but asks the members of the Commission, what it is that they want to do?

Mary Murray explained that they had discussed wiping the Work Plan clean, as a member of the Commission, she hadn't been educated enough in her ability to say what it is that they should/shouldn't or can't/couldn't do.

Mark Konz clarified that they have always had members of the Commission who were particularly interested in specific areas of preservation work. He gave the example of a previous Commission member who expressed an interest in preservation of mid-century modern homes as they aged into historic status, as well as a Commission member with an interest in architecture. Mark Konz referenced a previous Commission that expressed interest in window restoration. Mark Konz asked the Commission again what they wanted to do.

The commission discussed a list of the designated properties that would be publicly available. The code has a list, but can be challenging to find.

Mark Konz explained that Courtney Kietzer, a previous member of the Commission had created a [GIS Story Maps](#) of all the Locally Designated Properties. (*Last updated Oct 6, 2015*) Mark Konz stated that he thinks it would be a good idea.

Jessica Potter stated that in order to be locally designated the City Council needs to pass the ordinance adopting it into the code, meaning that the properties that have been Locally Designated should all be listed in the Ordinance, meaning that they are publicly available.

Mary Murray asked what the difference between the list and the brochure that was put out by GMG is?

Jessica Potter clarified that she assisted in that brochure's creation and that it covers the properties that have plaques and local designation, but that she did not know if it covered all the locally designated properties.

Mark Konz stated that it could be something to include as a Work Plan item, to make the list of locally designated properties more visible, whether its on the City Website or another option.

Mary Murray said she would go through the online content as a resident and review what she could and could not find easily to help make the information be accessible and user friendly.

Marry Murray explained that following the December Commission meeting she felt that they would've created a list stating that *blank* individual would talk to *blank* individual, to get *blank* and so on. She explained that she expected to have tasks dedicated to the Commission members and that this Work Plan would be for work to be completed by members of the Commission.

Jessica Potter explained that the process had been done before as they would reach out and make contact to property owners for local designation and then they would ask City Staff to send the formal inquiry. She explained that Covid messed up the system and that they were still recovering.

Jessica Potter asked Mark Konz that a question came up as to what communication the HPC should be having with City Facilities staff, particularly regarding plaques? Mark Konz explained that if the plaques were to be placed in/on city facilities then yes, the HPC should communicate with facilities staff.

Jessica Potter asked whether there should be communication regarding the goals of City Facilities for interpretive signage within the parks. She explained that she talked with staff regarding interpretation and how it is decided who gets signage and who does not. Jessica Potter stated that facilities staff brought up Kern Bridge and how interpretive signage would be included. She asked if the Commission would need to communicate directly with Facilities on projects like the Kern Bridge, as Michael McCarty is no longer the leading that communication? She then asked if the Commission still needs to be focused on the Kern Bridge to ensure that interpretive signage is include and done so in the correct manner?

Mark Konz stated that he thinks it is a great idea for the Commission to communicate with Facilities Staff.

Jessica Potter explained that when the Kern Bridge was first planned, she was under the belief that the interpretive signage would be interpretive focused rather than heritage focused. She explained that she remembers the Twin Rivers Council for the Arts were involved and that it would be a bigger process.

Mark Konz stated that he was unfamiliar with these details.

Mary Murray stated that the Commission would then need to make a decision regarding the signage, would it be interpretive or heritage focused? She stated that the Kern Bridge could then be a back-up Signage location for the Hubbard Mill. She asked if it should then be included on the Work Plan?

Mary Murray stated that she browsed through the Historic Context Study and that it's a fantastic document with lots of "to dos" for the HPC, particularly on page 35.

Mary Murray reiterated her sentiment that she would be comfortable approaching the content from a resident's perspective and then detailing what content she could find and what she could not.

Mary Murray explained that part of the education would be saying "I easily found this" and then bringing to dos to the Commission. Mary Murray clarified that unless something comes to the HPC for approval, or is related to a grant, the Work Plan would be need to say "what other things are we looking at".

Jessica Potter asked Sydney DePrenger if she gathered what had been said? She explained that Staff should gather what had been said during this meeting and include it in the Work Plan, and then send it back out to the Commission.

Mark Konz explained that the current Work Plan the Commission is seeing on the screen was created by Sydney DePrenger, this was done after she had asked the Commission to provide her with Work Plan items or feedback and had not received any responses. He then explained that if the Commission wants the Work Plan to be their plan and passion, then they need to provide items and feedback to Staff, as otherwise Staff is just guessing.

Mark Konz stated that the easy thing to do would just be to say "this is what was here before" and then just move that forward, but that such an approach was not what he heard the Commission want during this meeting's discussions.

Mark Konz asked that members of the Commission provide that feedback, provide what they want to do, and then we can talk about what action steps could be taken to make that happen.

Mary Murray stated that she is comfortable taking on tasks, like compiling the wants of the Commission and then sending that out.

Jessica Potter stated that she would appreciate Mary Murray taking on that "to do".

Jessica Potter stated that it would be great to go back through conversations, even through 2024, and see what were some of those conversations and how they can take them from there. Jessica Potter then explained that she takes notes from the meetings and then goes back through them before the next meeting and asks "did we cover them?".

Jessica Potter asked members of the Commission are comfortable with the conversation?

Tim Pulis stated that he was comfortable.

New Business

No New Business Items

Miscellaneous

Commission Discussion:

Tim Pulis presented a book to the Commission. The book was titled *"The Hubbard Milling Company, 1878-1978: a past to remember--a future to build"*, authored by *Vernard E. Lundin*. Tim Pulis stated that the book provided an interesting look into the history of the Hubbard Mill; written from the perspective of a former employee of the Hubbard Milling Company and former Mayor of Mankato, it was published in 1978. Tim Pulis stated that the Blue Earth County Public Library has two copies of the book at this time.

Additional Information on/from Vernard E. Lundin can be found at the MNSU Library.

John Zehnder asked the Commission if it would be a good educational opportunity for the Commission if Tim Pulis gave one of his educational presentations. He explained that he still regularly thinks about a Streetcar presentation Tim Pulis gave in the past.

Jessica Potter stated "definitely". She then explained that the Commission still has the modules that were part of the state-wide training program and so there are a lot of potential educational opportunities.

Adjournment

Mary Murray motioned to adjourn, and John Zehnder seconded with all in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 pm.