

Historic Preservation Commission

Regular Meeting

October 9th, 2025 4:30pm

City of Mankato

Present: Jessica Potter, Tim Pulis, Mike Lagerquist, Mary Murrey, & Justin Vossen

Staff: Brittany Mitchell, Bennett Hanson, Courtney Kramlinger

Guests: Eric Hayes (509 S. Front St Applicant) & Steve MacGregor (MVAC)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 pm.

Approval of Agenda

Mike Lagerquist moved to approve the agenda; Tim Pulis seconded with all in favor.

Approval of Minutes

July 10th, 2025 Minutes:

Justin Vossen moved to approve the July minutes; Tim Pulis seconded with all in favor.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Review of the Commercial Rehabilitation Project for 509 S. Front St:

Today's Action Items:

1. *The scope of work will be modified to ensure the metal paneling returns towards the brick-face along the roofline and walls. Steve MacGregor will meet with Dave Knudson to discuss the use of spray foam.*
2. Motion to conclude that 509 S. Front Street is not historically significant: Mary Murray motioned; Mike Lagerquist seconded, with all in favor.
3. Motion to approve scope of work: Mary Murray motioned; Mike Lagerquist seconded, with all in favor.

Minutes:

Courtney Kramlinger provided an overview of the scope of work. She stated that the project in question is utilizing the City's Commercial Rehabilitation Program and due to the program's guidelines and policies, the HPC must review and approve the Scope of Work for any projects utilizing City funds.

Courtney Kramlinger stated that the project is at 509 S. Front Street, which is known as the "Social House". She explained the applicant is proposing to do improvements to the south side of the building.

Courtney Kramlinger clarified that she will ask Steve MacGregor with MVAC and Eric Hayes, the applicant, to provide a more in-depth explanation after her summary. She continued, stating that the applicant had removed the metal siding from the building in order to restore the original brick face, but had discovered that the brick was in a state of despair and required extensive modifications. She explained that this pushed the scope of the proposed work beyond what was intended for the property.

Steve MacGregor with MVAC, who has been tasked with assisting in the administration of the City's commercial rehab program, provided an overview of the scope of work. Staff pulled up the documentation provided by the applicant and followed along with Steve's presentation.

Steve MacGregor presented photos of the damaged brick wall when it was discovered. He stated that the tuck-pointing alone would cost well over \$100,000. Steve MacGregor provided an explanation of the most damaged areas of the wall.

Steve MacGregor explained that Eric Hayes and his team proposed the solution of packing cement into the corners of the walls where it is most damaged to stabilize the wall and then surround it with a metal wrap with vertical and horizontal support and soffit to create a "box-fit". He stated that they also will need to replace the roof deck along the southern edge of the building, which is being supported by the metal framework. Steve MacGregor explained that their intent is to support the building whilst maintaining as much of the exposed brick as they can without pushing unreasonable costs on the applicant.

Eric Hayes explained that if he could fully restore the brick wall and not have the exterior metal support, he absolutely would do so, but that it is not feasible. He stated that he worked with Brent Krohn of ME Midwest Engineering on the project for a long time and that this proposed solution was their way to still achieve the brick-focused design of the building whilst providing the needed structural integrity. Eric Hayes explained that they do not have any existing structural plans of the property and therefore know very little on how the building was built.

Eric Hayes explained that the patio area itself took an unusual amount of work, as there was an existing superstructure that necessitating the creation of a two-tiered patio.

Eric Hayes stated that they explored alternatives and that this is the most viable and cost-effective solution without entirely removing the visibility of the brickwork.

Jessica Potter asked to have a comparison between the proposed work and the previous site conditions. Jessica later amended this to include the demolition photos as well.

Jessica asked if they intend to leave the "shadow-line" open where the metal exoskeleton meets the brick.

Eric Hayes stated that the goal is to leave it open. He clarified that it would prevent moisture and would allow of an area of the brick-face to be downlit using lighting recessed under the exoskeleton.

Jessica stated that she has concerns with the open nature, as it could bring “critters”, which could create their own damage. Jessica stated that she also believes this brick was not meant to be an exterior wall and was exposed when the building next door was removed following a fire.

Steve MacGregor stated that he recommends that they enclose the end-wall areas. He clarified that the plans they have create a soffit that comes back in toward the brick-face.

Steve MacGregor asked staff to pull up the scope of work plans and stated that they show “install termination panel on the masonry wall for the soffit”.

Steve MacGregor explained that he also made the suggestion that spray foam be used inside of cement to stabilize the corners, as it would reduce costs.

Brittany Mitchel stated that Steve will need to check with Dave Knudson if he intended to make this modification.

Jessica Potter inquired as to the proposed treatment plan for the exterior brick.

Steve MacGregor stated that they intend to use low-pressure (20psi max) water washing with minor chemical usage based on the Historic Preservation Guidelines, followed by the application of sealer to protect the brick.

Steve MacGregor also clarified that the lower portion of the walls have four rows of brick, whilst the higher portions have two rows of brick. He stated that they would install a mortar cap and bevel

Tim Pulis stated that the building next door, at the location of the patio, was an old apartment building that was in a state of disrepair before it burned 30-some years ago.

Steve MacGregor stated that believes the metal siding must have been installed after the fire to protect the brick. Eric Hayes clarified that one of the reasons for the metal structure is because of a 3’x3’ concrete column (12’ on center) structure within the patio area that was built following the fire with the exoskeleton to support the two adjacent buildings, this structure necessitated the two-tier patio.

Mary Murray asked if the railing will be added to the second tier of the patio area, as shown on the rendering?

Brittany Mitchel stated that the City Code requires fencing for the patio area.

Mary Murray asked if the rear portion of the building not included in the metal frame is part of the Social House building as well?

Eric Hayes stated that it is part of the building. He explained that they will be painting it, replacing two blocks, and maintaining the windows.

Tim Pulis asked if the entire structure is 1896?

Steve MacGregor stated that the rear portion of the building is an addition made of concrete blocks.

Mary Murray asked if there will be a gap between the exoskeleton and the brick-face? Could someone climb up the building? She asked if the Fire Chief has signed-off to allow it?

Steve MacGregor clarified that that It is possible, but that the beams are 10' apart.

Brittany Mitchel explained that the Building Department will review it when they submit a Building Permit for the proposed project and Sean Hayes will perform his review as well.

Mary Murray stated that she was surprised that someone would put in so much effort to preserve the brick.

Mary Murray asked Eric Hayes intention for maintaining the brick?

Eric Hayes stated that he wanted to preserve the brick and that he likes the look of the brick for his business and that it would add to the patio experience.

Mary Murray stated that she believes the story of the building is important to the space.

Tim Pulis stated that Eric Hayes may be able to find historic photos of the property at the BECHS.

Tim Pulis asked what the "Social House" is?

Eric Hayes explained that it was rooted in night clubs & bars. He stated that he wished to maintain the liquor license with a zero-food requirement. Eric Hayes explains that it is an Arcade bar option that utilizes retro arcade machines in a social environment, something that differs from Rounders. He said the model is unique and they have been behind with construction, leaving to a poor opening time.

Eric Hayes stated that the term "Barcade" is trademarked and isn't applied to this property.

Tim Pulis asked if there are apartments above the bar space?

Eric Hayes stated that there is a two-bedroom apartment with a rooftop patio on the top portion of the 2-story building.

Eric Hayes stated that they have combined the two buildings (507 & 509 S. Front St) into one for addressing as 509 S. Front St.

Eric Hayes stated that they will be using large outdoor patio heaters to maintain the patio at an open state for the winter, with about 1,000,000 btu of radiating heat along with two gas fireplaces and a large drainage system. He clarified that he wanted to capitalize on the unique private patio space within the area, as most patios are within the public ROW and are required to be removed seasonally.

Jessica Potter asked if the front façade had already been painted?

Steve MacGregor stated that it has.

Jessica Potter asked Courtney Kramlinger to summarize the request for the HPC.

Courtney Kramlinger stated that the HPC is being asked to review of the significance of the structure and to review the scope of work with any modifications that the HPC may want to request in order to improve or prevent impacts to the historical significance of the structure.

Steve MacGregor stated that once this process is done, they need to begin to solicit bids for the proposed work.

Mary Murray asked that the guests leave the room (Eric Hayes & Steve MacGregor) whilst the HPC have a discussion amongst themselves and staff regarding the historical significance of the building.

*Eric Hayes and Steve MacGregor leave the room temporarily. *

Mary Murray stated that as the front of the building has been painted, she believes that the building is no longer historically significant.

Courtney Kramlinger clarified that the applicant would have to come before the HPC for any exterior improvements to the building if it was designated, but as it has not been designated, no prior approval is required.

Mary Murray stated that there is no longer historical significance to the building.

Jessica Potter asked if the project would lose loan funding if the HPC determined that the building wasn't historic?

Courtney Kramlinger explained that the project still needed to be reviewed by the HPC, even if there is no historic significance per the terms of the program.

Justin Vossen asked if the determination of no historical significance would make them ineligible for the program?

Courtney Kramlinger stated "No".

Tim Pulis stated that he agrees that he agrees with Mary Murray, but that the age of the building adds to the significance.

Jessica Potter stated that there are a lot of aged buildings in Mankato, but that this does not mean that they are historically significant.

Courtney Kramlinger provided the example of the Landmark Building, as It was turned down by SHPO from listing on the NRHP due a determination that It wasn't historically significant following its renovation into an apartment & office space.

Mary Murray stated that she didn't think the wall looked stable.

Brittany Mitchel stated that the current structure that is in-place today is only temporary shoring to keep the wall maintained and prevent collapse. She explained that the shoring would be removed and replaced with the metal exoskeleton when the process begins.

Mary Murray stated that the shoring structure made her believe that the gap would a safety concern, but that it would be up to City Staff.

Justin Vossen stated that he agrees that there isn't historical significance to the building and that he is comfortable with the process that is proposed.

Mike Lagerquist stated that he believed it was a nice compromise between tearing it down and a complete rework.

Jessica Potter asked City Staff if a vote needed to be taken for the determination?

Courtney Kramlinger stated that the HPC should vote, saying that they HPC has determined that the building is not historically significant and that they approve of the Scope of Work as proposed.

Mary Murray motioned; Mike Lagerquist seconded, with all in favor.

Justin Vossen left the meeting at 5:10pm.

Jessica Potter provided a recap of the conversation that occurred whilst Steve MacGregor & Eric Hayes were out of the room, that it is not a historically significant building and that they approve of the scope of work.

Steve MacGregor asked if they could utilize sandblasting of the brick on the exterior, as it was used on the interior, even if the Guidelines don't allow for it?

Jessica Potter stated that it should not be done as it would the damage that brick even further, especially as it wasn't installed to serve as strictly an exterior wall.

Jessica Potter explained that the guidelines are more to maintain and guide any work that occurs rather than hard and fast rules. She explained that local brick tends not to hold up as well to sandblasting and therefore recommends that they stay away from it.

Steve MacGregor, Eric Hayes, and the HPC discussed the improvements made to 501 S. Front St.

*Courtney Kramlinger, Steve MacGregor, and Eric Hayes leave the meeting. *

Miscellaneous

Discuss PreserveMN Conference Takeaways:

Action:

Discussion Skipped and tabled until the next HPC meeting.

Minutes:

Jessica Potter requested that the discussion be tabled as Tim Pulis & Brittany Mitchel were the only Mankato attendees.

Tim Pulis stated they he will discuss the HPC conference takeaways next month.

Jessica Potter stated that they would share the slide decks from the State Preservation Conference once SHPO posts them to their website.

Work Plan Review 2025/2026:

Today's Action Items:

1. Mary Murray confirmed her resignation to the HPC members.

Upcoming Action Items:

1. Jessica Potter & Brittany Mitchel will meet 1on1 to discuss the what the HPC Agendas will look like before the new year. This meeting will occur before the next HPC.

Minutes:

Brittany Mitchel stated that this agenda item was include for the review. She explained that at the last meeting, in July, they had asked for feedback to the presentation that was given on the proposed changes to the Work Plan.

Jessica Potter asked Mary Murray go provide an overview of her work on the Work Plan.

Mary Murray explained that she compiled documents on her computer. She stated that the feedback she received was for documentation to be provided to HPC members so that they can look back and fill in the blanks.

Mary Murray stated that there needs to be a conversation with Courtney Kramlinger, as she holds some of the HPC relevant information, particularly specific site information.

Mary Murray stated that she has ready through all the available documentation and that the HPC needs to go back and determine what needs to be done.

Mary Murray explained that the Historical Site Inventories all have a single date as they were done internally and now need to be updated.

Mary Murray stated that she created a document of headers to better organize the documentation.

Mary Murray explained that there needs to be some momentum within the HPC so that they can accomplish some really meaningful work. She provided the example of the painting of the front of the 509 S. Front Street building, as it removed the historical significance of the property. She asked how they could go about educating the community about maintaining their historic properties.

Mary Murray stated that much of the work needed would require grants and that the HPC is not doing that work at this time, aside from the plaques and conferences. She clarified that the HPC has not had focus coming out of COVID and that it needs to return.

Mary Murray proposed that the HPC create a communication plan to provide a connection between City Staff and the HPC regarding projects in the City.

Mary Murray stated that she was "insulted by what Mark said at the last meeting, when he basically said, yeah well we don't have the time to keep you informed". She asked why we have the HPC and stated that she thinks it should be disbanded if the HPC isn't taken seriously. Mary Murray Stated that there are HPC members she hasn't seen in a long time. She stated that she thought the Work Plan would be a good motivator for the HPC, but that it hasn't been.

Jessica Potter asked HPC members what they thought of the documents?

Mike Lagerquist stated that he believes it would be better for the HPC focus more on looking forward rather than stepping back in the past.

Mary Murray asked for an example.

Mike Lagerquist stated he did not have one.

Tim Pulis asked Mary Murray for an example of what she is asking for.

Mary Murray clarified that if the HPC is able to just look back and see what didn't get completed, they would find the momentum for deciding future work plans. She explained that she believes the City is in a phase of Urban Renewal and that it is the HPCs job to promote their own areas of focus to the City.

Mary Murray explained that after Red Wing's PreserveMN conference last year, she would have liked to see the HPC identify things that they did well in Red Wing and plan how Mankato could implement the same practices, whether that is through the City, HPC, or Blue Earth County. She gave the example of a group in Red Wing related cemeteries which identifies who is buried in the cemeteries and maintains the cemeteries. She asked whether there is an ability to work with the library or another group to do something like this in Mankato.

Mary Murray clarified that the HPC just needs to identify the work that could be done and decide if they would want to do it.

Mary Murray explained that she prefers to work outside of the Commission meeting and then meet to discuss the completed work and make decisions.

Mary Murray gave the example of the Bus Tour that the HPC had worked to create and retrofit to the MPO conference that was held earlier in the year. She asked why nothing else became of it and why she had not heard about it after the conference.

Mike Lagerquist asked if Tim Pulis and him ever gave a recap on the MPO Conference?

Jessica Potter & Brittany Mitchel explained that they did not as no HPC meeting was held following the conference. Jessica Potter stated that it would have had to been included as an agenda item to cover in this meeting.

Mary Murray stated that the Work Plan would have corrected for this as it identifies that there would need to be a follow-up after the bus tour had been completed. She explained that now that we know the bus tour worked for the MPO Conference, we need to ask whether it would work for other events or groups in the area?

Brittany Mitchel asked if prior to COVID, the HPC worked with City Staff on projects coming through the City?

Jessica Potter stated that it did occur. She clarified that early-on it was the HPCs purpose to educate the community about historic preservation, which then turned to focusing on Local Designations with education. She further clarified that the original HPC staff was Courtney

Kramlinger who she believes has a great understanding of Historic Preservation and that the HPC worked closely with her to do Local Designations in the first place.

Jessica Potter explained that the work got done because the HPC decided as a group to focus on a particular area of work, like the Historic Context Study, Design Guidelines, & Inventory. She further explained that in the last 5+ years, that has not necessarily been maintained, that there is not a larger project, especially that includes work outside of the regular meetings.

Jessica Potter explained that most projects skip past the HPC and don't allow for a proactive approach, they may go to the Planning Commission or Council before the HPC could comment. Jessica Potter stated that if the HPC can do more of the education piece in the community, projects may pause and ask for input from the HPC before they get into the City's plan review process. Jessica Potter stated that she fields a lot of calls like this.

Jessica Potter gave the example of Design Guidelines, as they exist for Old Town, but don't exist for South Fifth. She explained that the HPC can help lead those conversations and that when the day comes when they need a grant, they will know what they would be needed for.

Mary Murray stated that that with all the events the BECHS is putting on, she hadn't seen HPC members attend with badges or other identifiers to say, "hey, we're the Mankato people and we would like to hear your perspective".

Jessica Potter added that they could even do a presentation in the community, maybe hosted by the BECHS that would be open to the public to learn about what the HPC does, show them the brochure, and increase visibility. She explained that they have been on the Work Plan before, but haven't been done.

Jessica Potter stated that she is grateful that Mary has taken the time to compile all the information in one place for the HPC.

Jessica Potter explained that the HPC has always allowed leniency with member absence and not enforced a policy that removed members if they don't attend three consecutive meetings.

Jessica Potter stated that she agrees with Mary Murray's stance that it feels like the HPC doesn't matter and that she believes it make it difficult to for people to want to attend meetings if they don't see the value. Jessica Potter clarified that if the City of Mankato wants to have an HPC as part of their ordinance, that the way the Commission functions, needs to change.

Brittany Mitchel stated that the previous statement involves a conversation that would need to occur with Mark Konz. Brittany Mitchel explained that in the four months since she started, there are HPC members that she has never met. Brittany Mitchel asked if the HPC should offer that absent members step away from the HPC so that new members can be brought in. She explained that Mark Konz should also weigh in on this decision.

Mike Lagerquist stated that the HPC has previously discussed their ability to encourage the reuse or saving of building materials.

Brittany Mitchel stated that based on her background, builders would not save materials unless there is a monetary benefit to them.

Mary Murray stated that publicity is could also be beneficial, as positive publicity would be an incentive.

Mary Murray stated that the HPC should do something to inform the community about the extra steps that are taken on projects, like the 501 S. Front St or 509 S. Front St projects. She explained that this could be done through letters to the editor, by reaching out to the local news, or by spreading the word at local events.

Mary Murray stated that there should be something that the HPC can hand to a new member to provide them with an understanding of what is going on.

Jessica Potter stated that she would like the HPC to work to put some foundational things in place as they go into the new year.

Jessica Potter stated that the HPC should work to create a "Member Manual" that provides New and current HPC members with the ability to reference the Ordinance and processes needed. Jessica Potter stated that Mary Murray has done much of the groundwork for this.

Mike Lagerquist stated that the HPC should plan on meeting every month and if there aren't items on the agenda, then we would work on this type of stuff.

Brittany Mitchel reiterated that the HPC should meet every month, at least until the end of the year with the goal of having something solid in place before the new year. She stated that she also wanted to encourage those who don't attend HPC meetings to come or to resign.

Jessica Potter stated that she agrees with Brittany Mitchel.

Jessica Potter asked what items should go on next month's agenda based on the conversations that occurred today.

Brittany Mitchel stated that Jessica Potter and her should meet a week or two out from next month's HPC to determine the agenda items. Jessica Potter agreed.

Mary Murray's Resignation:

Mary Murray announced that she submitted her resignation from the Historic Preservation Commission and that this meeting would be the last of her term.

Mary Murray stated that she will be providing copies of the documentation she compiled to the HPC with her leave, but that she must first finish assembling them in a complete form.

Adjournment

Mike Lagerquist* motioned to adjourn and Tim Pulis* seconded with all in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:43 pm.