

Historic Preservation Commission

Regular Meeting

November 13th, 2025 4:30pm

City of Mankato

Present: Jessica Potter, Mike Lagerquist, John Zehnder, Justin Vossen.

Staff: Brittany Mitchell, Courtney Kramlinger, Travis Johnson, Chris Talamantez

Guest: None

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm.

Approval of Agenda

Mike Lagerquist moved to approve the agenda; John Zehnder seconded with all in favor.

Approval of Minutes

October 9th, 2025 Minutes:

Justin Vossen moved to approve the October minutes. Mike Lagerquist seconded. The motion carried with all in favor; John Zehnder abstained.

Old Business

October 2025 Old Business

Ms. Mitchell recapped the improvements discussed at the October meeting at 509 S. Front Street. She provided the members with an update and noted that although a final plan is not yet in place, progress is moving in a positive direction.

New Business

Scope of Work Review: 1416 N. Riverfront Dr.

Today's Action Items

1. Courtney Kramlinger presented the scope of work for the proposed project at 1416 N. Riverfront Drive. She noted that, due to the intent to utilize public EDA levy funds, the HPC is required to determine whether the property holds historical significance and to offer any relevant comments.
2. Mr. Zehnder made a motion for the Historic Preservation Committee to determine that the building located at 1416 N. Riverfront Drive is not historically significant and that the committee offer no comments on the proposed project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Vossen and carried unanimously.

Upcoming Action Items

1. None.

Minutes:

Ms. Kramlinger presented the scope of work, noting that the project proposes to utilize the City's EDA levy funds. In accordance with program guidelines and policies, HPC review and approval is required for any project using city funds. She reported that the EIFS previously located on the building's exterior has been removed, revealing clay block. The commercial rehab loan request includes installation of windows, a new storefront, and doors. The clay block will remain in place but will be painted. She noted that the building dates to 1950 and emphasized that the HPC's role is to determine whether the structure holds historical significance and to provide comments if applicable. She added that the scope of work indicates that 16 windows would be added for different offices throughout the building.

Mr. Lagerquist inquired if the entire building would be occupied by Aaron Hatanpa Insurance.

Ms. Kramlinger indicated that a hair salon would also occupy the property, with a potential third tenant yet to be identified.

Ms. Mitchell explained that the existing building's front half would be used by Aaron's insurance company, while the back half is planned for a hair salon. The remaining space will be used for storage but could potentially be leased to a future tenant. She also mentioned the possibility of adding a second building on the site, though at this time, the only work being planned is the remodeling of the current structure.

Mr. Lagerquist commented that he liked the look of the uncovered brick and appreciated seeing the building being used. He also asked about the building's original purpose, noting that, since it is located next to where Jakobe Lumber was once located, its original use may have been related to that business.

Mr. Zehnder asked whether it was part of Jakobe Lumber or merely situated adjacent to it.

Ms. Potter stated that Beacon records indicate the structure was built in 1950 and functioned as a store; however, no further historical details are documented. She noted that as with the project reviewed in the previous month, the building has undergone extensive alterations and no longer reflects its original historical context.

Mr. Vossen agreed and added that, even from an architectural standpoint, the building is not significant. He added that he didn't believe there would be any reason to hold the project up.

Mr. Lagerquist added that, based on photos and their most recent uses, the interior is essentially a wide-open space.

Mr. Zehnder moved that the Historic Preservation Committee determine the building at 1416 N. Riverfront Drive to be not historically significant and that the committee offer no comments on the proposed project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Vossen and carried unanimously.

New HPC Member

Today's Action Item:

1. The vacant HPC seat will be filled by Jeff Kagermeier

Upcoming Action Item:

1. Mr. Kagermeier will be present for the meeting in December.

Minutes:

Ms. Mitchell stated that the vacant Planning Commission seat has been accepted by Jeff Kagermeier and that he will be joining the commission in December.

Staff update on current projects

Today's Action Items:

1. General discussion regarding projects previously discussed at HPC meetings, including the Kern Bridge, Good Counsel, and Ardent Mills.

Upcoming Action Items:

1. City staff will continue providing updates on projects previously discussed at HPC meetings.

Minutes:

Ms. Mitchell stated her interest in initiating broader discussions about projects the HPC may deem significant or previously reviewed, citing examples such as the Kern Bridge and Hotel Mankato. She further noted that she was seeking guidance from the commission members on the types of information or considerations they would like addressed when projects are submitted to the city.

Mr. Lagerquist noted that he had seen a large dumpster behind the former National Bank of Commerce. He inquired whether any applications had been submitted to the city regarding that site.

Mr. Konz stated that no applications have been submitted to the city for that site at this time.

Ms. Potter stated that she had spoken with Ms. Mitchell last week regarding updates on projects previously reviewed by the HPC and inquired whether the heritage marker for Lincoln School had been ordered.

Ms. Mitchell indicated that the heritage marker has not been ordered yet, as they were awaiting final signatures. She indicated the necessary documents have since been provided to the appropriate parties to obtain those signatures. Additionally, Michael Koop had advised waiting until the funds are available before placing the order.

Ms. Potter indicated that these are the types of items for which it would be helpful to receive updates moving forward, along with other projects previously discussed by the HPC.

Ms. Mitchell indicated, based on recent federal changes, the entire application had to be amended to change the verbiage.

Mr. Konz added that this item was brought back to the HPC because there had been a discussion regarding the size of the proposed sign. The decision was made that any sign is better than none, which required the application to be amended; this has since been completed, and the project has moved forward accordingly. He also noted that many development-related items are beyond the city's control, and no further updates have been received by the city. As an example, he referenced the Post Office, where a land use plan amendment was made, but no further action has been taken since.

Mr. Zehnder questioned if the post office project was stalled.

Mr. Konz indicated that the project is not stalled, but potential future tenants are still being explored and negotiated with.

Ms. Potter asked whether the preservation easement proposed for the Post Office was approved and inquired whether the local designation had been completed.

Mr. Konz indicated that he believes the preservation easement was approved. He also stated that the local designation was not completed because it was never pursued by the owners, noting that the ordinance requires the owners to apply. The city had previously reached out to the owners, but the process was not pursued.

Ms. Potter stated that if a list of properties were to be recreated for potential local designation, the new owners of the post office property would be placed at the top of the list. She also inquired about the Kern Bridge and asked whether there were any new updates on that project.

Mr. Konz reported that the project has been approved to proceed and that pre-construction meetings have begun. He noted that no timeline has been established but stated he will provide updates as the project progresses.

Ms. Potter asked whether he anticipated any further need for HPC input as the project progresses.

Mr. Konz indicated that an application could be submitted for a historic marker for the Kern Bridge.

Ms. Potter asked whether the heritage marker for Lincoln School will be installed in the spring or summer of 2026.

Ms. Mitchell confirmed that the project would occur within that general timeline but noted that an exact date has not yet been determined.

Ms. Potter noted that the HPC can include this in next year's planning to help draw attention to the heritage marker. She added that the marker's location will be determined by the property owner, although the HPC may provide input.

Mr. Lagerquist questioned if there were any new updates to any projects happening at the Good Counsel property.

Mr. Konz indicated that the pastor has been approved for development. He added that the Hilltop section has received a lot of questions and preparation has begun for submittal next year, but at this time nothing is ready yet. He added that he did not believe any buildings were expected to be demolished. He noted that one dormitory building is in poor condition, but at this time there are no indications that any structures will be removed. He added that the property could receive local designation without being listed on the National Register.

Ms. Potter asked whether there were any new updates regarding the Ardent Mill property.

Mr. Konz stated that there are no updates and that no applications have been submitted at this time.

Miscellaneous

End of year items to discuss

Today's action items:

1. General discussion regarding the continued use of the three documents presented at a previous meeting and their ongoing role in helping the HPC identify, track, and plan future items.
2. Initial discussion related to plans for the upcoming preservation month 2026.

Upcoming action items:

1. HPC members should review the three work plan documents and bring ideas for potential projects to the December Meeting.
2. Ms. Potter will compile a list of tours and programs conducted over the years to serve as a reference for planning Preservation Month 2026.
3. Ms. Mitchell will bring a list of events from surrounding communities as potential ideas for Preservation Month 2026.

Minutes

Mr. Talamantez attended the meeting to thank the HPC members for their input on the recent NPO Directors Conference hosted by MAPO. He stated that the HPC served as a valuable resource and noted that conference attendees shared many positive comments.

Update the work plan for the start of 2026.

Ms. Mitchell opened the discussion by requesting input from the commission members regarding three separate documents that had previously been presented by Mary Murray. She asked for feedback on the templates and inquired whether the HPC would like to adopt them to assist with the organization and tracking of future HPC items.

Mr. Vossen noted that he had reviewed some of the material and found it logical and useful, emphasizing that it could serve as a guide for future HPC actions.

Ms. Potter agreed that the template would be an important tool for the HPC and helpful for tracking and organizing items. She asked whether an intern or volunteer could review and update the template to include information such as survey dates for local properties.

Ms. Mitchell noted that the information currently included in the template did not contain all relevant dates. She stated that there was an opportunity to add missing dates and include additional properties, and that it would simply require someone to review the template and update it accordingly.

Ms. Potter added that Ms. Murray had three different documents: a historical inventory form, context study action items, and the Heritage Preservation Commission work plan. She noted that the historical inventory form had been updated with the information she had previously provided to Ms. Murray, and once she receives it back, she will be able to make additional updates. Ms. Potter also stated that the context study action item form contains relevant information, and it will be up to the HPC to determine the next steps. She suggested adding additional columns to the context study form—such as “Completed,” “Dates,” and “Notes”—to indicate the status of each item would be helpful.

Preservation Month 2026

Ms. Mitchell initiated a discussion on potential activities for Preservation Month in May 2026. She noted that January would be an appropriate time to begin developing concrete plans.

Mr. Konz noted that existing walking tours, which have been popular in the past, could be used for Preservation Month. He added that upcoming construction projects may create congestion, making this an ideal time to offer such activities.

Mr. Lagerquist noted that 2026 marks the 40th anniversary of the Veterans Bridge and suggested that it could be highlighted in any tours planned for Preservation Month.

Ms. Potter indicated that she would compile a list of tours and programs conducted over the years to serve as a reference. She noted that earlier tours focused primarily on local designations. She also mentioned the planned Lincoln School marker as a potential item to incorporate into Preservation Month activities.

Mr. Konz added that tours have also included historic buildings, such as the courthouse and the Betsy-Tacy House, noting that tours do not always need to be walking or bus-based.

Ms. Mitchell emphasized the need for different types of events to engage multiple age groups. She stated that she has created a list of events from surrounding communities, which she will bring to the next meeting. This list could provide the HPC with additional ideas for Preservation Month activities.

Ms. Potter added that if a meeting is held in December, the HPC could further discuss Preservation Month and the work plan, allowing members to provide input on what they would like to see happen. She also encouraged members to review the context study action items and come prepared to the next meeting with ideas for potential projects.

Ms. Mitchell suggested exploring the possibility of coordinating with North Mankato to determine if they are conducting similar historic preservation activities with businesses or residents.

Adjournment

Mike Lagerquist motioned to adjourn and John Zehnder seconded with all in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:28 pm.