



City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
ci.northfield.mn.us

Meeting Minutes - Draft Heritage Preservation Commission

Thursday, April 14, 2022

2:30 PM

Chamber of Commerce/Council Chambers

Work Session at 2:30pm, Meeting at 4pm

1. [22-224](#) Work Session on Bridge Square Renovations

Attachments: [1 - Final Bridge Square Comments from the HPC](#)
[2 - Hyperlink to Bridge Square Plans](#)

Commissioners and City staff met for a Work Session at 2:30PM in the Chamber of Commerce meeting room. Working from the existing concept drawing, park plan consultants spoke briefly and then received questions and comments from those attending. The discussion focused chiefly on how best to represent Water Street's historic presence on the west side of Bridge Square, the historic Civil War Monument, and the established sculpture fountain. This in-person meeting informed the consultants about Commissioners' written comments and the Commissioners about consultants' ideas about how to modify the plan.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

*The meeting was called to order at 4:02PM.
City Planner Mikayla Schmidt, Assistant City Planner Reeve Needham, Meetings Associate Edward Malnar, Jessica Peterson-White, City Administrator Martig, Mayor Rhonda Pownell*

Present: 6 - Commissioner Alice Thomas, Commissioner Baird Jarman, Commissioner Clifford Clark, Commissioner Jesse Steed, Commissioner Robert Stangler and Barbara Evans

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Michael Meehan

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Clark, seconded by Commissioner Stangler, to approve the agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Commissioner Thomas, Commissioner Jarman, Commissioner Clark, Commissioner Steed, Commissioner Stangler and Chair Evans

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. [22-225](#) 10 March 2022 HPC Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [03-17-2022 HPC Minutes](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Clark, to approve the March 10 minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Commissioner Thomas, Commissioner Jarman, Commissioner Clark, Commissioner Steed, Commissioner Stangler and Chair Evans

NEW BUSINESS

3. [22-226](#) Introductions of the Commission, Commissioners, and Staff

Commissioners Jarman, returning from extended absence, and Stangler, a new member, introduced themselves.

4. [BC 22-011](#) Certificate of Appropriateness for Proposed Changes to 312-314 Division St. S. - McKay and Tosney Buildings.

Attachments: [1 - Application](#)
[2 - Presentation](#)
[3 - Historical Survey Information](#)

Assistant City Planner Needham presented architectural designs and color swatches for changing and improving the buildings' façade and awnings under the Façade Improvement Grant program. The proposal is intended to acknowledge the historical atmosphere of downtown Northfield. The proposal does not include any signage. Owner Jessica Peterson-White presented considerations of the design and answered questions from the Commission.

A motion was made by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Jarman, to approve the renovation proposal as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Commissioner Thomas, Commissioner Jarman, Commissioner Clark, Commissioner Steed, Commissioner Stangler and Chair Evans

5. [BC 22-012](#) Review and Recommendation of the A.W. Norton House (418 College St) as a local Heritage Preservation Site.

Attachments: [1 - Application with Appendices](#)
[2 - SPHO Letter](#)
[3 - Presentation](#)

Associate City Planner Needham Alice and Chair Evans introduced the application for local historical designation. Thomas, as a private citizen, reported her application process for state and national historical designation, for which local designation is a helpful prerequisite, and presented a history of the house of A.W. Norton and its prominent occupants. She also detailed efforts to rehabilitate and restore original design features of the building and answered questions from the Commission.

A motion was made by Commissioner Clark, seconded by Commissioner Stangler, to approve recognition for Norton House as a local heritage preservation site. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Jarman, Commissioner Clark, Commissioner Steed, Commissioner Stangler and Chair Evans

Abstained: 1 - Commissioner Thomas

6. [22-227](#) Review and Discuss Land Development Code Amendments Related to Certificate of Appropriateness.

Attachments: [1 - Hyperlink to 4.12.22 CC Work Session Staff Report](#)
[2 - Hyperlink to 4.12.22 CC Work Session Video](#)

City Administrator Martig presented options explored by Assistant City Planner Needham on improving the functionality of the Commission's Certificate of Appropriateness process, considering State Historic Preservation Office review, enforcement of decisions, and the possibility of appealing Commission decisions. He indicated that any official recommendation would prompt consultation with the Planning Commission before submission to the City Council. Needham presented her work comparing Northfield code with peer cities' historic buildings commissions. Commissioners considered language choices and the ability of these options to support Commission goals.

Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Stangler, moved to approve recommendation for shifting appeal authority over Historic Preservation Commission certification decisions from the Planning Commission to the City Council. The motion was passed with unanimous approval.

A motion was made by Commissioner Stangler, seconded by Commissioner Thomas, to approve a request that City Hall staff draft language intended for the Land Development Code to define exemptions, exceptional cases, and a sense of urgency as expressed in time constraints for the option of appeals of the Commission's decisions. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Commissioner Thomas, Commissioner Jarman, Commissioner Clark, Commissioner Steed, Commissioner Stangler and Chair Evans

7. [22-228](#) Review Sign Checklist.

Attachments: [1 - Historic Sign Checklist](#)

Assistant City Planner Needham presented her work to formalize and complete a signage application checklist, and then introduced an additional page on the checklist to clarify expectations for signage within the Historical District. The Commission agreed by consensus to adopt this version for immediate use with plans to update the checklist upon effective changes to municipal code. No motion needed.

8. [22-229](#) Discuss and Approve the Heritage Preservation Commission Work Plan.

Attachments: [1 - HPC Action Plan 2022 - Clean](#)
[2 - HPC Action Plan 2022 - redlined](#)

Assistant City Planner Needham introduced a new of the HPC work plan. This version removes completed items, clarifies language, includes current tasks and goals, adds time frame for ongoing work, and provides priority levels by item.

A motion was made by Commissioner Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Stangler, to approve the new work plan as amended by moving the item to "provide information and guidance to property owners interested in officially designating historical homes" toward the end of the plan and changing its and related items' priority to level 2. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Commissioner Thomas, Commissioner Jarman, Commissioner Clark, Commissioner Steed, Commissioner Stangler and Chair Evans

9. [22-230](#) Commissioner Shadowing Reports.

Attachments: [1 - Northfield Boards and Commissions](#)

Chair Evans explained the informal commission shadowing process, its expectations, and benefits to the Commission. She then asked for interest in volunteers to shadow other boards and commissions. Commissioner Stangler expressed interest in shadowing the Housing and Redevelopment Authority. Commissioner Thomas will continue shadowing the Arts & Culture Commission, Chair Evans the Planning Commission, and it is suggested that all Commissioners mind proceedings of City Council. Reeve Needham will send out a schedule and reminders for other functions of City government as interested.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS AND CHAIR

Commissioner Thomas thanked Needham for her work and recommended following the proceedings of the State Historic Preservation Office. Commissioner Stangler introduced the concept of property deed covenants and expressed concern for the possibility of local legally recognized ownership limitations that could potentially be used discriminatively. Use of such covenants is not currently known in Northfield and official "disavowal" of such language if found would impose a cost on property owners.

STAFF UPDATES

10. [22-231](#) Staff Updates.

Assistant City Planner reported that Teresa Jensen will serve Interim Community Development Director, façade improvement grants within the Historic District and the creation of the new riverfront enhancement grant program, that the park plan has been submitted for SHPO review, that the direction of mural policy groundrules are leaning toward a general prohibition of murals on historical buildings, and opportunities for relevant training and education.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Evans adjourned the meeting at 5:56PM.