

Grand Forks Historic Preservation Commission  
255 North Fourth Street  
P. O. Box 5200  
Grand Forks, ND 58206-5200

**Minutes**  
**March 11, 2025**

**Commissioners present:** Chuck Flemmer, Bill Caraher, Judy Swisher, Sandy Slater, Nicole Derenne, Paul Conlon, Brian Carlson, Gordon Iseminger, Jacey Johnston.

Meeting called to order at 6:04 pm.

1. Approval of minutes from February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Moved Slater, second Caraher. Motion carries.
2. Section 106 Reviews: There were no Section 106 Reviews this month.
3. Chair Report: Chuck Flemmer:
  - a. Water Treatment Plant Redevelopment Steering Committee met on Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>.
    - i. Partial zoom and in-person meeting. Showed an artist's rendering of what the potential visual could be for the site. A couple of mixed use buildings with views to the river. Next meeting will be on March 26<sup>th</sup> before presenting to city council.
  - b. Carlson asked about the three existing houses and noted that the two houses have value where they are located and it would be worth seeing if they could be incorporated. He noted that the oldest house in Moorhead was saved for a newer development.
  - c. Swisher asked about the old post office and whether it is in a historic district. Slater and Flemmer believe no and that it is between the districts.
    - i. An effort to balance goals and revenue generation
    - ii. The emphasis is on the value for the community – value creation, value capture and public benefit.
    - iii. They have conducted a height study for the neighborhood and taken that into account to be sensitive to the view from the neighborhood.
    - iv. They also considered that public art could be an avenue to celebrate the history of the site.
    - v. They are looking at a crossing over Minnesota Ave for pedestrians to a public plaza.
    - vi. Focus on river views and access and making it an extension of downtown.
    - vii. Elevated plaza for retail.
    - viii. Making it a destination site
    - ix. Economics and lending may point to the size of the construction.

4. Coordinator Report: Susan Caraher

a. February 12<sup>th</sup> - Preservation Leadership Forum webinar: Navigating Congress and the Administration in 2025 and Beyond.

- i. They discussed key priorities of the new administration. Still lots of uncertainty regarding executive orders and funding freezes.
- ii. The many Executive orders designed to reverse previous Administration policies and expand Executive Branch authority. Some that directly affect, or could impact historic preservation include:

- 1. National Energy Emergency designed to expedite the approval of energy generating projects. Burgum signed several Secretarial orders regarding emergency energy production, encouraging energy exploration and production on federal lands and waters, and a National Monuments review.
- 2. Promoting federal civic architecture - federal buildings should be identifiable as civic buildings and should reflect regional, traditional and classical architecture heritage.
- 3. Celebrate America's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence – DoD Taskforce 250.
- 4. OMB issued a temporary freeze on all federal loans and grants pending a review – Both the Historic Preservation Fund and Historic Tax Credit were specifically referenced as requiring review. Some funding was restored to State and Tribal offices but remains in limbo. The constitutionality of such a widespread pause is also under review.

iii. Appropriations and Federal Funding issues.

- 1. Appropriations were at their highest in the last several years with FY23 funding at \$204.5 million. The current FY26 recommendation is \$225 million based on the needs of the field.
  - a. House and Senate have requested cuts to align with the Administration.
  - b. FY25 CR until March 14, unauthorized programs are at risk. Authorization for the HPF expired in September 2023 and given a one year extension in the FY24 Appropriations bill. Another one year

extension written into the FY25 bill but it remains unfinished. The reauthorization request increases it from \$150 million to \$250 million.

2. Historic Tax Credits

3. Main Street America – more details attached

- b. Visiting Scholar Public Lecture – Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 4pm.
  - i. UND is hosting Fulbright Scholar, Dr. Torgim Guttermsen and he is presenting a public lecture. The coordinator will also meet with Dr. Guttermsen to discuss how his research could be applied to our local heritage projects.
- c. St Michael's Hospital example of reuse.
  - i. Rolene Schleisman is working on a project in Oklahoma and is looking to make a before and after presentation for community input for a couple of local buildings. She asked for some images of St Michael's Hospital/St. Anne's Guest Home to use as a good example.
- d. Valley Memorial Homes photos from Lanark Ave/Lincoln Park.
  - i. The coordinator was contacted regarding some historic photos to decorate the Larnark wing at Valley Memorial Homes and has identified 5 potential images. We are now looking for the best resolution for each and have contacted Special Collections with the hope they might have better versions.
- e. Iseminger asked about the Columbia Hall/St Michaels hospital. Issue is the cost of demolition.
- f. St Michael's Church seeking a grant for painting and possible roof and ceiling repair.
  - i. The coordinator spoke with SHPO and identified a couple of possible options, and also offered to provide a letter of support for their grant writing efforts.
- g. Pillsbury Park:
  - i. The coordinator was asked to provide content and images for an interpretive panel at Pillsbury Park. Marsha Gunderson has shared one of the images from the local history photograph publications of a building that occupied the site in the early 1900s. Other possible images include Sanborn maps and the photo of Benners in our office.
- h. Pembina and Walsh County CLGs:

- i. The coordinator was contacted by the co-curator of the Walsh County Historical Museum for a recommendation and also asked whether the GFHPC would be interested in having a get-to-know-/problem solving meet up with both the Walsh County and Pembina County HPCs, since they already collaborate on several projects. The coordinator agreed and suggested perhaps sometime over the summer.  
– TBD.
  - i. Postcard reorder. 250 of each
  - j. Bronze roadside marker – the coordinator reached out to ND Tourism but has not had a reply. She has also contacted Greg Vettel.
    - i. Iseminger asked about getting it redone.
    - ii. Johnston asked about the CA company and whether we could ship it there? She has a connection with a trucking company that might be able to assist with moving it.
5. Other Business:
- a. Approval to move the April meeting one week out to April 15<sup>th</sup>. Moved Slater, second Swisher. Motion carries. Johnston
  - b. Iseminger asked about the Grandstand – no update
  - c. Iseminger asked about the story on the Metropolitan Opera House – no update
  - d. Johnston asked about the retail for Franklin on 4th and when they are going to be ready.
  - e. Caraher – Just published a new book, “An Archaeology of the Red River Valley” on pre-settler archaeology. If anyone would like it, please let the coordinator know.
  - f. Slater – Ferguson book store is closing tomorrow.
6. Move to adjourn 6:58 pm., Derenne, second Johnston. Motion carries.

Upcoming meetings: **Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> 2025 at 6:00pm**