

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

Minutes
April 15, 2025

Commissioners present: Chuck Flemmer, Bill Caraher, Sandy Slater, Judy Swisher, Gordon Iseminger, Doug Munski, Nicole Derenne, Brian Carlson.

Guest: Joyce Bruni

Meeting called to order at 6:01 pm.

1. Approval of minutes from March 11th, 2025. Moved Iseminger, second Caraher. Motion carries.
 - a. Iseminger asked to add more explanation of the height study for the Water Treatment Plant redevelopment project. He also asked for clarification about the pedestrian bridge and what it means to be a destination site.
 - i. The height study is part of the process for building a large mass construction at the intersection of two historic districts to ensure the best outcome for those in the residential neighborhood.
 - ii. The pedestrian bridge is suggested to allow for easy and safe access from the Greenway to cross Minnesota Ave to a public plaza. It is not a pedestrian bridge that crosses the river.
 - iii. A destination site provides for attractions within the complex that will bring visitors not only from around the city, but visitors to the city from the region and beyond.
2. Section 102 Reviews: GF Park District has distributed a Section 102(2) as required for consideration by interested parties. The GFHPC does not typically engage with Environmental Reviews so the coordinator reached out to SHPO to determine whether anyone in their office would do so. The request was also share with Planning and Community Development for any input regarding known future development. The coordinator also spoke with GF Parks advise of our limits regarding Section 102(2) and agreed that we would provide an email response to that effect following our April commission meeting.
3. Chair Report: Chuck Flemmer:
 - a. DDRB Meeting – March 20th

- i. Variance for a sign at 802 Demers Ave. The owners are seeking a variance to include a second business name Cobb Insurance building. The design didn't fit within the usual guides. The will come back with a second option as a monument sign.
- b. Visit with the GF County Historical Society – the chair and the coordinator met with the Historical Society chair, Richard Rae, and director, Leah Byzewski, to discuss ideas where they might be better able to utilize City programs and opportunities. One possible pathway to support would be to visit with their representative Council member. A follow up with Community Development discussed potential for Beautification funds but it would be out of the usual criteria which is downtown. We also encouraged them to tout their successes.
- c. Next Water Treatment Plant Redevelopment Steering Committee meeting is Wednesday, April 23rd at 10:30am. It will be the final meeting before they take it to Council.
 - i. Swisher asked about goals. Flemmer noted best possible outcome for the City's investment. The final step after Council would be to go to an RFP to seek development. Proposals could be submitted from anywhere.

4. Coordinator Report: Susan Caraher

- a. Roadside Marker update – Badmans was able to fix the marker and will make a new post to fit it. The GF Parks will pour a new concrete pad for a potential May installation. We met onsite to choose a new location for the sign that will provide better protection from a tree on the berm in the event of a future snow plow mishap.
 - i. State funds – the coordinator visited with the State regarding the left over grant funds they provided for the replacement as originally requested. We have the option to spend those funds on another project and these must be spent by the end of September.
 - 1. Reallocate leftover funds to Lost Neighborhood. Moved Slater, second Caraher.
- b. Odins has sold and will once again operate as a gas station. The new owners have a personal connection with the business which will be renamed Barta's Belmont Service. They hope to open in the next couple of months.
 - i. Swisher asked about the neighboring house and if it was connected.
- c. May is Preservation Month – the National Trust has provided some resources to help advocate for Preservation throughout the month.

- d. Pillsbury Park history – the coordinator has drafted a history of the site (included in the packet) for an interpretive panel. There are several Sanborn Maps but only one good photo of the building. The coordinator will be looking a 1983 photo documentation project at Special Collections next week to hopefully find more. All materials will be given to the Public Works Department for creation and installation.
- e. Donation of historic documents – a community member gifted us several items including a 1939 document commemorating the visit from the Crown Prince and Crown Princess of Norway. We will ask for assistance to hang it in the historic section of City Hall. Other items were an 1881 Norwegian Bible, some WWII coupon books and a small framed Norwegian prayer.
- f. Donated flood newspapers – Mayor Bochenski’s family donated copies of the Grand Forks Herald’s 1997 flood newspapers.
- g. Dakota Commercial – Armory/Civic Auditorium. Our office and Community Development have provided some assistance with historic photos and information about the old Grand Forks Armory for the lobby of the Northern Heights building. We have agreed to provide them with the original dedication plaque for display by way of permanent loan. We will also assist with a description and pay for a small sign.
- h. Xcel Energy – the coordinator visited with Xcel Energy which is in the process of moving to its new building in the next few weeks. They have a lot of old photos and other historic materials that they invited me to see. I have brought some of those materials back to the office to scan for our own records, and will revisit to finish the review in the next couple of weeks.
 - i. Iseminger – noted the problem with steam at the intersections downtown before the NPS/Xcel moved to its current location with the steam causing visibility issues during the winter.
- i. GF County Grandstand update: the State was able to answer some of the questions we posed, but we are haven’t yet received a copy of the contract that the State will issue to the County for the project.
- j. Donated labor forms: the coordinator is preparing to do the FY23 Q6 and FY24 Q2 drawdowns.

5. Other Business:
 - i. Slater asked whether there is any update on Federal funding
 - ii. Congratulations to Nicole on her EdD. Her dissertation title is “Learning to Teach Digital Literacy: Faculty as Learners.”
 - iii. Swisher asked about the progress of The Artisan. Flemmer noted the the progress is slow but that the quality and workmanship will be very high.
 - iv. Architect of St. John’s – B.W. Fisk. The coordinator learned who designed St John’s Block while researching content for the Talking Trails project. It was previously thought that perhaps John Ross was the architect but there is a lack of blueprints and other records.
 - v. Iseminger asked where the interest is coming from for downtown preservation projects.
6. Move to adjourn 6:57pm., moved Munski, second Derenne . Motion carries.

Upcoming meetings: **Tuesday, May 13th 2025 at 6:00pm**