

**MINUTES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
WORKSESSION**

5:30 p.m.

Thursday, January 16, 2025

City Council Chambers, Historic Federal Building

**Commissioners Present:** Chairperson Janice Esser; Commissioners, Tim Gau, Christina Monk, Heidi Pettitt and Rick Stuter.

**Commissioners Excused:** Bill Doyle.

**Commissioners Unexcused:** None.

**Staff Members Present:** Wally Wernimont and Travis Schrobilgen.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The Work Session was called to order by Chairperson Esser at 5:30 p.m.

**WORKSESSION: Introduction to B2E2 Project**

Other individuals present were a couple members of the Dubuque County Historic Preservation Commission and staff member Ed Raber with Dubuque County Zoning.

Assistant City Engineer Bob Schiesl introduced the Building Bridges to Employment and Equity Project (B2E2). He said the city received a \$25 million RAISE Implementation Grant toward construction of the B2E2 project and is working with a consultant, AECOM, for feasibility and historic review. He noted that the project is a multimodal transportation project to promote safety and connectivity for the public. He said the project includes several round-a-bouts and a pedestrian/vehicle bridge over the train tracks. He said the railroad merger is expected to increase the number of trains through the city and that some alterations are already being made such as the closure of 15<sup>th</sup> Street on either side of the tracks. He noted that the project involves federal funding and therefore, the city and consultant are seeking comment from the Historic Preservation Commission on the proposed project.

Nathan Guequierre and Mark Durbahn, both of AECOM, and Ray Werner, with Tallgrass Archaeology, discussed the project timeline, the steps involved and potential transportation alternatives and their impact on historic resources within the study area. They clarified the study area which included the Point Neighborhood, Kerper Boulevard, and the area south of 22<sup>nd</sup> Street down to the Millwork District and west to Central Avenue. They noted that the goal of the workshop was to acquaint the HPC with the project details and to establish a relationship between the project team and the HPC as impacts to historic resources are likely to be generated by project activities.

The team presented an overview of project status focusing on project history, the successful grant application, the NEPA process for transportation system development, transportation

needs, findings from the archaeological and historic resource surveys, and high-level improvement concepts being evaluated and assembled into project alternatives.

Commissioners agreed that the project would benefit travel in downtown Dubuque, both for residents and visitors. They agreed that a rail overpass is a reasonable improvement to evaluate and alternate locations were discussed. 16<sup>th</sup> Street was discussed in detail as a potential alternative. It was noted that the east to west flow of traffic would be less than ideal at that location and noted that more historical resources would be impacted including the Blum site and an increase in necessary home demolitions along that route.

Commissioners expressed that an overpass on 14<sup>th</sup> Street may have fewer impacts on historic resources than at other locations due to the wider street width, relatively fewer historic properties than on 16<sup>th</sup> Street, and potential to reduce cut through traffic. Due to the timing of the railroad merger, Commissioners asked if an interim action could address issues earlier than the construction of an overpass.

Commissioners suggested an Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) implementation that could provide early notification to motorists that the railroad is blocking streets in the neighborhood to alert both local traffic and traffic entering the area from Wisconsin. Commissioners discussed a desire for designs under the overpass that develop the area as an attraction rather than a barrier or eyesore, for instance: an active space with decorative lighting, a dog park, skatepark, water features, or other neighborhood enhancements.

County Commissioners requested copies of the archaeological and architectural surveys. City staff noted that they will investigate distributing them after redacting sensitive and confidential archaeology details as is standard practice.

No action was requested of or taken by the Commission.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Esser, seconded by Gau to adjourn the January 16, 2025, Historic Preservation Commission meeting. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Janice Esser, Tim Gau, Christina Monk, Heidi Pettitt and Rick Stuter; Nay – none.

The meeting adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Wally Wernimont, Planning Services Director

February 20, 2025  
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Adopted