

**MINUTES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR SESSION**

5:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 15, 2025

City Council Chambers, Historic Federal Building

**Commissioners Present:** Chairperson Janice Esser; Commissioners, Bill Doyle, Tim Gau, Heidi Pettitt, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft, Adam Schwendinger

**Commissioners Excused:** Christina Monk, Heidi Pettitt

**Commissioners Unexcused:** none

**Staff Members Present:** Wally Wernimont and Chris Happ Olson

**CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting called to order by Chairperson Janice Esser at 5:32 p.m.

**MINUTES:** Staff Member Happ Olson noted that Commissioner Witthoeft recognized that wording was transposed on two motions for 1005 Main Street. The correction was made available via email on May 14, interchanging the words “carried” and “denied” on the motions for 1005 Main Street near the bottom of page 4.

Motion by Witthoeft, seconded by Schwendinger, to approve the minutes of April 17, 2025 meeting as amended. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Janice Esser, Bill Doyle, Tim Gau, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft, Adam Schwendinger. Nay – none.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**REVIEW FOR 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY NEIGHBORHOODS SURVEYS**

Commissioner Bill Doyle recused himself from the meeting and took the podium to present for Heritage Works. Doyle noted he was a contractor for the City of Dubuque and presented the 95% completion draft reports on two surveys undertaken for Voelker Highlands and Deereville Neighborhoods.

Doyle noted the drafts include historic contexts and a breakdown of resources, narrative description, and typology. He reviewed the history of the neighborhoods and their building types. He noted that this work could be used to develop a National Register Historic District nomination in the future. He discussed the reasoning for the survey area and things specific to post-war housing, including the Federal Housing Administration plans and restrictions. He noted how both neighborhoods had a variety of housing from the time period.

The Commission had questions and discussion for the consultant.

Staff Member Happ Olson noted that the role of the Commission in this case is to review, provide comment, direction or corrections and eventually recommend approval of the surveys to the City Council.

Motion by Schwendinger, seconded by Gau, to recommend approval and adoption of the surveys to City Council, with final edits to be made by the consultant. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Janice Esser, Tim Gau, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft, Adam Schwendinger. Nay – none. Abstain – Doyle.

### **DEMOLITION REQUEST**

Applicant: Joe Ungs  
Owner: Corridor Dubuque LLC  
Address: 1527-33 Central Avenue  
Project: Rear section demolition as part of a Historic Tax Credit project  
District: Washington Neighborhood Conservation District

Commissioner Bill Doyle recused himself due to working on the project and left the chambers. Staff Member Happ Olson presented the staff report on the nature of the project, demolishing the one-story rear addition on the contributing property, and providing information with which to make a determination of economic non-viability, if need be. Happ Olson showed visual imagery, maps and information about the request. She noted the owner is working to utilize state and federal historic tax credits and local funding from the City of Dubuque in order to make the project financially feasible. She explained that in most cases, the City would defer review to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), because their review is more intensive and stringent than the Commissions, but because of the timing for installation of a green alley behind the building, the owner is bringing this forth at this time. He also supplied information on economic non-viability of the addition due to the fact that he didn't want to return at another meeting, due to timing. Happ Olson described the Commission's role is limited to demolition only, because of the project's location within the Conservation District, and that she is deferring to the SHPO for review of the project plans.

Commissioner Chad Witthoeft referred to the fact that a similar case for removing the same addition on this structure came before the Commission in 2017, prior to the ownership of the current owner. Happ Olson confirmed that it was approved and that the approval was good for one year, and that in that case, there was not a full rehabilitation proposed.

Joe Ungs, 2305 Simpson Street, noted the poor condition of the rear addition and added concerns that the excavation adjacent the foundation to the building, for the upcoming green alley, would further undermine the addition. He made a case that economically it did not make sense to attempt to save the structure, and instead was focusing on rehabilitating the entire building.

Josh Jansen, 11368 Rock Grove Court, spoke on behalf of the owner as a contractor for Restoration and Renovation Services. He noted the addition is severely out of plumb and referred to photos of the addition. He agreed with comments by Happ Olson that the building had been repointed many times and that work had further damaged the brick. He stated it would be too soft to salvage and that the structural condition would require rebuilding.

The Commission discussed the case and talked about historical and financial evidence for the project.

Motion by Schwendinger, seconded by Gau, to approve the application as submitted due to the fact that the addition did not appear to have historical or architectural significance. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Janice Esser, Tim Gau, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft, Adam Schwendinger. Nay – none. Abstain – Doyle.

**ITEMS FROM PUBLIC:** None

**ITEMS FROM COMMISSION:** None

**ITEMS FROM STAFF:**

- Goal Setting, as part of the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Process for the City of Dubuque  
Staff Member Wally Wernimont introduced the Goal Setting documents and process. Items discussed and agreed upon were:
  - Support of the Historic Tax Credits (state and federal funding to projects)
  - Support of the Historic Preservation Fund (federal, but also funds state and local communities as part of the Certified Local Government program)
  - Support of City historic preservation funding
    - For the public, through forgivable loan programs
    - For the City, to use as a match to leverage private, state or federal dollars

The Commission reviewed the workplan. By consensus, they instructed staff to utilize these items and the workplan to complete the process.
- Historic Preservation Awards report  
Staff Member Happ Olson described the award ceremony and Architecture Days.
- Training Opportunities  
Staff reviewed upcoming training opportunities and encouraged Commissioners to take advantage of them. Commissioner Witthoeft noted he was unable to make the Preserve Iowa Summit and Happ Olson noted she would cancel the reservation.
- Election of Officers (anticipation for July 2025)  
Happ Olson reviewed the memo and reminded the Commission that anyone is allowed to serve in any position. Elections will take place on the next meeting following July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- June Meeting Update (scheduling)  
Staff explained that the June meeting will take place on Tuesday, June 17 in order to allow for the City holiday of Juneteenth which conflicts with the regularly scheduled HPC meeting on the third Thursday of that month.

Commissioner Schwendinger asked a question about the possibility of regulation around painting and murals. Staff discussed that we currently don't have any regulation around painting, although there are times when the Commission weighs in on color (when dealing with additions or replacement materials) and whether an element needs to be painted. There was a brief discussion of challenges and staff showed a number of examples of different types of painting, on different materials and historic and non-historic surfaces. Particularly historic masonry is the biggest concern for painting, due to its damaging and camouflaging nature. This is something that can be explored through the update of the Unified Development Code.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Schwendinger, seconded by Doyle to adjourn the May 15, 2025 Historic Preservation Commission meeting. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Janice Esser, Bill Doyle, Tim Gau, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft, Adam Schwendinger. Nay – none.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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Wally Wernimont, Planning Services Director

June 17, 2025

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Adopted