

**MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION**

5:30 p.m.

Thursday, September 18, 2025

City Council Chambers, Historic Federal Building

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

Commissioners Excused: None

Commissioners Unexcused: None

Staff Members Present: Wally Wernimont and Travis Schrobilgen

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Janice Esser at 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES: Motion by Gau, seconded by Schwendinger, to approve the minutes of the August 21, 2025 meeting as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Janice Esser, Bill Doyle, Tim Gau, Christina Monk, Heidi Pettitt, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft, Adam Schwendinger; Nay – none.

ACTION ITEMS:

DEMOLITION PERMIT

Applicant: Nick Widmeier

Owner: Nick Widmeier

Address: 614 Loras Blvd

Project: Demolition request for house

District: West 11th Street Historic District

The applicant was not present at the beginning of the meeting. The Commission decided to move the case to the end of the action items.

Motion by Monk, seconded by Witthoeft, to table to the end of action items. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Janice Esser, Bill Doyle, Tim Gau, Christina Monk, Heidi Pettitt, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft, Adam Schwendinger; Nay – none.

DEMOLITION PERMIT:

Applicant: Dutrac Community Credit Union
Owner: Yager Properties, LLC
Address: 1305 Elm Street
Project: Removal of brick duplex for redevelopment
District: Washington Street Neighborhood Conservation District

Staff Member Wernimont presented the staff report noting the property was included in the Washington Street Neighborhood Conservation District, but left out of the Washington Residential National Register Historic District. He described the neighborhood and the history of the block noting that the integrity of the neighborhood was lost and there is little context left. He noted the property is not individually significant and not part of a district.

Commissioner Doyle agreed with staff stating that he writes site inventories and said that it would be difficult to create a district around this site and said the property would not rise to be individually significant. He noted that while this is the only historic structure remaining on the block, there were properties across the street and near to the Washington Street Historic District.

Commissioner Stuter asked what the intent was after demolition.

The applicant, Kim Adams, 380 E. 14th Street, representing the applicant, noted that they intended to utilize the area for access from Elm Street. She said there are plans for an overpass on 14th Street which that will block access drives to their parking lot. She said the bank is trying to get ahead of those changes.

Commissioner Monk noted that there appears to the building does not have neighborhood context due to loss of several structures on the block and Commissioner Gau agreed.

Commissioner Schwendinger noted that he would like the property to stay. He stated that more research is needed on the property and later added that historic reports are not as detailed as one might expect. He used his own property historic report as an example. He said the subject property was in pretty good condition and that just because it is the last property on the block, it is not justified to be demolished. He noted that he would prefer it to stay residential. He asked if the other properties on the block went through historic review. Wernimont stated that he was unsure, since the conservation district may or may not have been present when some of the buildings were demolished.

Commissioner Esser stated that she would hate to see it go but understand why it might need to go. She said we have to use the information at hand to make a decision.

Commissioner Witthoeft noted that the city needs housing, and that just because it is the last structure on the property that it is not justified to demo. He said he would prefer re-use of the property and that he would like to see a structural analysis. He said the demo is being requested in anticipation of a potential overpass. He concluded that it is significant because it is the last building standing.

Staff member Wernimont clarified that the Commission is tasked with using the information at hand and that they are to review the application and determine whether the residential structure at 1305 Elm Street has historic or architectural significance to the community. He noted that if the Commission finds the building proposed for demolition does not have historic or architectural significance, the Commission should approve the application. If the Commission finds the building proposed for demolition has historic or architectural significance, the Commission should deny the application.

He concluded that if denied, meaning the Commission found the property has historic or architectural significance to the community, the applicant is afforded the opportunity to file a subsequent application to determine whether a reasonable economic return can be earned on the property.

Motion by Monk, seconded by Pettitt, to approve the demolition due to the property not having architectural or historical significance. Motion denied by the following vote: Aye – Christina Monk and Tim Gau; Nay – Janice Esser, Bill Doyle, Heidi Pettitt, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft, Adam Schwendinger.

Commissioner Doyle returned to the Chambers.

DESIGN REVIEW

Applicant: Zephyr Aluminum Products
Owner: Gabriel Bonn
Address: 1175 Highland Place
Project: Replace one wood window with one fiber window
District: West 11th Street Historic District

Staff Member Schrobilgen presented the staff report noting that the structure is a contributing building within the West 11th Historic District. He stated that the applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for alterations to a single window and that they would replace the window with the same style, type, and size but with wood-fiber composite instead of wood.

Bruce Timmerman, 555 Huff Street, spoke in favor of the request. He noted that the existing window is deteriorating and that the window is located in a bathroom. He said the property owner was hoping to make the switch to wood-fiber composite so that it won't deteriorate going forward. He said the edge of the rail is beveled to replicate a wood window and that the window would be in the entire opening and not a pocket window, in order to maintain the size.

Commissioners discussed the proposal. Monk asked if the sash was repairable and the applicant noted that too much of it was missing. Schwendinger noted that no alternatives were proposed and asked if the owners had considered just replacing the sash and said it would likely be cheaper. The applicant said he was unsure. Doyle asked if there were dimensions and noted that the bottom rail is typically larger than the others. The applicant replied that the bottom rail was the same thickness as the sides, so there would be a minor change there. Stuter asked what all the other windows are made of. The applicant noted he changed a couple wood windows a few years ago. Staff noted that the remaining windows appeared to be wood. They noted the alteration of one window can become a slippery slope and noted that it was on a primary façade.

Motion by Gau, seconded by Witthoeft, to approve the application as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Janice Esser, Tim Gau, Christina Monk, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft; Nay – Heidi Pettitt, Bill Doyle, and Adam Schwendinger.

Note: Commissioner Doyle recused himself from the 1248 Iowa Street citing a conflict of interest and left the Chambers.

DEMOLITION PERMIT:

Applicant: Andrew McCready, 563 Design
Owner: 1248 Iowa Street, LLC (Aaron Rauen)
Address: 1236-1248 Iowa Street
Project: Demolition of non-original section at northwest rear
District: Downtown Neighborhood Conservation District

Staff Member Schrobilgen presented the staff report noting that the structures are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and contain some non-original elements, like the rear 2nd and 3rd story sections proposed for demolition. He said it is unclear how old the shed structure is atop the one-story section, but it is proposed to be removed. He noted that the elements to be demoed are not a part of the original structure but the commission may consider if those sections have historic or architectural significance. He also noted that the Commission does not have design review over this project but the project is receiving city funding and therefore, Historic Preservation staff will have design review of the project.

Andrew McCready, 563 Design and Josh Jansen, RRS described the project noting that it will be a rehabilitation of the original building and that the deteriorating additions are to be demolished.

Commissioners asked for clarification on which sections were to be demolished. They agreed with the applicants that the portions to be demolished were not original and should enhance the historic portions.

Motion by Gau, seconded by Schwendinger, to approve the application as submitted due to those portions being demolished lack of significance. Motion carried by the

following vote: Aye – Janice Esser, Tim Gau, Christina Monk, Heidi Pettitt, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft, Adam Schwendinger; Nay – none.

DEMOLITION PERMIT

Applicant: Nick Widmeier
Owner: Nick Widmeier
Address: 614 Loras Blvd
Project: Demolition request for house
District: West 11th Street Historic District

Motion by Esser, seconded by Doyle, to remove 614 Loras from table. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Janice Esser, Bill Doyle, Tim Gau, Christina Monk, Heidi Pettitt, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft, Adam Schwendinger; Nay – none.

Staff Member Wernimont stated that the request was to see whether demolition would be allowed. He said the owner stated that they purchased the building with the intention of rehabilitating it, but the condition and structure of the building has proved difficult to do that financially.

Staff Member Schrobilgen presented the staff report noting the two-story side gabled house retains its basic form but has had material changes over the years. He said the structure is not individually eligible for the National Register but is contributing to both the West 11th Street historic and conservation districts in which it resides and as a result is listed in those National Register and local historic districts.

Commissioners noted that the structure is one of few examples throughout the city and that it is contributing to the national register and historic districts. Commissioners noted that the property has architectural significance to the community.

Motion by Monk, seconded by Gau, to approve the application as submitted. Motion denied by the following vote: Aye – none; Nay – Janice Esser, Bill Doyle, Tim Gau, Christina Monk, Heidi Pettitt, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft, Adam Schwendinger.

Staff noted the next step for the applicant would be to submit documentation for a Certificate of Economic Non-Viability.

ITEMS FROM PUBLIC: None.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSION: None.

ITEMS FROM STAFF:

Upcoming Training Opportunities (memo)

Wernimont referred to the upcoming trainings outlined in the memo. He also described his most recent trip to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Past Forward conference.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Monk, seconded by Schwendinger, to adjourn the September 18, 2025 Historic Preservation Commission meeting. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Janice Esser, Bill Doyle, Tim Gau, Christina Monk, Heidi Pettitt, Rick Stuter, Chad Witthoeft, Adam Schwendinger; Nay – none.

The meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Wally Wernimont, Planning Services Director

October 16, 2025

Adopted