

**MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION**

5:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 16, 2025

City Council Chambers, Historic Federal Building

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Janice Esser; Commissioners, Bill Doyle, Tim Gau, Heidi Pettitt, Chad Witthoeft, and Adam Schwendinger (arrived at 5:32 pm).

Commissioners Excused: Rick Stuter and Christy Monk.

Commissioners Unexcused: None.

Staff Members Present: Travis Schrobilgen and Chris Happ Olson.

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

MINUTES: Motion by Pettitt, seconded by Gau, to approve the minutes of September 18, 2025, meeting as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Janice Esser, Bill Doyle, Tim Gau, Heidi Pettitt, and Chad Witthoeft; Nay – none.

Commissioner Schwendinger arrived at 5:32 pm.

DEMOLITION PERMIT

Applicant: Nick Widmeier

Owner: Nick Widmeier

Address: 614 Loras Blvd

Project: Partial demolition request for house

District: West 11th Street Historic District

Staff Member Happ Olson presented the staff report noting the previous denial of a demolition request, based on the fact that the property at 416 Loras Boulevard is historically/architecturally significant. The property's owner, Nick Widmeier, returns to the Commission with a downsized request. She noted he is asking for demolition of a small rear section and a change to some window materials and one window size.

She said she had a site visit and found that there was significant structural damage, formerly addressed by a previous owner, to the east side of the house, including the deterioration of the sill, seen in the photos that follow the request. She said she discussed the possibility of requesting an Economic Non-Viability Certificate of Appropriateness, but in the end, the owner decided to move forward with rehabilitation.

While on site, she observed that the house has a wide, textured vinyl siding (with patches of aluminum siding at the rear), aluminum soffit and fascia, aluminum casings on windows. The windows are typical wood one-over-one double hung sash. The front lower left window has

been resized to a picture window at some point in the 20th century. Under the vinyl siding is asphalt faux brick sheeting, and then the original 4" wood lap siding is the original layer.

She noted the applicant's plan and the review requirement of each in order to retain the house (no request for full demolition) and make the following modifications to bring it up to code and make it viable for housing:

SIDING: Reside the entire house with new, 4" smooth vinyl siding, retaining the hood over the front door, and removing the non-functional plastic shutters. This is appropriate as per our Architectural guidelines, replacing with a more appropriate size and texture, closer to the original narrow siding. *This request alone would have been approved in-house by staff.*

SOFFIT: Replacement of aluminum soffit with aluminum soffit. *This request alone would have been approved in-house by staff.*

REAR BAY WINDOW: Removal of the rear projecting one-story bay window, siding over with a seamless approach with the new siding (see red image to right). This work is only visible from the alley. *This work should be evaluated by the Commission.*

INSTALL NEW WINDOWS: Install new single hung windows to match the size and shape of the existing windows, except:

- New all wood windows on the front of the house, with the exception of the lower left window being resized back to the same size and shape as the right first floor window (see yellow image). All four windows would match and be in-line. *This work should be evaluated by the Commission.*
- Install new preferably vinyl windows on the sides and rear of the house, largely not viewable from the public right of way, except for the alley.
- If removal of the rear bay is approved (see red image, on #3), install new window to match the new window directly above in size, shape and alignment. *This work should be evaluated by the Commission.*

Nick Widmeier, 12120 Timber Ct., thanked staff for the thorough summary and reiterated that the expense to rehab is high at approximately \$100,000, but if he can use vinyl siding and windows on a majority of the project it would keep costs down and allow him to not demolish the structure. He said he has learned a lot about historic preservation in the process, and that this property was purchased as part of a deal with another property he desired. As a result, he had not done his due diligence in determining what it would take to rehabilitate the property. He said that demolition would be expensive as well and that he has decided he might be able to make renovation work.

Commissioners discussed the proposal asking for clarification on parts of the request. They concurred that allowing the side and rear windows to have material changes while retaining wood up front, along with resizing the late addition front picture window, was a great alternative to demolition.

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

ITEMS FROM PUBLIC: None.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSION: None.

ITEMS FROM STAFF: Mini HPC Training: Purpose and Powers of the HPC were discussed by staff. Happ Olson noted many relevant projects, events, and reviews that the Commission and staff have worked on or continue to work on.

Commissioners asked how landmarks work, if signage could be added to properties, and Olson detailed the landmark process and noted that a program could be created and that she will look into some options for the Commission to review.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Schwendinger, seconded by Gau, to adjourn the October 16, 2025, Historic Preservation Commission meeting. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Janice Esser, Bill Doyle, Tim Gau, Heidi Pettitt, Chad Witthoeft, and Adam Schwendinger; Nay – none.

The meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Travis Schrobilgen, Assistant Planner

December 18, 2025

Adopted