Historic Landmarks and Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 26, 2026 at 4:00 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by Nagle. A quorum of commissioners in attendance included Altschwager, Gilbertson, Hammer, Hermanson, Nagle, and Ulrich. Staff liaisons Bennett and Kornmann were in attendance.

Notice of Open Meeting

It was noted that the meeting was posted according to law.

Approval of agenda

Gilbertson motioned to approve the agenda; seconded by Hermanson. There was no discussion and the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Approve minutes from previous meeting(s)

Consider and take action to approve the meeting minutes from July 22, 2026

Hermanson motioned to approve as presented, the meeting minutes from July 22, 2026; seconded by Gilbertson. There was no discussion and the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Public Comments (3 minute limit per person)

There were no members of the public in attendance for comment and there was no correspondence.

New Business

1. Consider and take action regarding the financial report and any new invoices

   Bennett presented two reports - one from the Workhorse software and the other by the commission's treasurer. Bennett noted that there was reporting issues, specifically a delay from the books transfer and audits. Altschwager and Bennett will exchange invoices and revenue materials in order to keep the books aligned. The external bank accounts are planned to be audited at the end of the year. Altschwager shared recent donations and calendar sales. Ulrich asked Bennett not to include unused accounts in future reports.

   Gilbertson brought to light an issue with the Columbus Chamber of Commerce in which the group had perceived additional sponsorship opportunities from its donation and sponsorship of purchasing the alcohol insurance needed for the summer concerts. Gilbertson noted that the Chamber had been listed on flyers, cards, and were announced during the concerts. Yard signs and banners do not have sponsors listed on them, only the concert dates and bands. It was discussed about giving the Chamber a possible calendar sponsor slot since they didn't sponsor it this year. Gilbertson paid for the sponsorship on behalf of the Chamber.

   Bennett presented the invoice from Suttle-Strauss for $1,249 for the purchase of 38 historic recognition yard signs. The signage was approved at a previous meeting, and the invoice will be submitted to Finance for payment.

Ulrich presented a receipt for $24.39 for stationery and stamps for calendar donation solicitations. Hermanson motioned to reimburse Ulrich for $24.39 to be paid from the HLPC account; Altschwager seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. The motion was carried by unanimous roll call vote.

2. Consider and take action regarding the 2027 budget and capital improvement projects

   The commission discussed what it would like to budget for 2027 in the designated general fund line item under Planner. $2,500 for historic recognition signage for other historic districts and an additional $5,000 for additional bronze placards for remaining downtown buildings and landmarks. There would be a need to inventory historic landmarks around the city and the 72 or more contributing buildings.

   The commission recommended the continuation of the $1,500 contribution towards the Water Tower fund from the City's general fund. There was discussion regarding storage solutions for better organizing commission materials in the storage area. Although there are two unused drawers and some of the documents can be digitized, the commission would like to recommend budgeting $1,500 for supplies.

   Pavilion upkeep was briefly discussed, and any funding would be taken from the appropriate external historic preservation account.

   The Commission prioritized its recommendations for the City's capital improvement projects (CIP) with the renovations at the Rest Haven as its top priority followed by tuckpointing of City Hall as another priority.

3. Consider and take action regarding the proposed draft of the historic preservation section of the draft zoning code update

   There was discussion regarding recommendations of potential historic sites to the Council for approval. Kornmann noted that the current code issues include defaulting to appointed officials rather than elected officials to approve the recommendation, nominations not made by the owner, very limited appeal conditions, and there's no design standards within the code for downtown buildings. A question that was discussed involved why the HLPC couldn't just be the final approval for owner nominated sites. The commission noted concerns about consistency from the Council making approvals. Nagle stated preference for keeping existing landmark nomination procedure as currently written given appeals does involve common council and sending all to council would create an unnecessary step.

   Gilbertson suggested keeping the current code but adding downtown design standards to it. There was additional discussion about either keeping the existing code, adopting the draft code, or amending the code. The commission discussed process and timeline for design reviews.

   Staff noted the time sensitivity of the commission making a recommendation as the Plan Commission will be reviewing the last sections of the draft code before making its recommendation for Council approval. This item will be added to the next meeting to be wrapped up and a recommendation given to the Plan Commission.

4. Discussion regarding the 2026 summer concerts review

   Gilbertson and Nagle provided a recap for the final concert of the summer. It was noted that about 200 people attended due to the great weather. Gilbertson cited $1,216 was made in donations and tips during the concerts. Gilbertson was asked to provide a breakdown of revenues and expenses for the 2026 concerts and will deliver the report at the next meeting.

5. Discussion of the Council decision regarding the local historic designation of Fireman's Park

   Bennett provided a recap of the Council's approval to send the City's application to nominate the Fireman's Park complex for local historic designation to the Historic Landmarks and Preservation Commission. Once the application is formally received, it will kick off the process for local historic designation review and consideration.

The commission noted that there's room for educating the Council and general public on local historic designation to encourage more support and possibly property owner participation.

6. Discussion regarding Pavilion repairs and updates

   The Pavilion's roof has been completed as the shingles were replaced following storm damage. The commission recapped discussion regarding the proposed painting of the renovated stairs. It was noted that the railings were painted a dark gray along with dark gray steps according to a rendering from the Recreation Committee. Gilbertson motioned to recommend the stairs remain the previous color scheme of white railings and light gray steps; seconded by Hermanson. There was no additional discussion, and the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

7. Discussion regarding the Rest Haven project

   Staff and the Mayor shared that City administration, and the Council did not want to pay for the proposed Axiom work order for the proposed Rest Haven project of replacing the front doors, and the side doors and adding accessibility buttons. The work order would cost over $24,000. The commission did not want to pay for the work order either citing previous plans to the Rest Haven having already been done.

   There was discussion regarding advocacy of the project and the possibility of dropping the proposed work order for a previous plan of just replacing the two front doors and adding accessibility buttons. Previous quotes were for under $25,000 for that work and electric extension was partially completed. Additional discussion involved possibly focusing on smaller, but visible projects.

   The commission would like this item to be on the next meeting for further discussion.

Adjourn

Gilbertson motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Hermanson. There was no discussion and the motion was carried by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 6:07 pm.

** These minutes will be approved at a future meeting and may be amended. These minutes are respectfully submitted by David Bennett, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator **