



Historic Preservation Commission

March 18, 2026 — 3:30 PM

A regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held March 18, 2026 at 3:30 PM in Community Room of the City/County Complex at 414 E. Callender St. The meeting was rescheduled from March 10, 2026. The meeting was facilitated by Chair Jack Luther.

1. **ROLL CALL** – Kristin Vanderland, Jack Luther (via zoom) and Tom Blurock (via zoom) present. Eli Isaly was absent (excused). Staff: Jennifer Severson, Planning Director. NOTE: Luther's zoom connection was intermittent during the meeting.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – a quorum of the members present at the February 10, 2026 meeting were not present at today's meeting; those minutes will be approved at a future HPC meeting

3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT - none

4. General Action Item

A. Election of Board Chair and Vice-Chair for 2026 (postponed from Feb. 10, 2026 meeting)

Vanderland motioned for Blurock to be the Board Chair; seconded by Blurock. Motion passes 3-0.

Vanderland motioned for Luther to be the Vice-Chair; seconded by Blurock. Motion passes 3-0.

5. .A. Voluntary Design Review – NONE

B. 2026 HPC Work Plan Discussion (continued from February 10 meeting); No Action Requested.

Kate Hampton, Community Preservation Planner with Montana SHPO, was in attendance via zoom to discuss using Certified Local Government (CLG) pass thru funds to hire the MSU Community Design Center to draft Historic Preservation Design Guidelines for Livingston's Downtown Historic District. Severson mentioned the possibility that there may be additional SHPO funds that might be used to explore the possibility of nominating the Livingston Depot for a National Historic Landmark designation. Hampton reiterated that there are preliminary steps to the NHL process before drafting a designation.

Severson provided a summary of previous meeting discussion by the HPC to create Design Standards for the Downtown Commercial Historic District and focused on key points of what MSU students would do related to that project. Severson mentioned language in the Downtown Master Plan

supports the creation of historic Design Review standards.

Blurock expressed his desire to have HPC involved in design reviews in an advisory capacity to City Staff; Severson suggested a separate discussion at a future date on the topic.

Hampton provided an overview of the CLG program and confirmed there may be additional funding, in addition to pass thru funds, to fund a specific, implementable project such as creating a Preservation Plan for the City as suggested to her by Severson. Hampton stated this would be a great use of the funds. When addressing the need to have Historic Design Guidelines to assist with design review, Hampton stated that other MT communities that require historic design review have Design Guidelines in place; Livingston does not. Dept. of Interior historic design guidance is very general and having design guidelines specific to Livingston will help preservation efforts. Having concrete, community-specific Design Guidelines also support design review decisions made by staff if they are questioned by applicants. Hampton stated she believes there may be an opportunity for the HPC to be involved in the design review process, but that it is ultimately up to the City/ City Attorney. SHPO / the CLG program does not require design review- it is elective by each CLG community. Hampton also mentioned that having Design Guidelines as well as a Preservation Plan and continuing inventory activities for commercial buildings in the downtown historic district are all great projects and are all eligible to use CLG funds to complete.

Guidelines also identify historic preservation best practices and the clearly define priorities of the Livingston community for its preservation efforts.

Vanderland said Design Guidelines are especially needed in the absence of Design Review by the HPC. She supports the project if the MSU CDC students and advisors would like to do it.

Severson reiterated the importance of creating a Historic Preservation Plan but that there is not enough money through annual CLG Grants. Hampton commented that having a Preservation Plan is a requirement of the CLG program so Livingston needs to create one. Since Livingston is a MT Main Street Community, Hampton suggested the City consider applying for Main Street grants in the coming year; she suggested the City not try to cobble together money over multiple years, scale back the scope of the preservation plan, and/or do a 'piece meal' plan that is not comprehensive.

Blurock said he would like to see MSU students provide examples of other design guidelines they have done for other MT communities and he'd like to see examples of Historic Preservation Plans from other communities. He would also like to have an initial meeting with CDC students and the faculty project manager to hear from them- What can the City expect from the work? How does the process work? How can HPC members get involved?

Blurock and Vanderland expressed support for hiring the CDC to work with the HPC to create Livingston- specific Historic Design Guidelines; Severson stated she'll inform Jordan Zignego at the CDC they will move forward.

Blurock, Vanderland and Luther voiced support for Severson to apply for this year's CLG pass-thru funds. Severson confirmed with Blurock that it's OK to sign the CLG pass-thru grant application for him as the Chair of the board.

6. OLD BUSINESS

7. BOARD COMMENTS

Severson informed the board that she has received an application to fill the vacancy on the HPC. The applicant works for the Yellowstone Gateway Museum. Severson has not had a chance to speak to the applicant but she is hopeful all five board seats will be filled by the next HPC meeting. She also confirmed the City Commission is responsible for approving the Staff's recommendation to fill the vacancy.

Hampton thanked the board for their passion, dedication and time and encouraged them to continue with the HPC regardless of their inability to issue design review decisions (per the City Attorney).

Blurock again stated his disagreement with the City Attorney's decision to not allow design review by the HPC unless the applicant specifically requests it. Vanderland stated it is likely due to the City's concerns about legal liability. Blurock lamented recently demolished 'The Sport' building and Hampton suggested reviewing the Butte Demolition by Neglect Ordinance as a possible model for Livingston. RE: design guidelines, Severson stated these will be especially important when it comes to staff review of historic design on upcoming large-scale projects. Hampton mentioned the design guidelines will also provide guidance for infill in historic districts, such as character and compatibility with existing historic buildings.

Severson mentioned that the new adopted Zoning Code has more detailed requirements for height that will apply to new buildings downtown. Blurock asked about parking requirements for a large-scale new development in the downtown historic district; Severson confirmed that in response to recent state legislation, parking requirements have been drastically reduced.

8. ADJOURN – at 4:34 pm