

Historic Preservation Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes

February 11, 2025

Community Room, City County Complex, 414 E. Callender Street

3:30 PM

Chair Tom Blurock called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

1. Roll Call

Present: Tom Blurock, Lindie Gibson, Jack Luther, Eli Isaly, Kristin Vanderland. Staff: Jennifer Severson, Planning Director.

A quorum was present.

2. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the December 12, 2024 minutes by Gibson. Second by Vanderland. Motion passed 5 to 0.

3. Election of Officers

Chair: Motion to nominate Tom Blurock by Luther. Second by Gibson. Motion passed 5 to 0.

Vice Chair: Motion to nominate Jack Luther by Blurock. Second by Vanderland. Motion passed 5 to 0.

General Public Comment

City Manager Grant Gager thanked Commissioners for their service. No additional public comment.

4. Design Review: Main Street Print Shop and Park County Community Journal, 108 N. Main Street

Staff presented a request for two non illuminated, flat wall signs for Main Street Print Shop and the Park County Community Journal. The signs were proposed within the existing brick insets above the awning. Dimensions were stated as approximately 30 inches tall by 118 inches wide. Commissioners confirmed the awning would remain in place and asked whether the proposed signs met City sign standards. Staff confirmed compliance.

No public comment was offered on this item. Commissioners discussed the signs briefly and noted that locating the signs within the existing brick insets helped limit visual impacts in the historic district.

Motion to approve by Gibson. Second by Vanderland. Motion passed 5 to 0.

5. Design Review: Fainting Goat Pub, 122 N. Main Street

Staff presented a request for a hanging blade sign to be installed at the Main Street entrance for the Fainting Goat Pub. The applicant proposed an internally illuminated version of the existing sign design located on Park Street, with the Main Street sign intended to be lit from within. Staff noted that the sign was reviewed against current sign code requirements and stated it was compliant. Staff also referenced the City's dark sky standards, noting that internally illuminated signs are addressed in the broader code, while the Commission's review focuses on the historic district design standards.

Public comment was received. Bob Ebinger (128 S Yellowstone) stated concern with internally illuminated, modern style signage in the historic district. He described the proposal as similar to conventional commercial signage and asked the Commission to favor external lighting or another approach that would be more consistent with the historic character of the district. He stated he would vote against internally illuminated signage if he were on the Commission.

Jeff Galli (302 N Yellowstone) stated sign would be more attractive if externally lit.

Commission discussion followed. Commissioners asked clarifying questions about materials, lighting, and how the proposed sign compared to the existing Park Street sign. Staff and commissioners discussed prior code expectations and how the current sign code differs from past practice. Commissioners noted that the proposal met sign code requirements but expressed mixed views about whether internal illumination was appropriate for the historic district. Some commissioners indicated a preference for external illumination as a more traditional treatment.

Motion to approve by Gibson. Second by Vanderland. Roll call vote: Blurock: no; Luther: yes; Isaly: yes; Vanderland: yes; Gibson: yes. Motion passed 4 to 1.

6. Design Review: Industrial Towel Building Demolition Permit, 218 S. 2nd Street

Staff introduced the request for a demolition permit for a commercial building within the downtown historic district and reviewed the Commission's role in making a recommendation before the City may act on the permit. Staff outlined the intended meeting structure for this item: applicant presentation, public comment, commissioner questions, commission discussion, and then a motion and vote.

Applicant presentation: Developer Eric Horn presented the proposed project and described it as a mixed use development intended to activate the Second Street corridor and serve as a gateway to Sacajawea Park. He stated the request before the Commission was limited to the

demolition permit and explained that securing the permit was needed to proceed with schematic design and entitlements. Horn stated that the Second Street brick facade was intended to be preserved and integrated as a key element of the future development, and that an as built survey would be used to document existing conditions and inform structural bracing and phasing. Horn referenced efforts to pursue assistance through the Urban Renewal Authority to support facade integration and inclusion of affordable housing units. He described a concept that included a blend of market rate and affordable housing, associated parking, and a small neighborhood restaurant.

Project concepts and technical discussion: The project team discussed a massing concept described as a U shaped building with a central courtyard. They described a podium level intended to accommodate parking and the restaurant, with residential units above. Commissioners asked whether the podium would cover the entire site and discussed how the restaurant would relate to the preserved facade. The team described exploring setbacks near the adjacent historic building to the north, including a rough 13 to 15 foot setback concept in relation to a nearby cobble foundation, and discussed how future design review would occur when more detailed drawings are developed. The team described anticipated methods for temporarily bracing and supporting the facade during demolition and construction, including documenting the wall and surrounding conditions through an as built survey. Commissioners also heard discussion of geotechnical conditions and the need to understand subsurface conditions as part of structural planning.

Public comment: Multiple speakers supported adding downtown housing but emphasized that historic preservation must remain central to the decision. Several commenters stated that demolition would permanently remove historic resources and urged the Commission to ensure that the preserved facade is not treated as optional.

Julie Riley, 214 S. 2nd Street, Unit B, speaking also for Gregory and Violet Rasnick, stated support for development and downtown vitality but opposed demolition or damage to the existing building and facade. She urged the owner to consider project alternatives that work with the existing structure and warned that approval without clear preservation requirements could set a harmful precedent.

Kris King, 425 W. Chinook, Executive Director of Explore Livingston, stated support for mixed use development and downtown workforce housing and noted that additional activation on Second Street could increase foot traffic and support businesses. King recommended using additional renderings and view studies as the project advances to help the public understand building height and context.

Sarah Barnett, a neighboring property owner, asked what responsibility the project would have if adjacent buildings are damaged during demolition or construction and expressed concern about massing and neighborhood impacts, including views from nearby homes.

An additional speaker questioned whether a structural study had established that the existing building was unsafe and stated opposition to demolishing the building rather than working with it.

Commission questions and discussion: Commissioners asked the applicant and consultants to explain the as built survey process, including how the facade would be documented, temporarily braced, and ultimately integrated into the new construction. Commissioners noted that some language in the demolition permit materials described the facade as something that may be preserved, and commissioners stated concern that the Commission's action needed to create a clear expectation. Horn stated that the team intended to make a serious effort to preserve the facade and agreed that, if future study shows the facade cannot be preserved, the applicant would return to the Commission to explain why and to discuss next steps. Commissioners also discussed broader concerns raised in public comment, including building massing, setbacks near adjacent historic resources, and the importance of avoiding impacts to surrounding properties during demolition and construction.

Motions and vote: A motion to approve demolition as presented was made but did not receive a second and therefore did not proceed. A motion was then made to approve the demolition permit with the condition that the existing brick facade be saved and incorporated into the design of the new building, and that if preserving the facade is not feasible the applicant must return to the Commission with additional information before proceeding. Second by Gibson. Roll call vote: Blurock: yes; Luther: yes; Gibson: yes; Isaly: yes; Vanderland: yes. Motion passed 5 to 0.

7. Old Business

None.

8. Board Comments

None.

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned.