



**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

**APPROVED**

**URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**DATE:** Wednesday April 1, 2026

**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** City Council Chambers, City Hall, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois

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**MEMBERS ATTENDING:** David Hays, Kathryn Holliday, Dennis Roberts, Trent Shepard, Angela Urban, Andrew Weiss

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Laura O'Donnell

**STAFF PRESENT:** Olivia Jovine, Community Development Services Director and Zoning Administrator; Aimirou Sy, Planner II; Kate Himick, Planner I; Eric McCann, Grants Specialist

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Matthew Bastianen, Ziv Rome-Blech, Shizuka Hayasaki, Isabella Li, Bennet Scala

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**A. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL**

Chair Urban called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

**B. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

There were none.

**C. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

**Minutes of June 4, 2025, Regular Meeting**

The minutes of June 4, 2025, Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission were presented for approval. Mr. Hays moved that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the minutes. Mr. Roberts seconded.

Mr. Shepard sought the following changes:

- Mr. Shepard's last name [Shepard] was spelled incorrectly in multiple locations; he marked the incorrect versions so that updates in their entirety could be made.

- Agenda Item **J. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**
  - On page three (3), “Mr. Marcus,” should be corrected to *Mr. Ricci*
  - The reference to “the Baptist Church” should be clarified as *Canaan Baptist Church on Main Street*
- Agenda Item **K. STAFF REPORT: CLG Grants Update**
  - Commissioners were uncertain who “John Wesley” was and what his involvement on the CLG Grant was. Staff clarified that this was *Jon Pressley, within the State Historic Preservation Office*. This will be corrected in the minutes.
  - On page four (4), third paragraph of the minutes, Commissioners clarified that the sentence “Mr. Ricci then states that Mr. Roberts spoke with Urbana Free Library and Joseph Royer” be updated to: *Mr. Ricci then states that Mr. Roberts spoke in reference to a Royer exhibit at either the Hotel Royer or the Urbana Free Library.*
- Agenda Item **K. STAFF REPORT: Preservation Month Activities**
  - In paragraph two, the first sentence should begin with *Dr. Holliday*.

Mr. Hays sought clarifications as to how the by-laws require him to be addressed in the minutes when he presides over a meeting in the Chair’s absence; should he be written as “Chair” for that meeting, or should he still be referred to as “Vice Chair”? Staff confirmed with the by-laws that he had two ways of being addressed:

- Option 1: Mr. Hays
- Option 2: Vice Chair Hays (when acting as Chair)

Mr. Hays requested to be called *Vice-Chair Hays* in the meeting minutes when acting as Chair.

Dr. Holliday sought the following changes or clarifications:

- Agenda Item **K. STAFF REPORT: Preservation Month Activities**
  - Paragraph 1, Sentence 1: “Mr. Ricci opened this agenda topic stating the Midcentury Modern Housing Exhibit and Tour occurs through July 12” should be corrected to reflect the two things being referred to: *Mr. Ricci opened this agenda topic stating the Mid-Century Modern Open House Tour occurred on May 31<sup>st</sup> and the Mid-Century Modern Architecture Exhibition at the Krannert Art Museum continues through July 12<sup>th</sup>.*
  - Clarification to Paragraph 2, Sentence 1: “Holliday noted opportunity to engage with audience and get them curious about their commissioners, saying it was a very large crowd, and they were eager to know who represented their commission” needs to read as: *Dr. Holliday noted the opportunity to engage with audience and get them curious about preservation, saying that it was a very large crowd, and they were eager to know how to engage [with preservation].* She continued, stating that it was not about the crowd being curious or engaging with the commissioners themselves, but “about preservation”.

Chair Urban asked if any further corrections were needed; none were offered.

The minutes of June 4, 2025, Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission were approved as corrected by a unanimous voice vote.

### **Minutes of August 6, 2025, Regular Meeting**

The minutes of August 6, 2025, Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission were presented for approval.

Chair Urban noticed that the dates listed on the agenda as “August 6, 2025,” and minutes as “August 8, 2025,” were inconsistent. The date shown for minutes should be changed to: *August 6, 2025*, for accuracy.

Mr. Shepard noted places within the minutes where his name needed to be edited, sharing that he marked these for ease of correction.

Chair Urban sought further clarifications or edits to the minutes; none were extended.

The minutes of August 6, 2025, Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission were approved as corrected by a unanimous voice vote.

### **Minutes of December 3, 2025, Regular Meeting**

The minutes of December 3, 2025, Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission were presented for approval.

Mr. Shepard sought these corrections or clarifications:

- His name was inconsistent throughout the document, and he marked where he’d like corrections to be made.
- Agenda Item **J. MONITORING OF HISTORICAL PROPERTIES:**
  - On page three (3), he clarified that “the Lincoln House” should be edited to: *the Boyden House at 404 W. Illinois St.* to reflect the official terminology.
  - On page three (3), he stated that “Webber Street owner-occupant...” should be reworded as follows: *108 N. Webber owner-occupant was given information about contractors. Mr. Shepard hoped to see improvement by next year.*
  - On page four (4), in the first sentence, Mr. Shepard noted that Mr. Roberts’ name should be edited to: *Mr. Roberts.*

Ms. Holliday sought the following edit to the minutes:

- Agenda Item **H. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS:**
  - On page two (2), Dr. Holliday requested that “Sophia, a student of the U of I...” include her last name: *Warner.*

Commissioners discussed alterations to the last sentence on page two (2), “Commissioners shared dismay at demolitions which were former nominations that failed, stressing the [care and] diligence in how these applications are presented for vote” agreeing that it should be rewritten as follows: *Commissioners shared dismay at the recent demolition of the University Place Christian Church in Champaign, stressing the need to nominate historic properties.*

Mr. Roberts noted that, on a related note, he received a demolition delay notification for two houses on East Elm Street that are close to his home. He noted that the demolition delay was a 45-day

period to allow for a building to potentially be nominated to be a historic landmark. Chair Urban thanked Mr. Roberts for the information and requested that it be included in the minutes.

Chair Urban asked for other corrections; none were offered.

The minutes of December 3, 2025, Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission were approved as corrected by a unanimous voice vote.

#### **D. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

- Housing Needs Study Community Survey
- City of Urbana Youth Services Grant FY 2021-2022
- Correspondence between Emily Kerlin and Mr. Shepard regarding potential landmark eligibility of University Laboratory High School (Uni High)
- Transmission email of HPC Commissioner comments to Emily Land of IDOT
- Handout from Dennis Roberts – Brick Sidewalk Maps
- Handout from Dennis Roberts – Urbana Pedestrian Plan on Brick Sidewalks
- Handout from Dennis Roberts – HPC Staff Memo – Dated 05-15-2003
- Handout from Dennis Roberts – Memo from William Gray – Dated 03-01-1999
- Handout from Dennis Roberts – Ordinance No. 2002-02-014

#### **E. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

There was none.

#### **F. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

#### **G. OLD BUSINESS**

##### **Section 106 – IDOT Seq. # 246422, *Florida Avenue Roadway Improvements***

Chair Urban opened this item on the agenda and gave the floor to Ms. Olivia Jovine, Director of Community Development Services and Zoning Administrator, and Ms. Kate Himick, Planner I.

Ms. Himick reported the following:

- On March 16, 2026, HPC comments from the March 4, 2026, meeting were compiled and transmitted to Emilie Land of IDOT by Ms. Himick. This submission included a cover letter and all commissioner comments. A copy of the transmittal email was included in April 1, 2026, meeting materials.
- On April 1, 2026, Ms. Himick sent Ms. Land a follow-up email and will notify the Commission when a response is received.

Chair Urban confirmed that any future correspondence from IDOT will be placed on a subsequent agenda under Old Business.

Mr. Shepard asked for clarification on the project scope. Ms. Himick stated that she would email Mr. Shepard the link to the project webpage maintained by City Engineering staff. Ms. Himick also

stated that to her recollection, the project involved traffic flow improvements, including potential traffic signals. Ms. Holliday noted that the information provided at the previous meeting was unspecific, but there would be locations where the street would be widened and streetlights and sidewalks potentially replaced. Commissioners noted materials previously provided were preliminary and lacked detailed engineering specifications. Mr. Hays noted that for much of the project area, the impact would be taken by the university property to the south, because there was no room to expand to the north; he stated that they had questions about how widening would be possible in some areas. Mr. Shepard also noted similar recent sidewalk improvements near Blair Park.

Ms. Jovine clarified that any further information from Ms. Land would be strictly on the Section 106 review process, while detailed engineering information would come from the City's Engineering Division as the project advances.

Chair Urban asked whether there were any further questions or comments. Hearing none, the Commission proceeded to the next agenda item.

## **H. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

## **I. NEW BUSINESS**

### **CDBG FY25 Grant Funds – Elm Street Sidewalks Improvement Project**

Chair Urban opened this item on the agenda, and Ms. Jovine provided background on the project and introduced Dr. Eric McCann, Grants Specialist, Community Development Services Department under the Grants. Dr. McCann attended the meeting to assist Staff in presenting information related to the Elm Street Sidewalks Improvement Project, which is proposed to utilize Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

Ms. Jovine explained that Dr. McCann has been with the city for approximately eight weeks and supports the Grants Division through review and monitoring of partner agency documentation for regulatory compliance, as well as community engagement related to grant programs. She noted that Dr. McCann has been preparing the environmental review for this project and would be available to answer questions.

Dr. McCann briefly introduced himself and summarized his professional background, which includes experience in archaeology, art history, and work with state and federal agencies on grant management, cultural resource review, and coordination with State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO).

Ms. Himick proceeded with the presentation on the Elm Street Sidewalks Improvement Project, with support from Ms. Jovine and Dr. McCann. Ms. Himick clarified that the information presented at the meeting by staff was meant to be an "initial go-around" and to spark conversation within the Commissioners. Within the presentation, the following items were outlined:

- Proposed replacement of existing brick sidewalks along E. Elm Street (running East-West along S. Grove Street to S. Urbana Street) and S. Urbana Avenue (running North-South along E. Main Street to E. Elm Street).
- Proposed work includes 6-inch Portland cement concrete sidewalks and combination curbs and gutters at intersections to improve accessibility, sidewalk width, and street-to-sidewalk transitions.
- The proposed project utilizes CDBG funds and requires a Section 106 review under the City's 2021 Programmatic Agreement (PA) with SHPO and ACHP, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.
  - Under the PA, a Qualified Professional (QP), Dr. Eric McCann, conducts the environmental review, with the HPC serving as an advisory body.
- SHPO has been contacted for a determination of Historic status, and Ms. Himick requested HPC involvement.
- Ms. Himick conducted a site visit on March 24, 2026, and documented the following conditions: the brick sidewalk was laid in herringbone pattern; no maker's marks were observed; and the condition of the sidewalks varied — some areas were intact, with others showing base failure, missing bricks, vegetation overgrowth, and tree-root displacement.
- Ms. Himick then gave the preliminary Staff assessment:
  - Sidewalks are unlikely individually eligible for local or National Register designation.
  - Sidewalks may be contributing resources within a potential district, though surrounding properties have been significantly altered.

Staff asked that Commissioners submit comments to HPC Secretary, Kate Himick, by April 6, 2026, for inclusion in the City's response to SHPO. Ms. Himick noted that she understood that this was a tight turnaround for comments.

Dr. Holliday asked to clarify the circumstances under which staff are required to send projects to the Commission. Ms. Jovine clarified that the PA was specifically in place for things that went through the Grants Division, and that funding was typically specific to rehabilitation projects. Ms. Jovine stated that the PA was expiring in September of 2026 and that questions such as these could be evaluated. Ms. Himick also noted that it was her understanding that SHPO had a template PA that Urbana's was based off.

Mr. Shepard asked for clarification on which areas contained existing, brick sidewalks. Ms. Himick noted that the project scope included the segment of E. Elm Street running between S. Urbana Avenue and Grove Street and the segment of S. Urbana Avenue running between E. Elm Street and E. Main Street. Ms. Himick also confirmed that only certain segments of these areas contained brick sidewalks and that there is no brick sidewalk running from the Southeast corner of E. Main Street and S. Urbana Avenue to the Northeast corner of E. Elm Street and S. Urbana Avenue.

Mr. Shepard discussed potential impacts to mature trees and suggested exploring minor sidewalk realignment to reduce root cutting where feasible. He suggested that sidewalk be readjusted to go around the tree.

Mr. Roberts noted that he lived near this area, in the neighborhood. Mr. Roberts requested that the Historic East Urbana Neighborhood Association (HEUNA) be informed of the project and mentioned the brick sidewalk ordinance that dictates which streets and sidewalks are considered

most significant in the area. He provided Staff with copies of the ordinance. Mr. Roberts stated that it is true that the sidewalks on that segment are not given the highest level of protection by the brick sidewalk ordinance. Mr. Roberts also noted that he was a proponent of working with community organizations, such as the local bricklayers union and the Regional Planning Commission, to build a youth training program to train young people to be bricklayers and maintain Urbana's brick sidewalks.

Ms. Jovine thanked Mr. Roberts for his comments and noted that the project is managed by the City's Public Works department and that staff will request follow-up on communication that had occurred. Ms. Jovine confirmed that they were aware of the ordinance, that the Elm Street sidewalks in the project area were not found to be a "Major Brick Walk Block," and that all abutting property owners had submitted letters in support of the project. Ms. Jovine noted that Staff being sure to follow the brick ordinance.

Ms. Holliday thanked Staff for bringing this project to the Commission and noted that in her experience, some of these brick sidewalks are significant and that guidelines and standards can be flexible for determining significance. Ms. Holliday noted that cultural landscapes still hold value, and that a consultative conversation is great for determining significance.

Mr. Shepard noted that half of the sidewalks were in horrible shape, and that something, whether repair or replacement, needed to be done. Chair Urban stated that it was also important that Urbana be an accessible city, and that there was a lot to take into account.

Mr. Hays asked for clarification on what Ms. Himick would like to receive from them to transmit to SHPO staff. Ms. Himick encouraged them to submit all thoughts but also directed them to reference page 34 of the packet provided, Section D, for guidance when preparing comments for SHPO staff.

Next steps agreed upon were that: Commissioners will submit written comments to Ms. Himick by April 6, 2026; Ms. Himick will then compile the comments to be transmitted via email to SHPO; Staff will continue coordinating with Public Works and SHPO, and Ms. Himick will return with updates at a future meeting.

## **J. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Chair Urban opened the topic on the agenda.

Mr. Shepard announced that the Royer House on Busey and Oregon (801 W. Oregon) is still for sale and empty. He's unaware if anything has been active or proposed.

No further updates were provided.

## **K. STAFF REPORT**

There was none.

## **L. STUDY SESSION**

Chair Urban opened the floor to Staff to continue with two study session topics.

### **Urbana Civic Center, 108 E. Water – Section 106, a Continued Session**

Ms. Jovine noted this is a continuation of the Commission’s February discussion. A summary of prior discussion was included in the packet. The Historic Preservation Commission is scheduled to give a 10-minute presentation at the April 6, 2026, Committee of the Whole meeting. Public Works was also scheduled to present at the April 6, 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting, with topics to include existing building conditions, the Master Facilities Plan, and the Capital Improvement Plan, with the same presentation being repeated at the May 6 Historic Preservation Commission meeting for commissioners unable to attend the Committee of the Whole meeting.

Dr. Holliday noted that it would be ideal for the Commission to have an opportunity to walk through the Civic Center, and Ms. Jovine stated that she would pass that on to facilities staff. Mr. Roberts echoed his support for this idea and requested that someone from Public Works staff be present to point out issues with the building.

Mr. Roberts proposed the possibility of reaching out to the MTD board to ask questions about the plan for the Civic Center. Ms. Jovine then stated that she had initial feedback from Ashlee McLaughlin at MTD regarding prior questions. Ms. Jovine stated that she does not speak for MTD and invited the Commissioners to reach out to MTD if they had further or more specific questions.

Ms. Jovine then offered the following information, based on her understanding:

- Only a massing study exists; no detailed schematic drawing or design has been produced.
- No architectural/engineering services have been contracted because MTD does not own the site.
- Turning-radius and operational considerations have been reviewed as part of many variables for a site.
- Other potential downtown sites were not pursued due to private ownership, possible displacements of existing tenants, and complexity.
- A 2014 Intergovernmental Agreement expressed City support for the site’s feasibility for a project such as this.
- The Civic Center was formally closed around 2018–2019, based on prior Council action.

Ms. Jovine stated that she did not have anything additional to share, and that if the Commissioners had anything they wished to discuss amongst them, they were welcome to do so.

Mr. Hays confirmed that the HPC had a 10-minute presentation slot. Chair Urban thanked Mr. Hays for requesting a presentation spot at the April 6, 2026, Committee of the Whole meeting. Commissioners agreed that Dr. Holliday and Mr. Hays will coordinate the presentation, with the possibility of brief contributions from other Commissioners. Ms. Jovine offered that Commissioners are able to also speak as members of the public during that portion of the meeting.

Regarding presentation content, Dr. Holliday stated that the Commissioners consider speaking about the Section 106 process and SHPO’s determination of National Register eligibility as it relates to the Urbana Civic Center. Mr. Roberts asked if the Commissioners should speak on the adaptive reuse of the building, and Mr. Hays suggested that they also lay out some basic groundwork for what “historic preservation” means and entails. Dr. Holliday expressed a desire to speak about the misconceptions surrounding historic preservation. Mr. Weiss stated that he saw it as a narrowing

down of topics – going from “what is history” to “what is historic preservation” to “what is the Civic Center” and finally to “what is the Section 106 process.” Mr. Hays asked if anyone felt comfortable speaking to the value of the Civic Center itself and referred to the value of Professor Altshuler’s previous presentations. Further discussion about who should speak to what topic continued.

Chair Urban noted that Urbana is not the only city struggling with the demolition of civic centers, and that other communities are facing this issue.

Next steps as agreed: Commissioners Hays and Holliday will prepare the slides and coordinate discussion for the April 6, 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting presentation. Commissioners will attend the April 6 meeting as available.

### **Section 106 – Process Review, a Continued Session**

Ms. Jovine noted that the *Section 106 Process Review* document (dated April 1, 2026) was the same version previously discussed at the March 14 (2026) meeting. Ms. Jovine noted that the purpose of the discussion was to identify improvements to Staff-to-Commission communication regarding Section 106 Reviews, and to consider which steps should be codified in the HPC’s official By-laws. She reported ongoing efforts to strengthen coordination with staff at the State Historic Preservation Office, including an introductory meeting with staff on March 12, 2026 and a follow-up meeting with Jon Pressley (Certified Local Government Program Manager) on March 31, 2026.

Ms. Jovine stated that all staff are new to their roles and are working to ensure correct contacts, communication channels, and expectations. They are exploring treating Section 106 Reviews similarly to case management, with internal milestones and clearer workflows. Commissioner input on communication improvements and potential bylaw updates was also sought.

Commissioners expressed support for clarifying internal processes and improving communication around Section 106 reviews. Dr. Holliday noted she is currently working on a research project involving CLGs in Illinois and nationally and offered to provide comparative information, if helpful.

Opportunities for public outreach during Preservation Month, including staffing a booth at the Urbana Market at the Square, were also mentioned. Ms. Jovine noted that coordination would need to occur through the Market Coordinator, Bryan Heaton.

### **M. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Staff invited commissioners to email additional study session topics or issues they would like to address later in the year. Commissioners expressed interest in devoting work time to several topics, such as the by-laws and Preservation Plan. Ms. Himick will maintain a list and work to schedule these items.

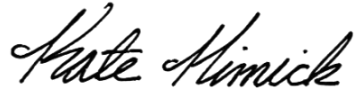
Ms. Jovine announced that the Urbana Housing Needs Study has begun, and Commissioners received a flyer for the resident survey and were encouraged to participate.

April 1, 2026

**N. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Urban adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Himick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Himick  
Historic Preservation Commission Secretary