



MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

APPROVED

URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE: August 5, 2026

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Kathryn Holliday, Laura O'Donnell, Dennis Roberts, Angela Urban, Andrew Weiss

MEMBERS EXCUSED: David Hays

STAFF PRESENT: Olivia Jovine, Director of Community Development Services; Evan Alvarez, Principal Planner; Kate Himick, Planner I; Teri Andel, Administrative Assistant II

OTHERS PRESENT: Chris Evans, Phyllis Williams

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 with a majority of the members present.

B. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

C. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes of March 4, 2026 Regular Meeting

The minutes of March 4, 2026 regular meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Weiss moved to approve the minutes. Dr. Holliday seconded the motion.

Mr. Roberts requested a correction to the minutes on Page 6, 3rd Paragraph, Last Line. It should read as such, "*make an effort to ~~an~~ err on the side of having more segmentation in the agendas in the future.*"

The March 4, 2026 regular minutes were then approved by unanimous voice vote as amended.

D. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

- Draft Letter from Urbana Historic Preservation Commission to Dan DiGiuseppe regarding the Section 106 review for the Urbana Civic Center

NOTE: Chair Urban mentioned that she received interest from Klayton Matlock to serve on the Historic Preservation Commission; however, at the time, there were no vacancies. Since then, he has accepted a position on the Plan Commission.

Chair Urban noted that Trent Shepard, who has been a longtime Commission member on the Historic Preservation Commission since the foundation, resigned. Now there is a vacancy on the Historic Preservation Commission, so she reached out to Mr. Matlock to see if he would be interested in filling the vacancy. She also checked with City staff to see if he could serve on two commissions at the same time, and he can. She believes he will be applying to serve on the Historic Preservation Commission soon.

E. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Chris Evans approached the Historic Preservation Commission to speak. He stated that he is speaking as a resident, not as a Council member. He thanked the Historic Preservation Commission for an outstanding job on the Civic Center. He stated that he appreciates the Commission's passion and effort.

Mr. Evans talked about the Honorary Street Program. He presented an update on the process of creating the proposed program in Urbana. He was asked by City Administration to hold off requesting it to be added to the Council agenda. He mentioned that the Council members have taken a 10-page survey to find out what they wanted to have in Urbana. There are many residents who initiated and are still interested in having the program.

He talked about his proposed process for applications. He mentioned that the Public Works Department would be willing and able to print four (4) signs per year for the proposed program. He noted that there are still some things to work out at the City Council level, and some of the Council members are not in favor of the program.

F. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

G. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NOTE: Mr. Roberts spoke about creating Design Overlay District Guidelines. Chair Urban recalled that the Commission voted to include it on a future agenda. Ms. Himick stated that she would review the recordings of the previous meetings to see if the motion was to add this topic to a specific month's agenda.

Mr. Roberts mentioned that he is not available to attend the October 2026 meeting and would be willing to add it to the agenda during the winter months unless the Commission wanted to jumpstart discussion at the September 2026 meeting.

He stated that during the evaluation of the Main Street Planned Unit Development case at a Plan Commission meeting, he recalled that one or two of the Plan Commission members said that they did not know how to respond to comments people said about the design not being appropriate because there are no standards to which they could refer. He believes that the Historic Preservation Commission is the body that should provide standards or recommendations.

Chair Urban suggested that the Commission vote to add the Design Overlay District Guidelines to the September 2026 agenda. Mr. Roberts moved that the Historic Preservation Commission add “Creating Design Overlay Guide Discussion” to the September 2026 agenda under Study Session. The guide would be for the future use of different agencies and the community. Dr. Holliday seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

H. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

I. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

J. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

There was none.

Kate Himick, Planner I, mentioned that Planning staff were notified that there was work done on the porch of the Ezekiel Boyden Historic Landmark without permitting. So, staff are working with the owners to rectify the situation. Ms. Himick said that there will be a Certificate of Appropriateness coming before the Historic Preservation Commission in the next month or two.

Dr. Holliday stated that when the local landmarks and districts were divided amongst the Commission members, she was not assigned any properties. So, if there is a need to reassign any properties, maybe the ones that Mr. Shepard was monitoring, she would be happy to take those properties on.

The Commission discussed the spreadsheet that previous Planning staff, particularly Marcus Ricci, had created. The spreadsheet showed which Commission member is responsible for each landmark and district. Ms. Himick stated that staff can certainly re-evaluate and reshare the spreadsheet. Chair Urban stated that there are issues with accessing the spreadsheet on Google Drive.

K. STAFF REPORT

Audit of Historic Surveys

Kate Himick, Planner I, presented an update on the Audit of Historic Surveys. She mentioned that Adeline Evans, former intern, will return to work at the City of Urbana on Monday, August 10,

2026. Ms. Evans will be continuing her previous endeavors and will also be aiding staff in data management, analysis and next steps for the historic surveys.

L. STUDY SESSION

Bylaws Review and Revision, Section 106 Proposal - Continued

Chair Urban opened this item on the agenda. Kate Himick, Planner I, presented changes to the bylaws. She reviewed three options the Historic Preservation Commission must choose from regarding the timeline for the initial review process of Section 106 reviews. Ms. Himick asked if any of the Commissioners had questions at this point before she presented other changes to the bylaws.

Dr. Holliday stated that she would love to see the invitation to participate in Section 106 review brought as written communication to one of the Historic Preservation Commission's regularly scheduled meetings even if it does not conform to the 30-day window just so that it serves as public notification. She also suggested that language be added, stating that the initial process outlined is in regard to the initial response to the invitation and that it is distinct from the Commission's participation in Section 106 review over what is often one to two years after that. The Commission, in an open meeting, will decide how it is represented in the subsequent meetings of review. Ms. Himick stated that there is plenty of room to put additional language regarding these suggestions. She mentioned that the intention is that even though a Section 106 review invitation does not meet the 30-day schedule, a written notice of consulting party invitation status would be brought to a Historic Preservation Commission meeting.

Chair Urban stated that she likes that Article IX.7 mentions that it is coordinated with the Chair, and if the Chair is not available, then it goes to the Vice Chair or a separate designated commissioner. The proposed language mentions that the letter should be signed by both parties... the Secretary and the Chair of the Historic Preservation Commission, or other as needed. She asked if language could be added to Option B and Option C that the Chair reviews and signs the letter. Ms. Himick replied yes.

Chair Urban stated that it is helpful to have a full week to do what you need to as the Commission Secretary. In Option A, she wondered if week four could be condensed, as it is in Option B. She asked if Option B would be doable from staff's perspective. Ms. Himick said yes, especially once a template cover letter is in place. Her own concern with Option B is the turnaround time for review if someone has a family emergency or is unavailable. She said that is why the language is there about if the Chair is unavailable, it goes to the Vice Chair and so on. So long as everyone is aware that when we do get them, there may be an increase in email communications to ensure we get everything turned back in to the federal agency on time.

The Commission members chose to move forward with Option B. If the Commission members or staff want to revise it, then they can do it later.

Dr. Holliday asked if she could email her other comments to Ms. Himick. Ms. Himick replied yes. The Commission members are always welcome to send emails.

Ms. Himick continued with her presentation of changes to the bylaws. She noted two major changes. The first change is on Page 15, Number 16, which states, ~~“The Chairperson shall close the public hearing only after the Historic Preservation Commission has taken action on the case. If the Commission has continued the case to a later date, the public hearing may be reopened at the same meeting at the discretion of the Chairperson or on a motion approved by the majority of the Commissioners present and voting. The Chair shall close the public hearing only after the Historic Preservation Commission has taken action on a case. The public input portion of the hearing may be reopened at the same meeting prior to the Commission’s action at the discretion of the Chair or on a motion approved by the majority of the Commissioners present and voting.”~~ She stated that there was a lot of confusion as to the meaning intent, which meeting it was referring to, who it was referring to, or all of the above. This language was not in the Historic Preservation Commission original bylaws, but it was added in 2008. She proposes to replace this language in the Historic Preservation Commission bylaws with the much clearer language that already exists in the Plan Commission bylaws.

Ms. Himick talked about the last major change on Page 9, Article XI, General Provisions, which states, *“Commissioners shall not communicate with other commissioners outside of Historic Preservation Commission meetings for the purpose of influencing such commissioners to adopt a position on a matter then pending or reasonably expected to come before the Commission.”* She said that there was concern that this would impact on the buddy system and Open Meetings Act (OMA) and the way this Commission has been operating to collaborate on group work. She added that this is the same language that is in the Plan Commission bylaws and from the original 1999 Historic Preservation Commission bylaws. She mentioned that City staff discussed this as a team and got clarification from the City Clerk's office that this is essentially just a decorum clause stating that Commissioners should not put undue pressure on others in a non-professional or harassing manner.

Ms. Urban asked if using the buddy system would still be fine. Ms. Himick said yes. Mr. Roberts asked if the Commission should codify this. Ms. Himick replied that it might be useful to provide language in the bylaws referencing the OMA. Ms. Andel mentioned that while retaking the OMA training, there is language about subcommittees and whether having two members violates OMA. She recommended that Mr. Alvarez, Ms. Jovine, the City Attorney, and maybe even inquire with the Illinois Attorney General’s office to ensure that the buddy system does not violate OMA. Dr. Holliday replied that subcommittees are formally organized and two Commission members talking with each other about Commission business does not constitute a subcommittee typically. While clarification does seem necessary, she does not think that the buddy system is really an issue. Chair Urban stated that she agrees; however, if they are considering adding language to the bylaws about the buddy system, then it would be good to formally find out.

Section 106 Regulations Revision and Discussion

Chair Urban opened this item on the agenda. She announced that there are two parts to this topic. The first part is regarding the changes to Section 106 review at the federal level. The second part is about Section 106 review at the local level to closeout conversation on the Urbana Civic Center.

Part One

Kate Himick, Planner I, presented a brief staff report on the federal changes being proposed to Section 106 review. Ms. Himick mentioned that she had sent an email to the Historic Preservation Commission members' City email addresses about this. She stated that the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation is an independent federal agency comprised of statutorily designated members. They voted to move forward with proposed revisions to the Section 106 regulations and essentially how Section 106 is implemented. This discussion started as early as February 2026, and revisions to Section 106 regulations have been a discussion for quite a long time, but this process went forward quite quickly without much notice for the designated members. Moving forward means that the new revisions will now move to interagency review before a public comment period. However, she received notice that negotiators in the Senate have pushed back public comments to give more time for review and understanding of what is going on. She said that this was in part due to a lot of backlash on these proposed regulations.

She referred to the fact sheet that was disbursed to the members prior to the start of the meeting. She noted that it is from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. There are three (3) general categories of what is been proposed.

One is that the revisions would consolidate agency control, giving federal agencies much more control over the Section 106 process. They also reduce the application of what counts as a historic property and reduce the scope of consideration. So, what is considered an undertaking is much more narrowed and what counts as an adverse effect would be narrowed.

She mentioned that there are great resources from Cultural Heritage Partners, which she will share with the Commission members and public after this meeting. Cultural Heritage Partners and various other legal groups have made known their intent to file lawsuits against these proposed regulations should it become necessary.

Ms. Himick said that she does not know when the public comment period will open given the uncertainty with Senate deadlines and how that is working. However, there are guidelines on various internet sources on how to submit public comments. There are also specificities to these public comments. If you are interested, she highly recommends reading through templates or suggested material.

Dr. Holliday reiterated that it is a major sudden and abrupt policy change that has been recommended by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, which is the federal agency that oversees federal historic preservation efforts. She noted that the National Trust of Historic Preservation Officers is great for providing suggestions about when and where and language for public comments. Also, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO) has good updates and guidance on public comments and good newsletters and posts about the consequences of the proposed changes. It has really opened the Section 106 debate, which I think we are all very aware of at this point on one level. However, on another level, there has been a lot of debate and commentary about the benefits and drawbacks of Section 106 review and on how it has been useful and helpful and has helped shape projects in positive ways.

Ms. Himick stated that while the public comment requirements can be quite specific and these agencies and groups' templates and instructions will be very helpful for people when public

comment opens, she heard that with the way public comment is collected, if they have too many duplicates, it could be AI screened and considered to be one public comment. So, if 500 people use a template, it might be considered one public comment instead of 500. It is good to use these materials to structure your thoughts on how to meet requirements for public comment but try to give it some individuality so your comments pass AI screening.

Part Two

Chair Urban mentioned that she and Dr. Holliday spoke with Quinn Adamowski with Landmark Illinois regarding the Section 106 review on the Urbana Civic Center. She said that she shared the letter with Mr. Adamowski that she had sent to the City Council. He provided advice, and one suggestion he made was for the Historic Preservation Commission to write a collective letter to close out the Section 106 review on the Civic Center.

She mentioned that she and Dr. Holliday had talked about what should be in the letter, and then Dr. Holliday drafted the letter, which is pretty straight, simple, and to the point. The Historic Preservation Commission can either work off the draft letter or could start from scratch. Or maybe other Commission members do not want to send a letter as a commission. She asked for comments and thoughts from the Commission members.

Mr. Roberts stated that it is empowering for the Commission to speak as a Commission and to be able to help clarify historic preservation issues and to respect and honor the history of our community. He said that Dr. Holliday has even expanded his understanding of what that could entail. Historic Preservation is broader than just about buildings that we are trying to preserve.

Chair Urban clarified that the Historic Preservation Commission and the City Council have already voted, and the Section 106 review and landmark application process is done. The draft letter is a way to close out the record. The draft letter states the Historic Preservation Commission's position on what happened and the process.

Mr. Roberts stated the Historic Preservation Commission has an important role in speaking about the concerns that historic preservation needs to be considered in some cases that come before the Plan Commission and providing some guidance to the Plan Commissioners. He said that he is even concerned with the Boneyard Creek Commission being reduced to one (1) individual, who does not seem to have any oversight in personal awareness of some of the topics that touch on historic preservation issues. The Plan Commission and the Boneyard Creek Commissioner are more engineering oriented and use references related to flood depth and years of flooding and are not typically taking consideration of historic or personalized aspects of a decision. Olivia Jovine, Director of Community Development Services, reminded the Commission to keep their conversation related to Section 106 review as much as possible to maintain the integrity of the study session. Ms. Jovine noted that a Boneyard Creek conversation could happen at a later meeting.

Dr. Holliday clarified that she wants to make sure if the Commission decides to send a letter that is co-signed that they have followed the procedure necessary to do so. So, there is a draft of a letter before the Historic Preservation Commission. What are the next steps? Should the Commission read the letter into the record, so the public is aware of the Commission's position? Can the Commission edit the letter together? Ms. Jovine said that she is conflicted because although this conversation is certainly a continuation of the Section 106 process, drafting a letter should be a

standalone topic. The Commission can generally discuss the letter at this meeting, but any word smithing could have its own study session and be appropriately noticed on an agenda. She did not know a letter had already been drafted. Ms. Himick added that Chair Urban did reach out to her as the Secretary of the Historic Preservation Commission to notify her that the potential for a letter was going to be discussed and to ask that this topic on the agenda be revised to be a broader topic. Chair Urban clarified that the original intent for the Section 106 Review and Discussion topic was to hold discussion about the letter; however, they started receiving information regarding the federal level changes to Section 106 review. So, the topic was expanded to include discussion on the changes as well.

Dr. Holliday stated she does not feel that the Commission needs to have an additional meeting to draft a letter because the letter is available now at this meeting, and it is on the agenda. She said that it is helpful to have this confirmed.

Chair Urban asked if they should read the letter out loud so that the public can hear what it says. Ms. Jovine replied that she did not know. To err on the side of caution, the Commission could read it out loud. Staff will follow up and find procedures for future meetings. Mr. Roberts pointed out that at City Council, when they receive a public input via email or a letter, they are given a certain amount of time to read it. This letter was drafted by the Commission so reading it orally would make it public. Chair Urban stated that they are in Study Session, so the Commission should be allowed to read it and then edit it. She then read the draft letter out loud.

Mr. Weiss commented that it should appear less jargony, such as “FTA” and “SHPO,” since it is for public record. He asked if the Commission should enclose the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or is that overkill? Dr. Holliday said that they should have it because they wrote the MOA, but it might be nice to include the copy that we are working from in case there is a difference between the copy we have and the copy that they have.

Ms. O'Donnell asked if they should start the letter out as “We, the members of Urbana's Historic Preservation Commission, ...”, so people know who the letter is from. Dr. Holliday stated that their names can be added to the top or the bottom. Chair Urban said that it would be important to add their names at the bottom of the letter.

Mr. Weiss stated that he is prepared to add his name to the letter. Mr. Roberts agreed. He said that it is an excellent letter and is very clear.

Chair Urban said that Mr. Hays is not attending this meeting, and she would like to get his support as well. Due to complications with the audio system, Mr. Hays could not attend the meeting remotely.

Ms. Himick stated that the Commission would need to vote on the letter at a future meeting so staff can put it on the agenda as New Business. The Commission is welcome to hold a special meeting. Dr. Holliday said that she is in favor of timeliness and not to defer this for a month, so she would be in favor of having a special meeting. There was discussion on the timeline for holding a special meeting. Staff will need to confirm the process and what notification procedures need to be followed, but it would be a minimum of a week.

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Mr. Roberts moved that the Historic Preservation Commission request a special meeting to move the collective letter to New Business, which would be a formal version of the letter for vote with the corrections, clarifications, and names of all the Commission members at the signature. Mr. Weiss seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

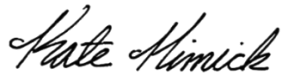
M. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

N. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. O'Donnell moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Holliday seconded the motion. Chair Urban adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Himick".

Kate Himick
Historic Preservation Commission Secretary