



**CITY OF URBANA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

DATE: Wednesday, June 04, 2025
TIME: 7:00 PM
PLACE: 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801

AGENDA

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

B. Changes to the Agenda

C. Approval of Minutes

[Minutes](#) of the January 8, 2025 Rescheduled Meeting

[Minutes](#) of the March 5, 2025 Regular Meeting

D. Written Communications

E. Audience Participation

F. Continued Public Hearings

G. Old Business

H. New Public Hearings

I. New Business

J. Monitoring of Historic Properties

K. Staff Report

Monthly Staff Report - June 2025

L. Study Session

Presentation on Gothic Revival Cottage at 118 North Webber Street - Stewart Berlocher

Certified Local Government Grant Awards & Next Steps

Historic Preservation Plan

M. Announcements

N. Adjournment

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PUBLIC INPUT

The City of Urbana welcomes Public Input during open meetings of the City Council, the City Council's Committee of the Whole, City Boards and Commissions and other City-sponsored meetings. Our goal is to foster respect for the meeting process, and respect for all people participating as members of the public body, city staff, and general public. The City is required to conduct all business during public meetings. The presiding officer is responsible for conducting those meetings in an orderly and efficient manner.

Public Input will be taken in the following ways:

Email Input

In order to be incorporated into the record, emailed public comments must be received prior to 5:00 pm on the day preceding the meeting and sent to the following email address: Planning@urbanail.gov. The subject line of the email must include the words **"HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION - PUBLIC INPUT"** and the meeting date. Emailed public comments labeled as such will be incorporated into the public meeting record, with personal identifying information redacted.

Written Input

Any member of the public may submit their comments addressed to the members of the public body in writing. If a person wishes their written comments to be included in the record of Public Input for the meeting, the writing should so state. Written comments must be received prior to the closing of the meeting record (at the time of adjournment unless otherwise noted).

Public Hearing

Any person desiring to appear at the public hearing and present testimony may speak during each public hearing at the time they appear on the agenda. This shall not count towards regular Public Input for the meeting. The Public Hearing is an opportunity for comments and questions to be addressed specific to each case. Board or Commission members are permitted to respond and engage during this time and/or the Chairperson may direct the applicant to respond during rebuttal. Comments unrelated to any of the public hearings listed on an agenda should be shared during the Public Input portion of the meeting where Verbal Input guidelines shall apply.

Verbal Input

Protocol for Public Input is one of respect for the process of addressing the business of the City. Obscene or profane language, or other conduct that threatens to impede the orderly progress of the business conducted at the meeting is unacceptable.

Public comment shall be limited to no more than five (5) minutes per person. The Public Input portion of the meeting shall total no more than one (1) hour, unless otherwise shortened or extended by majority vote of the public body members present. The presiding officer or the city clerk or their designee, shall monitor each speaker's use of time and shall notify the speaker when the allotted time has expired. A person may participate and provide Public Input once during a meeting and may not cede time to another person, or split their time if Public Input is held at two (2) or more different times during a meeting.

The presiding officer or public body members shall not enter into a dialogue with citizens. Questions from the public body members shall be for clarification purposes only. Public Input shall not be used as a time for problem solving or reacting to comments made but, rather, for hearing citizens for informational purposes only.

In order to maintain the efficient and orderly conduct and progress of the public meeting, the presiding officer of the meeting shall have the authority to raise a point of order and provide a verbal warning to a speaker who engages in the conduct or behavior proscribed under “Verbal Input”. Any member of the public body participating in the meeting may also raise a point of order with the presiding officer and request that they provide a verbal warning to a speaker. If the speaker refuses to cease such conduct or behavior after being warned by the presiding officer, the presiding officer shall have the authority to mute the speaker’s microphone and/or video presence at the meeting. The presiding officer will inform the speaker that they may send the remainder of their remarks via e-mail to the public body for inclusion in the meeting record.

Accommodation

If an accommodation is needed to participate in a City meeting, please contact the City at least 48 hours in advance using one of the following methods:

Phone: **217.384.2440**

Email: **Planning@urbanail.gov**

Watching the Meeting via Streaming Services

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MINUTES OF A RESCHEDULED MEETING

URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE: January 8, 2025

DRAFT

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ATTENDING: David Hays, Laura O'Donnell, Angela Urban, Andrew Weiss

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Kathryn Holliday, Dennis Roberts, Trent Shepard

STAFF PRESENT: Marcus Ricci, Planner II; Teri Andel, Planning Administrative Assistant II

OTHERS PRESENT: Susan Appel, Phyllis Winters-Williams

A. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

Chair Urban called the meeting to order at 7:01 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

There were none.

D. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

- Urbana Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report – January 8, 2025
- Urbana Historic Preservation Plan Revision – January 8, 2025

E. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

F. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

G. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

H. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

I. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

J. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Chair Urban opened this item on the agenda. She stated that at the previous meeting in November 2024, Mr. Ricci presented the list of Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) members and the historic properties, which they are responsible for monitoring. She stated that the properties that she monitors did not have any changes. She has not updated the spreadsheet.

Mr. Ricci stated that Ms. O'Donnell took pictures of her assigned properties and entered them into the spreadsheet. This is great because it will establish a photo timeline.

Mr. Weiss stated that he also did not report in the spreadsheet. There were not any changes. He went on to say that he was happy to experience in person the bike path convergence where the City of Urbana was going to remove brick sidewalk in order to make it safer for bicyclists.

K. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Ricci reported on the following:

a) Items of Interest:

▪ ***CLG Grant Update***

Mr. Ricci stated that the City was only allowed to submit two grant applications to the State, which we submitted the application for the Royer Education project and the application for the Historic Preservation Website Update. He is still waiting to hear from Jon Pressley with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) about the status of the applications. He stated that he is working with the City's Finance Department to set up an account to pay future interns who work on updating the website.

▪ ***Historic Preservation Month Activities***

Mr. Ricci said that the month of May will be here sooner than we know, so we can start getting ready to assist Ms. Holliday in advertising or staffing the Mid-Century Modern Housing Tour. Mr. Hays added that the exhibit will open later this month at the Krannert Art Museum. The exhibit will run all spring.

b) Historic Property Activities:

▪ **Landmarking and Districts**

Mr. Ricci stated that there are no recent inquiries for local landmarks and/or districts.

He said that Ms. Holliday and her class are working with Reverend Freeman of the First United Methodist Church to prepare a nomination application for the church as a landmark on the National Register.

▪ **Certificates of Appropriateness in Progress or Review**

Mr. Ricci talked about the following:

- ✓ Buena Vista Court Utility Work – Volo.Net Internet is installing fiber optic internet. Most of the installation is underground. The only above-ground work is attaching little interface boxes on the homes, which the Zoning Administrator determined would be an exempt activity, because the boxes are considered temporary.
- ✓ 8 Buena Vista (HP-2021-COA-01) – He said that he believed the access ramp had been removed already. He needs to work with the new owners to see whether they intend to repair and/or do porch alterations as planned in the Certificate of Appropriateness request by the previous owners.
- ✓ 210 South Race Street (HP-2021-COA-03) – He said that the Urbana City Council approved an open-dated extension for the Hotel Royer. The longer it takes Hotel Royer to open to the public, the less tax reimbursement they will receive from the City. Therefore, there is no hard deadline to be finished by.

L. STUDY SESSION

Historic Preservation Plan

Chair Urban opened this item on the agenda. She mentioned that the Commission should keep in mind that any updates they make to the plan should reflect the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Ricci talked about the following:

1. Review what is in the existing 1998 Historic Preservation Plan and decide what needs to be updated
2. Four Goals of the 1998 Historic Preservation Plan (Implementation Steps)
3. Purposes of Historic Preservation
4. Other City plans that work with the Historic Preservation Plan
5. Historic Resource Surveys
6. Incentives for Historic Preservation
7. Preservation and Education
8. Agenda for Future Action
9. Appendices

The Commission should consider whether the goals correspond to the purposes of historic preservation. We may need to consult with the City Economic Development Division staff to work on the economic development and also with the Building Safety Division on preserving Downtown's buildings and facades. The Building Safety Division can also help us work with the Building Code to figure out ways that people can adaptively reuse structures more easily and more acceptably.

Mr. Ricci stated that he could start collecting other cities' preservation plans. After three or four months of staff and the Commission reviewing the plans, they could create a bullet point list of things that we would like to consider being adding to the new Preservation Plan. This would give whoever works on creating the new plan, whether it be a consultant, University of Illinois students or in-house, ideas for content in the new plan.

Chair Urban said that a good objective for today is to come up with a draft timeline. This would aid the Commission in applying for a CLG grant in the next cycle.

Mr. Hays said that he reread the 1998 Historic Preservation Plan, and there is a lot of information that is really good; however, he feels that it needs a radical revision. History is not the past, but rather an interpretation of the past. We are always making history in the present, and the past is a condition. History is preservation of the past, and the existing Plan actually does not directly preserve the past. It preserves the history, and the history it invites us to preserve is basically Native American people who were transient and the prioritizing of settlement as an excuse for claim (real estate and buildings). Then the Native American people were gone and replaced by rich, white men (no mention of women). The existing plan asks us to promote the preservation of our historic resources, which means promoting the preservation of tangible real amenities of rich white men in this community. So, we need a radical rewriting because we do not want to preserve their history. We want to practice history, meaning interpretation of the past, according to our own priorities and values. He understands this to mean the story of people, things, and conditions. They need to redress native histories by acknowledging that women are part of the formula, by acknowledging people of color, and by acknowledging the landscape elements, such as the prairie, trees of Big Grove, and the Boneyard Creek. In the mindset of the people who profit in this place, the men celebrated here, and in the continuing mindset of the community have value in so far as they support economy whether that is industry or leisure (recreation). People do not talk about preserving trees like they talk about preserving buildings, and he thinks that we should be. He would like staff and the Commission to look at the plan but imagine what we aim to preserve is much more expansive. If we rewrite the historical summary of the beginning according to new priorities, we might be asking to support different things than what we are asking for.

Mr. Ricci stated that this is amazing and a radical shift from just preserving buildings to culture. He suggested that the Commission lay out these goals before reviewing the historical summary. He feels that starting off with the history and then going to the goals implies that this history that we just summarized for you is what drove our goals. Whereas, if you lay out the goals at the beginning of the plan and then you talk about your version of the history, what your goals are frames to the reader how you see your history developed. Mr. Hays said that this is a great idea because it acknowledges the subjectivity of different generations of people.

Mr. Hays mentioned that there are three kinds of history: 1) monumental history, which takes a narrow sector and honors it to the exclusion of everything else; 2) antiquarian history, which you do not know the value of anything, so everything is important, and 3) critical history, which says that we have the right to look at how people did things in the past and disagree. What Mr. Ricci is proposing would be like history is a living document that each year people look through it and say do we need to change something. They rewrite history and reinterpret the past as they do the work to guide them on what they could focus on.

Ms. Urban agreed that we need to make the Plan more expansive and redefine what the Plan could mean for historic preservation. She said that when she read through the existing Plan, it read like it was from 1998. It was the beginning of having a Historic Preservation Commission for the City of Urbana. She said that they have gone way beyond the existing Plan, but they have not had a chance to update it. Looking at the objectives in the existing Plan helps them get started in updating the Plan. She anticipates that the updated plan will be vastly different.

Mr. Weiss stated that the framework that Professor Hays described is invaluable. Balancing the content will be refreshing.

Chair Urban talked about the timeline. Since the CLG grant application will be due in November, she believes that they should have a semblance of what they want to do by September. They should send out a Request for Proposal (RFP) to get an estimate to have a consultant rewrite the Plan. They could also figure out an estimate of how much it would cost to have University of Illinois students rewrite the plan. Mr. Ricci stated that he was unfamiliar with the RFP process and would need to look into it.

Mr. Ricci suggested that they also start asking members of the listserv of the National Association of Preservation Councils (NAPC) how much time and money they spent on updating their Historic Preservation Plan. He said that he could reach out to some consultants without doing a RFP, and the consultants would tell them how much it would cost as well. He could work on this while the Commission holds discussions to set goals and talk about how they want to approach preservation in the new plan.

Mr. Hays inquired about the scope of work that the Commission would be doing on the new plan. He pointed out that the Historic Preservation Commission did not write the 1998 Historic Preservation Plan, because the Commission did not exist yet. The Historic Preservation Plan was written by the Plan Commission and approved by City Council. He asked Mr. Ricci to check to see if they are able to rewrite their own plan. Mr. Ricci said that he would ask about the process and who can rewrite the plan.

Mr. Hays suggested that the Historic Preservation Commission go through the existing plan page by page and decide what needs to be removed, what needs to be updated and whether they need a consultant or a student to do each task that needs to be done.

Chair Urban talked about the different phases of the process. She said the first step would be an internal dive into the 1998 Historic Preservation Plan. She likes the idea of the Commission members coming to a study session with comments prepared. This may include the Historic Preservation Ordinance. The second step would be external plan review, which she imagined having two parts: one is getting examples of other city's historic preservation plans and ordinances, and the second part of step two would be what other City plans would the Commission want to tie the Historic Preservation Plan to. The third step would be getting estimates from consultants and talking with the NAPC to get a better sense of what other cities have received for different plan updates and do we need to get a RFP. The fourth step would be to figure out what we want in our plan.

Mr. Hays stated that he figured what they want should come before getting estimates, because the estimates will be based on what we want. He felt the point that is incredibly powerful is thinking about how this plan connects to other commissions and other aspects of the Plan Commission's work. He said that in a sense we are inviting the possibility of what we do being integral to the big picture so that it does not come across as it has in the past as a kind of decorative supplement or an option that is nice that the City does. The Historic Preservation Commission does not get asked to do a lot of things that they should or to weigh in on things that they should. However, if the HPC was accountable to others and others were accountable to the HPC through a set of priorities the HPC articulates in the way we interpret the past, then the work of the HPC or whatever we would be called would have more teeth to it. He stated that he frets that the work of the HPC is not central to the process of managing the City broadly speaking.

Mr. Ricci stated that there are other places in the Zoning Ordinance where Historic Preservation Commission is mentioned. For example, if there is a variance request for a property next to or adjacent to a designated landmark or district, the HPC is supposed to be asked for comments prior to the variance going to a public hearing. We may need to develop a different mechanism to aid City staff when they are processing permits.

Chair Urban suggested giving each step two months to be worked on. Mr. Ricci reminded the HPC that the Open Meetings Act says that no more than two members can work on something together without being considered a meeting of the Commission. So, two members could meet at a time and discuss what they want to keep and what they want to remove or add to the updated plan. The members could rotate and discuss the same with a different member. They could then submit their changes to him. This is something that the HPC members could do between meetings and be a way to keep the momentum and dialogue going, because it is hard to justify holding a HPC meeting without there being cases. Chair Urban agreed. She recognized that the HPC would not be able to hold a meeting every month. She suggested that they task out the different steps to different members. We know that by August, we need to start looking into costs, because we want to start writing the application for the next Certified Local Government grant cycle.

Mr. Ricci stated that he would put a word version of the 1998 Historic Preservation Plan on the Google Drive as well as a blank version of the CLG Grant application. Chair Urban asked Mr. Ricci to share the link again to the Google Drive with the Commission members.

Mr. Weiss supported the overall effort to update the Historic Preservation Plan. He said that he did not agree that historic preservation is the gatekeeper of what is right and what is wrong. He stated that revising the Plan in a sensitive way will help define or undefine that perception. Mr. Ricci stated that he hopes the planning process for updating the Plan becomes a community discussion and a collaborative discussion. There are experts at the Urbana Free Library, the University of Illinois, and in the school district that can help.

Phyllis Williams-Winters asked how the public and other organizations can submit comments. Mr. Ricci replied saying that the Plan is available for anyone to review, and they can submit comments to staff. The public and other organizations can even email City staff and Commission members.

M. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Hays announced that the “Marking Place for the Arts at Home Performance and Mid-Century Architecture” exhibition will open at the Krannert Art Museum on January 29, 2025 at 5:15 pm for members and on January 30, 2025 from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm for the general public. He explained that the exhibition focuses on four houses designed by three architects: two by Jack Backer (the Erlanger House in Urbana and Baker’s Loft Apartments on Chester Street in Champaign), Dick Williams’ home on West University Avenue in Champaign, and John Replinger’s second home in Yankee Ridge in Urbana. The properties were designed as places where performances might take place or where new artwork would be generated. The exhibition asks what the value of these places is now? How do we make use of our understanding of them? How do we interpret them for our own purposes? People will be invited to add content or comments to the exhibition. He presented additional details and noted his role in providing information and activities for the exhibition. He noted that the exhibition would run through July 2025.

Chair Urban noted that the Urbana Free Library has brochures advertising virtual walking tours of the City of Urbana. It includes several significant buildings.

N. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Urban adjourned the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Submitted,



Marcus Ricci, AICP
Historic Preservation Commission Secretary

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE: March 5, 2025

DRAFT

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

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

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

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Laura O'Donnell, Trent Shepard

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner and Zoning Administrator; Marcus Ricci, Planner II; Teri Andel, Planning Administrative Assistant II

OTHERS PRESENT: Susan Appel, Phyllis Winters-Williams

A. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

Chair Urban called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

B. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Mr. Ricci recommended moving the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan discussion under Item L – Study Session be held before Item K – Staff Report on the agenda. He noted that Mr. Garcia was present to give an update on the Comprehensive Plan. Chair Urban agreed to the change.

C. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes of the November 6, 2024 Regular Meeting

The minutes of the November 6, 2024 regular meeting were presented for approval.

Mr. Hays asked what property the two communications for the November 6, 2024 meeting referred to. Mr. Ricci replied that the emails from Kathleen Jones and Stewart Berlocher were regarding 108 North Webber Street. Chair Urban confirmed.

Mr. Hays moved that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the minutes of the November 6, 2024 regular meeting as written. Mr. Weiss seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by voice vote as written.

D. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

- Monitoring of Historic Properties – Dennis Roberts

E. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

F. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

G. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

H. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

I. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

J. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Chair Urban opened this item on the agenda.

Mr. Roberts briefly gave an update on each property he monitors. He asked what the City's legal stance is to require a property owner to make needed repairs on a property that has been designated a historic landmark or district. Mr. Ricci replied that the City does not have regulations regarding demolition by neglect or enforcing repairs on properties that are not rental properties. Mr. Roberts stated that since it is a stairway that needs repaired at 104 North Central Avenue, which is the Halberstadt House, it would be considered a safety hazard. He said that sometimes reminding people that the City is watching is an impetus for people to take action. Mr. Ricci stated that this would be a good opportunity to find out how the Historic Preservation Commission works with other City agencies and organizations and with our landmark property owners and residents.

Mr. Ricci stated that this is the type of monitoring that the Commission hoped for to keep an eye on existing historic landmark and district properties and to be able to address issues before they fall down, or someone gets hurt. Mr. Roberts added that we are watching, but it is really on the onus of the property owner to be responsible for their property.

Chair Urban reminded the Commission members that there is a Google spreadsheet where they can add this type of information about the properties that they monitor. Mr. Hays mentioned that he had problems linking into the spreadsheet and gets error messages. Chair Urban said she had problems as well. Mr. Ricci said that he would look into what might be causing the issues.

Mr. Hays stated that there is nothing to report on the properties in the 800 block of West Main Street.

L. STUDY SESSION

Imagine Urbana Comprehensive Plan Discussion

Chair Urban opened this item on the agenda. She invited Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner and Zoning Administrator for the City of Urbana, to give an update on the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan. He began by talking about the timeline. He stated that there is still time to submit comments online. He said that staff would be able to add a couple of items related to historic preservation to dovetail nicely with some other things in the plan, so staff could really use input from the Historic Preservation Commission. He believed it would also be a good idea to add updating the Historic Preservation Plan in the Comprehensive Plan.

Chair Urban asked if the plan was being adjudicated in real time or do they need to submit the same type of comments that they might have already submitted. Mr. Garcia said that staff has tried to address most comments that they have received so far. If the Commission members submitted comments and notice that changes have not been made, staff is still in the process of making changes. He said that staff has been keeping track of changes as they make them. It would be a good idea to also keep track of comments that staff did not agree with or did not make changes in the plan in response.

Mr. Ricci mentioned that some members have a question about if the new plan would have a list of other plans that are still active or are no longer listed because they are incorporated into the new plan or are obsolete. He said that there was a list; however, staff has been talking with Plan Commission members about what other plans they should carry over into the new Comprehensive Plan. The ones they are discussing to carry over are actual approved amendments to the existing 2005 Comprehensive Plan, such as the Bicycle Master Plan, the 2012 Downtown Plan, Champaign County's Greenways and Trails, and the Hazard Mitigation Plan. There are certainly some other plans that have influenced the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, such as the Downtown Study.

Mr. Ricci asked if when the Historic Preservation Commission does a revised version of the Historic Preservation Plan, could it be adopted as an element to the new Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Garcia said yes, especially if the new Comprehensive Plan says something about updating the Historic Preservation Plan. Chair Urban stated that it is important to show that the Historic Preservation Plan and the new Comprehensive Plan reflect each other.

Mr. Ricci stated that when doing the grant writing for a new Historic Preservation Plan, it would be helpful to be able to state that historic preservation philosophies were mentioned in the new Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Roberts asked if they should submit their comments on the online input site. Mr. Garcia said yes. He showed how to get to the link from the City's webpage.

Mr. Garcia briefly showed some of the different text in the proposed *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan. He mentioned that there are drafts of some maps. He talked about Place Types (known as Future Land Use designations in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan). He showed how to make comments on the proposed new plan. He mentioned that the content is more refined since staff has been holding study sessions with the Plan Commission for the last month and a half.

Mr. Hays commented that when you look at the different Big Moves, you think about the places where recommendations for revising the Historic Preservation Plan could be mentioned, and there are multiple places. Mr. Garcia said that this has been the case with other topics as well. It is hard to slot certain things into one area.

Mr. Roberts asked if staff could add another Big Move “L” that deals with historic preservation as an important aspect of city life, culture, and history. Mr. Garcia said that he is hesitant to add another Big Move without giving it some serious thought. It could be an option. Mr. Roberts suggested maybe the Historic Preservation Commission members should go to the Plan Commission meeting and advocate for more content to be in the new plan for historic preservation. Mr. Garcia stated that the public hearing for *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan at the Plan Commission meeting is a great time for folks to voice their opinion whether it is as a representative of the Historic Preservation Commission or as a resident in Urbana.

Chair Urban stated that she does not see any changes reflecting the comments that she knows were made. How do the Commission members know whether their comments have been considered, added to the plan or whether their comments were rejected? Mr. Garcia stated that he will go through to ensure that staff has addressed all of the comments that have been submitted, and he will figure out a way to best convey this.

Ms. Holliday said that the best place to add content about historic preservation would be under Big Move 3, because an update to the Historic Preservation Plan would make it more comprehensive across the City, not just relevant to Downtown Urbana. She said a new Historic Preservation Plan should involve surveying the City as a whole and understanding in a granular way historic preservation needs of different parts of the City. She said a one-size fits all Historic Preservation Ordinance does not work anymore. A good new Ordinance would be tailored to understanding the needs of individual pieces of the City in different ways. She said that adding a bullet point to other Big Moves, such as the ones for the economic drive for downtown and for the cultural vibrancy of downtown, would be all that is needed to make sure that element of historic preservation and historic fabric is essential for the way we understand downtown. Chair Urban added that many people think of historic preservation is for buildings, but that is not what Ms. Holliday is saying. Historic fabric of our City and our neighborhoods each have their own special heritage.

Mr. Ricci stated that adding bullet points about historic preservation under different Big Moves is another way to look at everything as opposed to looking at it by itself. Whenever one looks at a project, thinking about whether there is a way that historic preservation can be incorporated into that project or plan. Mr. Roberts said that historic preservation is a useful topic for the interest of the community to have adaptive reuse of buildings, which is an economical, historical, and efficient way of increasing value in the community without building new things or tearing something down. Mr. Hays suggested they add Objective 4.5 to Big Move 4 to really articulate historic preservation. By putting something about historic preservation here, anything else that references Big Move 4 as a touch point would connect with it.

Chair Urban appreciates the Plan Commission involving the Historic Preservation Commission in this process. The Historic Preservation Commission plans to use the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan to reference updating the Historic Preservation Plan.

K. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Ricci reported on the following:

a) Items of Interest:

▪ ***CLG Grant Update***

Mr. Ricci stated that he received emails from Susan Baker and John Pressley reminding him that CLG grants are federal funds that are passed through the State of Illinois. Ever since the end of 2024, funds have become more tenuous, so the State has not yet issued any CLG grants or made any announcements about them.

b) Historic Property Activities:

▪ **Landmarking and Districts**

Mr. Ricci stated that there have been no new applications.

▪ **Certificates of Appropriateness in Progress or Review**

Mr. Ricci talked about 210 South Race Street (HP-2021-COA-03). He mentioned that there has been progress on the exterior of the Hotel Royer with new lighting as well as work continues renovating the inside. He heard that the owner was filling the pool. He said that he has not heard when the hotel will reopen. Chair Urban said that she noticed the progress being made on the outside.

Mr. Ricci stated that there have been no new applications for Certificates of Appropriateness submitted.

He mentioned that he was notified that the Bills House, which is a rental property, is for sale. Someone had called inquiring about the process to demolish the house, upon which he replied that they would need to get a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Mr. Roberts commented that the City lost the façade of the Sipyard, and it was created into an outside drinking establishment. It has since become defunct, and a billboard was placed over the front. There is a political poster on the cover. He said that it does not serve the City to have an eyesore downtown. This is why he feels it is important for the Historic Preservation Commission to consider working on creating a design overlay district for Downtown Urbana. He pointed out that it may remain an empty alleyway. Someone could redevelop the space, and the redesign of it could affect the rest of the block. The City should provide some guidance so that whatever new construction does occur there eventually will have harmonic resemblance to elements on the street.

L. STUDY SESSION

Historic Preservation Plan

Chair Urban opened this item on the agenda. She said that the status of the CLG grants does create a little hiccup for updating the Historic Preservation Plan. Part of the timeline for updating the plan involved keeping in mind when the CLG grant cycle would begin again. She did not believe that the Commission should deviate from the timeline they set because a lot

could happen between now and then. She reviewed the timeline, which was established at the previous meeting, which is as follows:

February and March 2025	Internal review of 1998 Historic Preservation Plan
April and May 2025	Focus on external plans
June and July 2025	Meet to talk about what we want in an updated plan
August and September 2025	Get cost estimates

She mentioned that the Commission members need a way to make comments so other members can view them. Mr. Ricci suggested that the Commission members find a partner to discuss the pros and cons of the existing 1998 Historic Preservation Plan and any improvements they each would like to make in the new plan. There can only be two members due to Open Meetings Act requirements; however, they could have people outside the Commission join their group. Each group should then provide him with a bullet point report of the changes they want made. The Commission can discuss everyone's changes/comments at their regular meeting in May. He may even do a press release to invite people to join in the group discussions. Ms. Holliday suggested that they announce that the Commission is planning to update the Plan at the Open House on May 31st, and if anyone is interested in participating to let them know. She stated that the panel for the Open House might include a representative from Landmarks Illinois and Elizabeth Blasius from Preservation Futures in Chicago. So, there will be people at the Open House that do work on updating preservation plans, so it might be an opportunity to jump start the public piece. Mr. Ricci said hopefully this will happen after the group discussions have happened.

Mr. Roberts inquired about the Open House. Ms. Holliday said it is an event for the exhibition, "Making Place for the Arts at Home", that she and Mr. Hays worked on. The Open House focuses on mid-century modern architecture in Champaign and Urbana. She said that one of the public events associated with the exhibition is a morning symposium discussing preservation challenges associated with mid-century modern architecture. The morning panel will have representatives who deal in historic preservation across the State of Illinois speaking to the issue of encouraging a greater degree of engagement in preservation of modern properties here specifically. The afternoon piece is the Open House, where four houses will be open for tours. While this event is not an event of the Historic Preservation Commission, it is an opportunity to have a large public audience to talk about modern houses and preservation and to encourage their participation in a conversation about our preservation plan.

He wondered if it would be appropriate for the Historic Preservation Commission to have a presentation for the public of where the Commission stands and is going as a commission. We could hold the presentation in the auditorium at the Urbana Free Library or somewhere that would be a typical place where a community meets to learn about projects within our city. Chair Urban said that she likes the idea; however, the Commission may not be ready to make a presentation by then. It does seem like a good time to drum up people that are interested in being part of the process. Mr. Ricci stated that he could arrange to have a table at the Market at the Square, and Commission members could have the public complete an online survey to get feedback on how important the public thinks historic preservation is. Chair Urban likes this idea. She said Commission members could help man the table at the Market.

Chair Urban said that the Commission may not meet in May, so she encouraged the Commission members to help get the Open House on May 31st advertised.

Mr. Hays said that he likes the idea of the Commission members pairing up to look at the 1998 Historic Preservation Plan and discuss how the Plan is structured, why it was structured that way, and what changes they would like to see in a new plan. If we do this work before we engage the public, then the Commission can be much more responsive to their suggestions.

Ms. Holliday mentioned that if someone wants to learn more, there is a group called the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC). They have a ton of information for people who want to update their historic preservation plans. They have sample plans, sample timelines and processes for updating plans. They are a great resource for not only looking at a plan that is 25 years old, but also looking at what other recent plans are looking at. She said that she would very much be in favor at some point in the process of the Commission updating our Historic Preservation Plan reaching out to this organization to see what their guidelines are for a city of our size in particular and to find out what kind of ordinances are typical. Mr. Ricci pointed out that the City of Urbana's Historic Preservation Commission is a member of NAPC. NAPC holds a lot of webinars that the Commission members are allowed to attend for free. NAPC has a great list serve that the City of Urbana could reach out to.

Chair Urban asked the Commission members if they are interested in working in groups to review and provide comments on the 1998 Historic Preservation Plan as discussed earlier. Mr. Weiss said he is in favor of it. Chair Urban suggested that the Commission members choose a Commission member buddy, meet with their buddy to discuss the existing plan, and start pulling some examples of other cities' plans or samples from the NAPC to discuss with their buddy. Mr. Ricci said that if the Commission members share other plans with him, he would make them available for other Commission members to view by putting them on Google Drive. If they find broken links to examples they are interested in looking at, then if they do not have time to reach out to that community, then let him know and he will.

Mr. Hays stated that there will be no meeting in April, and he cannot attend the May 7, 2025 regular meeting. Mr. Ricci said that staff can take a poll of who can attend the May meeting. If there will not be a quorum, then they cannot have a meeting. Staff will take a poll of different dates to hold a special meeting and let the Commission members know.

The Commission members present discussed buddies. Mr. Weiss and Mr. Roberts will be partners. Chair Urban and Mr. Hays will be partners. Mr. Shepard and Ms. O'Donnell will be partners. Mr. Ricci assigned Susan Appel to pair up with Chair Urban and Mr. Hays. He paired Phyllis Winters-Williams with Mr. Shepard and Ms. O'Donnell.

M. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Ricci asked Ms. Holliday to give a recap of the details for the Open House on May 31, 2025, so she did.

Phyllis Winters-Williams mentioned that Preservation and Conservation Association (PACA), Chris Enck, and Brian Adams will be celebrating the 120th anniversary of the building of the Joseph

March 5, 2025

Royer's home and the 100th anniversary of the publication of "Fairy Book" by Adelaide Royer and illustrated by her sister, Nell Brooker Mayhew, on Sunday, May 4, 2025 from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Kim Sanford will be Aunt Boog and tell stories to children. People will be able to decorate their own fairy garden door for kids. There will also be tours with a special emphasis on the dining room of the Royer House because of the murals that Ms. Mayhew made. Anyone interested does not need to pre-register. Chair Urban said this is a great way to kick off Historic Preservation Month.

N. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Urban adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marcus Ricci".

Marcus Ricci, AICP
Historic Preservation Commission Secretary