

**City of Portage – Historic District Commission**  
**Wednesday, February 02, 2022 @ 8:30 a.m.**  
**City Council Chambers**

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**Call to Order:**

**Approval of Minutes:**

\*January 5, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes.

**Discussion:**

- Events planning to highlight Historic Preservation month (May 2022)
- Timeline and progress for City Hall Spring Exhibits
- Draft sample letter with Martha Deming Maytnier's revision to HD property owners

**Old Business:**

**New Business:**

**Citizen Comments:**

**Member Comments:**

- HDC regular meeting start time change from 8:15am to 8:30am

**Adjournment:**

**Materials Transmitted:**

\*DRAFT HDC Rules of Procedure

Asterisk (\*) indicates printed material within agenda

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Please notify Biqi Zhao at 329-4475 or zhaob@portagemi.gov if you are unable to attend.

**City of Portage**  
**Historic District Commission**  
Wednesday, January 5, 2021  
City Hall Conference Room 2

Meeting Called to Order: 8:30 a.m. Chair Katie VanLonkhuyzen called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Jessie Duniphin, Katie VanLonkhuyzen, Martha Deming Maytnier, Nick Meyle, and Laura Glass

Members Absent (unexcused): Anthony Amarasinghe

Members Absent (excused): Becky Lopez, Suzanne M. Nemeth, and Jeremy P. Custer

Staff: Biqi Zhao, Senior City Planner

Other: Riley Thomas, Youth Advisory Committee Liaison

Approval of Minutes: Nick Meyle made the motion, seconded by Jessie Duniphin, to approve the December 1, 2021 meeting minutes as submitted; motion approved 5-0.

Discussion:

a. Event Planning to highlight Historic Preservation month (May 2022)

Three events for the year of 2022 were extensively discussed to promote Portage Historic Preservation:

- City Hall Spring Exhibits  
Staff Biqi Zhao presented the timeline from Parks & Recreations for City Hall Exhibits and asked the HDC to decide the topic selection. Katie VanLonkhuyzen, Jessie Duniphin, and Martha Deming Maytnier proposed to create story line of Northwest Corner of Portage Historical Homes including but not limited to family histories, architectural styles, cemeteries, schools etc. HDC also mentioned this project would serve as a start of deep dive for Portage Historic Districts geographically and they might continue doing other areas of the City in next year's exhibits. It would be about 10-12 slides for the panels. Katie VanLonkhuyzen stated that she would prepare the writings and asked Nick Meyle to help with photos. Nick Meyle agreed to research in the library files. Martha Deming Maytnier introduced other resources such as newspapers and genealogy to conduct research. Jessie Duniphin will work on the description by February 27's Parks and Recreation's deadline. Katie suggested gathering all the information first and narrow them down later. Jessie Duniphin will create a google drive and send the invite to HDC to put all the documents in. Staff Biqi Zhao offered to create GIS Storymap of the exhibits and feature it in the City's social media. Jessie Duniphin and Katie VanLonkhuyzen asked if the panels from Parks & Recreation Department will be highly quality and durable in order to reuse in other historical events. Staff Biqi Zhao responded to relay this request along with the topic selection to Lauren Lott of Parks & Recreation Department.
- Historic Preservation Month May 2022 event  
HDC decided that an educational event/lecture will be held on May 14<sup>th</sup> for Preservation Month. Jessie Duniphin stated that she hasn't received any response from Steve Rossio as the speaker for the lecture. Katie VanLonkhuyzen proposed that Nick Meyle can be the speaker if Steve Rossio is not available. Nick Meyle responded that Steve Rossio would love to give a lecture and he might be too busy to respond. Katie VanLonkhuyzen suggested HDC limiting topic selections for the

lecture and coordinating with Library's events and prerecorded seminars. She also mentioned that story line of Northwest Portage would catch Steve Rossio's interest. Jessie Duniphin responded to further contact Steve Rossio.

- Fall Festival September 18, 2022  
Staff Biqi Zhao showed the email from Alexis Conklin of Parks and Recreation Department requesting the input from HDC for planning Fall Festival on September 18, 2022. Jessie Duniphin stated that HDC had great success in opening historic buildings in 2021 Fall Festival. HDC agreed to support 2022 Fall Festival. Katie VanLonkhuyzen mentioned that she will not be available on September 18 due to her child's birthday. Youth Advisory Committee Liaison Riley Thomas responded to check with Youth Advisory Committee for more volunteers serving the festival.

b. Historic Preservation Tax Credit in the reinstatement process by the State

Staff Biqi Zhao stated that the Historic Preservation Tax Credit would help property owners in historic district to rehab their homes. Martha Deming Maytnier responded to add this information to the drafted letter to engage HD property owners. Martha Deming Maytnier also read out the definition of "exterior" from Interior Standard and State, and proposed to include it into the letter. Jessie Duniphin stated that the letter mentioned "the first step in the process of making any exterior changes to your designated historic property is to request a 'Certificate of Appropriateness' from the Department of Community Development." is sufficient for the applicant to check with the City at the initial step. Martha Deming Maytnier recommended that HDC further review the drafted letter and give comments in next meeting to finalize the letter. Katie VanLonkhuyzen recommended to mail a copy of the book "Where the Trails Crossed" along with the letter to HD residents. HDC agreed to do so. Martha Deming Maytnier questioned if change of painting colors needs HDC review. Katie VanLonkhuyzen responded if change of painting colors, yes; if repainting with the original color, no. Katie VanLonkhuyzen also recalled a serious HP violation regarding a property owner installed a vinyl siding not only change of the material but the style, and HDC had to request the property owner for total replacement of the newly installed siding.

Other Items:

Old Business:

New Business:

Public Comments:

Member Comments:

- a. Katie VanLonkhuyzen asked staff the procedure for replacement of commissioner who had three unexcused absences in 2021. Katie VanLonkhuyzen and Nick Meyle stated that in the City Council meeting for their term renewal, three citizens showed interest in being Historic Preservation Commissioners. Staff Biqi Zhao responded that she emailed the request after December 2021 meeting and will follow up.
- b. Nick Meyle acknowledged HDC that he will no longer work in the Library soon in spring, but still be on the commission. HDC wished him best luck and hope he can still help Historic Preservation Month and City Hall Spring Exhibition with his resources in the library before his departure.

- c. HDC inquired that if hybrid or remote meeting option is available to increase the attendance of the commission due to covid concern. Staff Biqi Zhao responded that all the public meetings are required in person so far and will further check the City's policy.
- d. Katie VanLonkhuyzen and Jessie Duniphin inquired the process for change the HDC regular meeting time from 8:15am to 8:30am. Staff Biqi Zhao responded to check the City's process.
- e. Staff Biqi Zhao made the copies of the previous assignment map. HDC discussed and assigned all the HD properties to individual commissioner for routine watching.

Adjournment: There being no further comments or business, Laura Glass moved, seconded by Nick Meyle, to adjourn the Historic District at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Biqi Zhao AICP, Ph.D  
Senior City Planner

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**CITY OF PORTAGE  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**RULES OF PROCEDURE**

**Section 1: Convening of Meeting; Quorum:**

The Chairperson, or in his/her absence or at his/her direction, the Vice-Chairperson, shall, at the time fixed for meeting, convene the Commission. The presence of five (5) members (or a majority of appointed members should there be vacancies) at the meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transacting of business. The Chairperson shall summarize those portions of the Historic Preservation Ordinance pertaining to the Commission's operations. A total of five (5) affirmative votes (or a majority of appointed members should there be vacancies) will be necessary to vote on an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness or Notice to Proceed.

**Section 2: Order of Business:**

The business of all regular meetings shall be transacted as far as possible in the following order:

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|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Call to Order       | 6. New Business      |
| 2. Roll Call           | 7. Citizens Comments |
| 3. Approval of Minutes | 8. Member Comments   |
| 4. Announcements       | 9. Adjournment       |
| 5. Unfinished Business |                      |

**Section 3: Reading of Minutes:**

Unless a reading of the minutes of a meeting is requested by a member of the Commission, such minutes may be approved or corrected without reading if the staff liaison or his/her designee has previously reviewed and approved the document.

**Section 4: Agenda for Meeting:**

The staff liaison, or his/her designate, shall prepare an agenda of the business to be considered at each regular Commission meeting. No business shall be considered by the Commission unless placed upon the agenda for the meeting not later than 12:00 p.m. on Friday, three (3) working days preceding the meeting, as long as this action will not conflict with Sec. 38-64. - Decisions of the Code of Ordinances (See also Section 6).

**Section 5: Regular Meeting; time/place:**

**The Commission shall routinely convene on the first Wednesday of each month at 8:30 a.m.** in a City Hall Conference Room (or a city historic site, if appropriately noticed). However, when the day for any regular meeting falls upon a National Holiday, or the eve of a National Holiday, or upon any regular or special election day, or when the Commission may determine to hold such meeting at a different hour or day, the notice of the time and place of the changed meeting date shall be noted to all concerned at least five (5) days prior to the meeting and at least one (1) notice shall be posted in or at the entrance to the Portage City Hall.

Section 6: Special Meetings; Notices Required:

- A. Special meetings may be called, as may be necessary, by the staff liaison or Chairperson when the presiding Officer is advised that an applicant requests a special meeting and five (5) or more Commission members (or a majority of appointed members should there be vacancies) can schedule to attend.
  
- A. The Chairperson, or any three (3) members of the Commission may, on written request to the staff liaison, call a special meeting.

Section 7: Officers of the Commission; Special Membership:

- A. The officers of the Commission shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary. Said officers shall be elected by the Commission from among its members at the regularly scheduled January meeting and shall serve for a period of one year, or until their successors are elected.
  
- B. Special Membership: At least three, if available, members of the historic district commission shall be appointed from a list of residents submitted by a duly organized and existing preservation society located in the city (if one exists). At least one member of the historic district commission shall be an architect duly registered in the state if such person resides in the city and is available for appointment. Three (3) members of the historic district commission shall be property owners of property in the historic district, if such people are available for appointment.
  
- C. Presiding Officer; Powers and Duties: The Chairperson shall be the presiding officer of the Commission. He/she shall state every request coming before the Commission, announce the decision of the Commission on all matters, and decide all questions of order; provided. He/she shall vote on all questions. He/she shall, at the request of the a Commission member, divide any question if such question in his/her opinion is subject to division, and he/she shall submit it as divided. He/she shall provide all in attendance the opportunity to be heard, and will read all correspondence submitted to the Commission.
  
- D. Vice-Chairperson; Powers and Duties: In the event the office of the Chairperson shall become vacant, the Vice-Chairperson shall become Chairperson for the unexpired term of this office. In the absence of the Chairperson or due to his/her inability to discharge the duties of this office, such duties shall for the time being devolve upon the Vice-Chairperson.
  
- E. Secretary; Powers and Duties: In the event the Vice-Chairperson is for like reason, unable to act, such duties shall for the time being devolve upon the Secretary. A member of the Commission shall assume notations for the Secretary in these instances. The Secretary shall perform other duties as directed by the Chairperson.

Section 8: Statements of Citizens:

All citizens shall have a reasonable opportunity to be heard for a reasonable length of time in the course of each meeting after being recognized by the presiding officer, and stating their name. The presiding officer may set a reasonable time limit on the length of time a citizen or any other person may address the Commission if, in the presiding officer's judgment, such time limit will

aid in the orderly and efficient administration of the Commission's business. If such time limit is imposed by the presiding officer, the Commission shall accept written materials from any citizen or person. If it appears there is a number of people who wish to make a statement on a business item, they shall be encouraged by the presiding officer to elect a spokesperson or limit their statements to only providing the Commission with new information.

Section 9: Rules of Debate:

- A. There shall be no debate or discussion of any issue prior to the proper introduction of said issue.
- B. When a motion is under debate, only the following resolutions shall be in order:
  - 1. Motion to adjourn.
  - 2. Motion to take a recess.
  - 3. Motion to lay on the table.
  - 4. Motion for the previous question.
  - 5. Motion to postpone to a day certain.
  - 6. Motion to refer to a committee of the Commission.
  - 7. Motion to amend or substitute.
  - 8. Motion to postpone indefinitely.
- C. A motion to adjourn and a motion to lay on the table shall always be in order and without debate.
- D. After a motion is made to close debate, the presiding officer shall poll the Commission on the question of closing the debate and put the principal question to an immediate vote of the Commission. If the yesses prevail, the presiding officer shall immediately poll the Commission on the principal question, or questions, without further debate.
- E. All votes shall be taken by yes and no, and be entered upon the journal to show the names of those voting in the affirmative and in the negative, or abstaining except if the vote is unanimous, the record need merely so state.

Section 10: Suspending, Amending Rule:

- A. These rules may be suspended by a vote of five (5) members (or a majority of appointed members should there be vacancies) of the Commission present and voting.
- B. These rules may be amended by a vote of five (5) members (or a majority of appointed members should there be vacancies) of the Commission present and voting.

Section 11: Conflict of Interest:

- A. A conflict of interest is any interest by a member in an issue before the Commission that is not held by the community at large and that could bias the member's opinion on that issue, or that could reasonably be perceived to have that effect.

- B. Among the examples of a conflict of interest are those in which the member:
1. Has family or close friends involved in the issue;
  2. Has a monetary interest in the issue;
  3. Lives within 300 feet of the property involved; or
  4. Stands to gain or lose from the resolution of the issue.
- C. If a member has at least a possible conflict of interest, the member should disclose the nature of it at the meeting in question, then announce whether he or she believes that it is in fact a conflict.
- D. If the member's decision is that it is in fact not a conflict, the Commission may, by majority vote, rule that it is in fact a conflict.
- E. If a conflict is either self-declared by a member or so determined by the Commission, that member shall have no involvement in the discussion in any capacity or voting on the issue, and shall leave the room during the time the issue is discussed and voted upon.
- F. Failure of a member to reveal a conflict of interest shall constitute malfeasance of office.
- G. None of the above shall preclude a member from submitting his or her own request and if he or she feels it necessary, presenting it to the Commission. Where a member of the Historic District Commission is an actual petitioner or person requesting action of the Commission, it is recommended that the member not present the matter to the Commission for consideration and not be involved in discussions.

Section 12: Ex Parte Contact:

If a member of the Commission has ex parte contact with an applicant who has a request before the Commission, the member shall disclose such contact to the Commission at the public hearing or deliberation of the matter.

Section 13: Attendance:

Commission members who will be absent shall, if possible, notify the staff liaison prior to meeting.

Section 14: Governing Rules of Order:

Roberts Rules of Order may apply to all other items not provided for in these rules, except where they may be inconsistent with said rules.

Section 15: Appeals: Hearings:

- A. Agenda items, once brought before the Commission, may not be resubmitted for consideration unless a substantial change in circumstances shall have occurred. The concurring vote of a simple majority of members shall be necessary to determine the significance of the change.



- B. If the Commission denies a request, the Commission may, if it chooses, grant an alternative option if moved and voted upon at the same meeting as the denial. If the Commission does not take such action, then the request may not be resubmitted for consideration unless a substantial change in circumstances has occurred. The concurring vote of the simple majority shall be necessary to determine if a substantial change in circumstance has occurred.
- C. Per Section 38-38 (b), an applicant aggrieved by an application decision of the historic district commission may file an appeal with the state historic preservation review board. The appeal shall be filed within 60 days after the decision is furnished to the applicant. The applicant may submit all or part of the appellant's evidence and arguments in written form. A permit applicant aggrieved by the decision of the state historic preservation review board may appeal the decision to the circuit court.

Section 16: Commission Authority:

The Commission shall exercise such powers and perform such duties as are authorized and provided by the statutes and laws of the State of Michigan, and particularly Act 169 of 1970 as amended.

Approved:  
Amended: