

**Great Falls – Cascade County Historic Preservation Advisory Commission
Minutes from the March 13, 2024 meeting, held in the PCD Conference Room at the Civic Center**

Members Present: Steve Taylor, Channing Hartelius, Ellen Sievert, Chris Christiaens, Ken Sievert, Suzanne Waring, Ken Robison, Rich Ecke, Carol Bronson

Members Absent: none

Staff Present: Samantha Long

Ex-Officio Members Present: Joe McKenney

The meeting was called to order by Channing Hartelius at 12:01 PM

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 14, 2023

- Ken Robison moved to approve the minutes as written. Ellen Sievert seconded, and the motion carried.

2. HPO Report

- Samantha provided a report of this year's ornament sales, showing a net loss of \$179. We had placed a fairly large ornament order anticipating strong sales for CMR High School, and sales were higher than an average year, but we appear to have been too ambitious. We will retain the inventory anticipating sales of the ornament will continue in smaller amounts in future years.
- The Advisory Council for Historic Preservation has released a set of recommendations for review of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. One of the key recommendations is more flexibility in the Standards' implementation, especially in cases where ADA access is a concern. These recommendations are not law and there is no timeline for the agencies to adopt them, but they are a leading voice in the preservation field.
- All the historic preservation officers in the state are beginning a regular online meetup to discuss our work and compare issues and successes. This should be an excellent opportunity to network and share notes.
- Samantha provided a letter of support to Paris Gibson Square for their application to the Montana Historic Preservation Grant program. The grant request is for funding for their rehabilitation of the attic and mitigation of bat intrusion.
- The annual CLG Grant has been approved and the contract will go before the City Commission on March 19.
- On April 19, there will be a ribbon cutting in celebration of the completion of the Civic Center façade restoration. The date was chosen because that was the date of the dedication ceremony for the building's completion in 1940.
- Samantha will be on vacation April 3-9.

3. Potential Preservation Cascade Partnership

- Sam, Rich, and Ken R. had a good initial meeting with Preservation Cascade regarding the idea of partnering to save the Boston & MT Barn. They have asked to see the site and for more details about future plans and how the partnership would work. Sam will coordinate with Park & Rec to arrange the site visit. The group agreed to appoint a committee to work through the specifics of the request.
- Ken Robison moved to appoint Rich Ecke, Steve Taylor, and Channing Hartelius to the Partnership Committee. Chris Christiaens seconded, and the motion carried.

4. Preservation Award Planning

- The joint HPAC-History Museum Awards will be held on May 11 at 1:00 PM in Dark Horse Hall at the Celtic Cowboy. The Museum is able to handle most of the press & graphic design aspects. Sam's ask for HPAC will be to solicit donations of dessert items – cookies, cupcakes,

etc – from local businesses, and the Preservation Sowing Sisters will be tapped to set up the dessert buffet and decorations.

5. Highland Development/Portage NHL Section 106 Report

- Sam presented the first draft of the Memorandum of Agreement that NeighborWorks is developing with USDA Rural Development, the State Historic Preservation Office, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and other concurring parties to satisfy the Section 106 process for their proposed development inside the Great Falls Portage National Historic Landmark. Sam collected HPAC's comments, which will be compiled with those of other agencies and refined into a draft which will be sent out for comment from the wider public. Comments from HPAC included concerns about whether the proposed park had been adequately discussed with other City departments, questions about the standards to which the view shed study had been conducted, ensuring all appropriate concurring parties were included, and corrections to incorrectly referenced segments of the Landmark.

6. Boston and Montana Barn Report

- Report covered in Item #3

7. Vinegar Jones Cabin Committee Report

- Ken S. reported that he has reached out to an individual who may be able to complete the needed roofing work, but there are some outstanding questions regarding insurance and licensing that will need to be answered before he can proceed. We will also need to secure materials and, due to the current condition of the roof, an aerial lift should be rented for safety. Sam will figure out the administrative questions with the City, and will ask whether Park & Rec has a lift that we could use to save on the rental.
- Rick Ecke moved, and Ken Robison seconded, that Ken Sievert proceed with his proposed plan of action to secure a new roof for the Vinegar Jones Cabin.

8. Reports from Commissioners

- Channing Hartelius reported that a celebration of Mary Fields' birthday would be held at the Masonic Lodge in Cascade on 3/15 from noon to 5 PM. Channing and Frank Laliberty will both present their research on Mary Fields and there will be cake.
- Channing also mentioned that the owner of the original jail in Cascade was looking to have it moved or else it may be torn down. Channing is looking for a location. Ken Sievert noted that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards strongly discourage moving historic buildings. Samantha brought up that the ACHP's new recommendations suggested reviewing that prohibition and allowing it as a treatment when there are no alternatives.
- Ken Robison reported that the Montana History Conference would now include a tour of Belt. There was initial discussion of a tour of the Little Belts, but it was decided that it would not be feasible to do the tour in the time allotted. He suggested it as a future tour for Preserve MT.

9. Public Comment

- There was no public comment.

Channing Hartelius adjourned the meeting at 1:04 PM.