



# HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

City Council Chambers, 33 East Broadway Avenue Meridian, Idaho

Thursday, June 27, 2024 at 4:30 PM

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## MINUTES

### ROLL-CALL ATTENDANCE

|  |  |
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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blaine Johnston, Chair       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heather Giacomo      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pam Jagosh (online)          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ken Freeze           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jack Keller                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Debra Pitts (online) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patrick Gittings, Vice Chair |  |

City staff present were Arts and Culture Coordinator Cassandra Schiffler and City Attorney Bill Nary.

B. Johnston called the meeting to order at 4:34pm.

### ADOPTION OF AGENDA

K. Freeze made motion to adopt agenda, seconded by P. Gittings

All ayes

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES [ACTION ITEM]

- 1. Approve:** Minutes from the 5-23-24 Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission

K. Freeze made motion to approve minutes, seconded by P. Gittings

All ayes

### APPROVAL OF MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS [ACTION ITEM]

- 2. Approve:** Monthly Financial Statement

C. Schiffler stated TAG's project has been fully completed and payments have been processed, and the first invoice for the landmarking project has been sent to Finance though it is not showing on the financial statement yet. C. Schiffler confirmed the total available budget for the Commissioners via the Budget Memo included in the agenda packet.

P. Gittings made motion to approve the monthly financial statements, seconded by K. Freeze

All ayes

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **3. Initial Draft Memo: Landmarking Program Analysis ~ Sheri Freemuth, AICP, Senior Planner J-U-B Engineers, Inc**

B. Johnston moved to Item 4 as S. Freemuth was not yet online for this presentation. At the conclusion of discussing and planning future guided historic walking tours, B. Johnston came back to this Item, but due to technical difficulties, S. Freemuth could not unmute so B. Johnston moved to Item 5 while S. Freemuth tried signing back in to the meeting online.

Presentation given by S. Freemuth (preliminary draft memo attached).

S. Freemuth stated the memo is only a draft because additional information is still pending and also needs feedback from the Commission as this will be the memo that is forwarded to City Council. S. Freemuth stated that next month community members could be invited to attend to provide public comment on the memo as well. The memo begins with information on the National Register, local districts, and preservation tools, per the request of the Commission, but more detail can be added, such as information about the Advisory Council, if the Commission wants this. The main purpose of the document is to describe the local landmarking program so the next section of the preliminary draft memo discusses the process in Idaho. The Commission can decide if it wants to include information from other states or not. The next section of the memo was gathered primarily from the Commission's webpage and summarizes the type of work done by the Commission. Also included in this section is information about the work TAG has done for the Commission in terms of investigating the possibility of a National Register District which led to the suggestion from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to look in to local landmarks. Information provided in the local landmarking section of the memo currently focuses on what a landmarking program could be and not necessarily what the Commission's take on a landmark program could be. The "Next Steps" section drills down to some considerations that the Commission needs to make and might be where the Commission includes information about what it will do rather than what needs to be done. S. Freemuth stated the Commission needs to determine which sites will be included in the program; what will be done once sites are determined to be landmarks; and criteria for what the Commission will do once property owners come before the Commission. The "Conclusion" section is not complete because the Commission needs to decide what its conclusion is regarding landmarking. Lastly, relevant Idaho Statutes have been included in Appendix A but could also include samples from other cities provided by SHPO and/or include the TAG report in lieu of a map showing where potential districts are located. S. Freemuth requested the Commission provide edits and suggestions in the next couple of weeks and then she will provide a revised memo for public comment at a future Commission meeting.

Based on the Commission's discussion of this agenda item:

- B. Johnston directed the Commissioners to go through S. Freemuth's memo and put together a wish list of what each Commissioner would like to see and what each Commissioner's think the Commission might be able to do in the future and send this information to C. Schiffler who will forward to S. Freemuth so she can revise the memo and present a second draft at the July Commission meeting.
- S. Freemuth agreed to B. Johnston's plan and will add additional information from other States as it is received. S. Freemuth stated as the memo stands now it really was written from her to the Commission so in July the Commission can discuss how to revise the memo and to narrow it down to what the Commission wants the memo to say to Council. S. Freemuth stated she plans to attend the Commission's July meeting.
- C. Schiffler requested all feedback from Commissioners by July 11 which she will forward to S. Freemuth.

#### Commission Feedback

B. Johnston stated that since this is not a regulatory Commission there is only so much the Commission can do so the Commission will need to discuss with Planning and the City Attorney to see how far they want the Commission to go. At a minimum, B. Johnston would like to see a chance for the Commission to at least comment on projects in Old Town before review and demolition or change and to make sure new buildings meet the scale of what is currently there. B. Johnston requested that the Commissioners review the document and send notes and thoughts to C. Schiffler so a final version can be prepared for the July Commission meeting and then in August can invite the public for comment. B. Johnston stated that homes within the City's designated zone of Old Town are not eligible for listing in the National Registry but they are important to the history of Meridian so thinks the Commission can create a program without having those homes eligible for listing. *Definitely worth following up with SHPO to clarify State Statute. Important to not be arbitrary on which properties to include in the program so suggested criteria included in the memo. Criteria would need to be adopted in to City Code under the preservation ordinance, which would include specifying the number of days for a written notice which at a maximum would be 180 but could decide to require less. The Commission should consult with the City Attorney and the Building and Development Services Department to see if there is an appetite to slow the process at all because even if the Commission does not achieve its ultimate goal of saving the building, the Commission would still be calling for some kind of delay, which is not always very popular.* B. Johnston stated this would give the Commission the opportunity to document what is there and important to Meridian's history, even if a building cannot be saved, which is Ada County's approach. *Ada County's ordinance allows them to be notified during the planning process if a property meets a certain age criteria but they have looked in to codifying this to make it a more formal process but currently it is more informally done and not yielded too many situations, based on a conversation with Brent Danielson who is a Planner for Ada County.* B. Johnston agreed with P. Gittings view on new

development in Meridian, especially Downtown Meridian and stated the Commission may not be able to save everything or even save anything, but if the Commission can slow the process down enough that the Commission can talk to people it will go a long ways for the Commission.

K. Freeze agreed with B. Johnston's agenda but stated a lot of moving parts with a lot of different people that need to be involved, such as Zoning to Planning, along with others, to keep the flavor of Old Town but there are modern buildings going up right now in/close to Old Town so currently, very possible that a big building will go up where an old historic building was unless something is changed but not sure the Commission has the muscle to push anyone to do anything at this point so there would need to a be a lot of changes made to things the Commission does not have control over. K. Freeze suggested the Commission put together a list of what it believes is necessary to preserve Old Town, for instance, and see how far it would go. K. Freeze stated the Commission needs to develop some sort of action plan so that once the Commission has be notified that something is on the block to be demolished, what steps will the Commission take in the agreed upon timeframe to document the property. *This is included in the "Next Steps" section of the memo. I would not underestimate the possibility of suggesting the revising of site plans to save a resource as seen with the Bown House in Boise. One of the steps could be asking the developer or the applicant to describe alternatives they looked at to save the resource; alternatives are not doable on all properties but this would start the conversation. Some people feel moving buildings is a good solution so would add this to the list too.*

H. Giacomo stated that S. Freemuth did a fantastic job on the preliminary memo. H. Giacomo stated that if she was a homeowner in a location that the Commission was thinking of including in this, she would want a letter stating the Commission is talking about doing this sent to her house to give her a chance to look at what the Commission is thinking about implementing. H. Giacomo would like to see a definite geographic boundary(s) mentioned along with an explanation of the Commission's choice included in the memo. H. Giacomo stated she likes the idea of talking about Boise and Ketchum but instead of the links talk about areas in Wyoming. H. Giacomo feels like a final draft in July and public comment in August may be too ambitious. *Timing of the final draft will depend on how quickly the Commission can provide comments or if the Commission wants to use these meetings to discuss drafts amongst itself then maybe have a draft at the July meeting and a revised draft at the August meeting would give the Commission more time to hash this out which is absolutely fine. If the Commission is really concerned about one geographic area or if it wants to see a geographic boundary, then that is different than the local landmarking process, as the historic district tool is really for a concentration or a geographic area or district. If the Commission wanted to draw a line around what the Commission deems as "Old Town" based on some criteria, whether the buildings contained in this area are eligible for the National Historic Register or not, then this is different than local landmarking but had to be included in the memo in order to talk about local landmarking, but for local landmarking there is no geographic boundary. Since local landmarking does not require a geographic boundary, local landmarking seems suitable for Meridian because*

*Meridian has individual, historic resources spread all over town. The Commission could still invite people who might be impacted by a local landmarking program without having a map because the Commission does know the location of Meridian's National Historic Register properties, so could invite these owners to a meeting for public comment. This memo is an investigative tool to see what local landmarking is all about and to take the temperature of the local community. Absolutely agree that the Planning and Zoning team, Building Department, and Legal Counsel should be involved; the City's Building Department does currently issue demolition permits over the counter which leaves no time for review of any kind so this will be one of the Commission's first hurdles.*

P. Gittings wanted to confirm that the City can have a landmarking program and the structures that would be considered for the program do not have to be eligible for the National Historic Register; however, it seems that Idaho State Statute reads that any building does need to be eligible for the National Historic Register. *Correct and I think Ketchum got around this by having their own criteria but I did see this in the Statutes. I'm not sure what the Statutes mean by "regulating" and this Commission has the option of advising and not regulating so this might be the fine point on this. This would be a question worth asking SHPO but we do have proof that Ketchum made it through their process and so far the program is intact.* P. Gittings noted that Idaho Code calls out a 180 day written notice of an owner's proposed action so even though the Commission does not have any teeth, this Code section states there could be a waiting period of up to 180 days but the section also says the 180 days can be changed to something less but this could be a way to ensure a demolition permit is not pulled and demolition begins same-day. P. Gittings stated that based on the development environment and the way Meridian is growing, he suspects that there will likely be a number of instances especially in the Downtown Meridian area which may be very desirable to developers for modern developments; just in the last month he is aware of three situations where buildings he thinks have historical significance in Meridian are under threat of being torn down, with one for sure being torn down.

B. Nary stated that based on discussion it appears the Commission has a multi-phased project and reminded the Commission that all projects operate on a budgetary year so maybe only Phase I, a final report and some public feedback, occurs before September 30 which is the end of the current budget year, and then create a game plan of what the Commission would like to see next and based on available budget, what could occur in the next fiscal year and present this to City Council. *Our agreement with S. Freemuth ends September 30 (C Schiffler).*

#### **4. Discussion and Planning: Future Guided Historic Walking Tours**

B. Johnston stated there is interest from both the Commission and the public to have more walking tours so asked Commissioners what dates they each have available on Saturdays during the Meridian Main Street Market to give a tour and would plan to do one tour only on Saturdays.

P. Gittings made motion to host a walking tour at 10am on July 20 and August 17 that will start at Meridian City Hall and head to Pine Street School with a few stops



along Main Street and then work backwards through the tour binder to City Hall; seconded by K. Freeze

All ayes

Based on the Commission's discussion of this agenda item:

- Walking tours will be advertised as one-hour tours
- Commissioners Gittings and Giacomo will give the tour on July 20
- Commissioner Freeze will give the tour on August 17

#### Commission Feedback

D. Pitts inquired if it would make sense to have a monthly, consistent tour schedule on the first Saturday or third Saturday, for example. *Since July is right around the corner try for the third Saturday in July and the third Saturday in August but I'm open so whatever the Commission would like to do but this is a good idea so we can get it on social media and start advertising the tours.* D. Pitts suggested running tours April or May through October at 10am. *Open to discussion so could plan through October on the third Saturday or do some third Saturdays and some first Saturdays.*

K. Freeze stated doing tours on a regular basis is a good idea, but two concerns: 1) summer months not good for him because of the heat; 2) getting enough participation for 10 months of tour dates (would likely not offer tours November through January). *For now, plan on July and August and see what kind of participation we have.* K. Freeze stated he likes Commissioner Johnston's idea of hosting tours the third Saturday of July and August and then evaluating tour participation at the August Commission meeting. K. Freeze suggested if the tour comes from the old Meridian High School down to the corner where the Post Office is then could still do a few more locations on the tour without prolonging the tour too much and return to City Hall on Main Street. *Will just depend on who is walking with you and the temperature.* K. Freeze stated it is seven blocks from City Hall to Pine Street School so wondering how it will go over with participants to start and immediately have to walk seven blocks. *It is only 4 blocks away.* K. Freeze volunteered to give the tour on August 17. K. Freeze noted that the two hour tour in May lost a lot of participants so if advertised as a two-hour tour it may scare people.

H. Giacomo stated she likes Commissioner Johnston's idea of planning July and August and seeing what the turnout is like and then evaluate and plan the two months after. *Open to discussion and evaluating tour participation at the August Commission meeting.* H. Giacomo inquired as to what time the Meridian Main Street Market opens. *Commissioners believe it is 9am but at the tour in May people were still showing up and trying to get set up so would suggest starting the tour no earlier than 9:30am.* H. Giacomo agreed with Commissioner Gittings that the Pine Street School is really a highlight but her experience with the tour is that a lot of people had left the tour by the time the group got to the Pine Street School. *How hard would it be for tour guides to give the tour backyards in order to start at Pine Street School?* H. Giacomo suggested not stopping at sites along Main Street because very hard to hear due to traffic. *Yes, agree we can skip sites on Main Street*

*so adjust tour as it is being given.* H. Giacomo volunteered to give the tour on July 20 but cannot attend on August 17.

P. Gittings stated there is a trade-off: a 9:30am tour start would probably be cooler but starting at 10am may increase the number of people in the area to participate in the tour so it will be a learning experience. *Yes, it will be learning experience for all of us.* P. Gittings suggested discussing how long the tours should be based on the warm weather and the experience of giving the entire tours in May which took a couple of hours. *Will depend on the weather on each day so if it is going to be hot then just do a partial tour, but if cooler weather than can give full tour.* P. Gittings said the old Meridian High School was a good stopping point during the May tour, but the other half of the tour was missed. P. Gittings stated the Commission should also think about reaching out to the volunteers at Pine Street School to open the school for these monthly tours as it is one of the highlights of the tour, but if they agree to open then the tour must go there. *That is something we can look at but yes, if we have them open then we need to go there.* P. Gittings stated he also thought about going from City Hall to Pine Street School and working backwards and there are a few sites in between that can be covered on the way to Pine Street School. P. Gittings volunteered to give the tour on July 20 but requested assistance of another Commissioner as he has not yet given a tour.

B. Johnston confirmed he will contact the Pine Street School to coordinate being open on July 20 and August 17.

C. Schiffler inquired how long the tour will be for advertising purposes. *One-and-a-half to two hours, weather dependent.*

D. Pitts confirmed that her tour in May was a little over an hour based on her participants so recommends an hour max. *Let's plan for an hour and at the hour mark gauge participants' interest to determine whether to continue on or end the tour and head back to City Hall.*

**5. News: Daughters of the American Revolution Plaque at Heroes Park**

C. Schiffler stated that the Daughters of the American Revolution requested to put a commemorative plaque at Heroes Park and the City is supportive of this request; however, the organization must first raise funds and the Mayor thought this would be of interest to the Commission so the Daughters of the American Revolution have been invited to come make a presentation to the Commission.

Commission Feedback

B. Johnston agreed that this is something the Commission should look at and when the time comes to install the plaque that the Commission should be present.

P. Gittings asked the location of Heroes Park. *Off of Ten Mile before Chinden, North of Walmart and South of Costco.*

K. Freeze read the description of Heroes Park.

## OLD BUSINESS

### 6. **Project Updates:** National Register of Historic Places Plaque Coordination for Meridian Speedway Recognition, Eggers Farmstead Development, SHPO Grant and Historic Preservation Plan

B. Nary stated that at the Mayor's suggestion, he has reached out to a different member of the Dairy Board regarding facilitation of the placement of the National Register of Historic Places plaque, but has not yet heard back.

B. Johnston stated no new updates on Eggers Farmstead as far as the deconstruction of the silos.

B. Nary stated an agreement pertaining to the Eggers Farmstead silos has been worked on so getting close to a resolution to deconstruct the silos and move them to a City facility site for storage but probably still a month out from finalizing this.

C. Schiffler stated she has reached out to SHPO regarding the grant for the Historic Preservation Plan but has not yet received a response.

P. Gittings stated no update on the Historic Preservation Plan beyond the information provided by C. Schiffler.

#### Commission Feedback

B. Johnston stated the State's Fiscal Year ends June 30 so that may be part of the problem on not hearing back on the grant for the Historic Preservation Plan.

P. Gittings stated he thought that the Commission would not hear back from SHPO until September which is when SHPO receives funding verification from the National Parks Service. *I think that is correct and we would not be able to begin work until September although I did anticipate an agreement sooner (C. Schiffler).*

## NEXT MEETING: JULY 25, 2024

C. Schiffler stated that she will not be in attendance at this meeting but that another City Staff person will attend in her place.

B. Johnston requested adding a discussion on his attendance at the National Trust Conference, Past Forward, this October in New Orleans. B. Johnston will try to get cost estimates for his attendance and has talked to C. Schiffler about available education funds in the Commission's budget. B. Johnston stated he will pay his own airfare and hotel fees if the Commission agrees to pay for his conference registration fee.

C. Schiffler stated that S. Freemuth is proposing a panel discussion in October at Idaho's chapter of the American Planning Association on the work she has been doing and invited C. Schiffler and/or the Commission to be present at the conference so that may be of interest to one of the Commissioners to attend and since it is an in-State conference, the full cost of attendance would likely be covered if the Commission approves the proposal.

#### Commission Feedback

B. Johnston requested more information from C. Schiffler on the proposal from S. Freemuth for the American Planning Association conference in October.



## **ADJOURNMENT**

K. Freeze made motion to adjourn, seconded by P. Gittings

All ayes

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 27, 2024  
TO: City of Meridian Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)  
CC: Cassandra Schiffler  
FROM: Sheri Freemuth, AICP  
SUBJECT: **PRELIMINARY DRAFT** Local Historic Landmarking Program

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*This Preliminary Draft Memo has some sections noted as TBD for additional pending information. More detail regarding the future options for a City of Meridian Landmarking Program will also be included based on any comments received on this memo. The Conclusion will be based on the approach the HPC is inclined to pursue. Additional appendices will be included in the next memo*

The City of Meridian's history is rooted in Ada County's early homesteading and railroad eras. Since the town incorporated in 1903, it prospered with the enhancement of irrigation across the Boise Valley, growing slowly and steadily through most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, adding houses, schools, churches, and shops. With the construction of Interstate 84, the city expanded more quickly; more than doubling in population between 1970 and 1980 and more than tripling between 1990 and 2000. This exponential growth has included expansion of the city limits, and continues to outpace past population increases, during this first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The role of your commission is to preserve the historic sites and landscapes of Meridian, and to increase the appreciation of these cultural resources by residents and visitors alike. The Certified Local Government (CLG) program, that is operated by the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), provides an array of tools and some funding to support your efforts. Recently the Idaho SHPO recommended that the Meridian HPC consider utilizing a local historic landmarking program.

This memorandum provides basic information on the implementation of historic preservation by local preservation commissions. Based on your present concerns, a closer look at Idaho Code Sections 67-4614 and 67-4616 is provided. Applications of the local landmarking tool in Idaho, as well as other states, is also described. A possible approach for Meridian to pursue is provided by way of conclusion to this memo.



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## Historic Preservation Tools

With the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) in 1966, historic preservation gained prominence in the United States. The NHPA established the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the SHPOs, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Section 106 review process. In 1980, the NHPA was amended to create the CLG program providing funding and increased emphasis on the importance of local understanding and perspective to the community rather than being the sole provenance of the state and national governments. However, the NRHP still serves as the underpinning of all local historic preservation programs. Administered by the National Park Service, the NRHP is the centerpiece of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

The NRHP consists of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. Under Federal Law, the listing of a property in the National Register *places no restrictions on what a non-federal owner may do with their property up to and including destruction*, unless the property is involved in a project that receives Federal assistance (usually funding or licensing/permitting).

However, local governments may designate districts and sites of local significance, with or without their inclusion in or eligibility for the National Register. Local landmarks designate a single historic structure or site while local historic districts consist of a *group of historic structures* that are significant to the City's culture and history. Cities use either tool in order to protect these sites or areas and maintain their historic integrity. Typically, properties within local historic districts are subject to local government approval at such time as a building permit is issued, for any changes to the exterior of the structures. Many communities adopt special design and development standards to support the objectives of the district and provide guidance for property owners. Code provisions and guidelines vary depending on the district.

## Local Landmarking Programs in Idaho

Historic Preservation programs in Idaho are provided for in Idaho Statute Title 67, State Government and State Affairs, Chapter 46 Preservation of Historic Sites (refer to Appendix A). Section 67-4612 expressly states that:

In addition to any power or authority of a .... city to regulate by planning or zoning laws and regulations or by local laws and regulations, the governing body ...is empowered to provide by ordinances, special conditions or restrictions for the protection, enhancement and preservation of historic properties....



Section 67-4614 further provides for the “designation as a historic property” providing the criteria for so doing and the potential for review prior to demolition of the designated property. Section 67-4616 provides a process by which local governments may regulate the change of use of a historic property.

While Idaho has over 40 cities and counties participating in the CLG program, a small percentage regulate historic properties or districts. In some of these communities, as well as other Idaho communities that are not CLGs, there exist properties and districts that are in the National Register but are not afforded the protection provided for by the local ordinances described in Idaho Statute.

Only two cities have a local landmark program – Boise and Ketchum. Both of these programs are distinct based on the nature of their historic resources (refer to Appendix B for copies of the ordinances). The City of Boise designates and maps by ordinance, individual properties that are not part of a local historic districts and are either listed in or eligible for the NRHP. Demolition or change of use in a historic landmark requires application to the City’s Historic Preservation Commission and may require further action by the City Council. The City of Ketchum also reviews demolition or change of use requests for their landmarks program. However, the City of Ketchum elected to create a list of 24 specific sites that are of local historic significance although they may not necessarily be listed in or considered eligible for the NRHP.

Other communities in Idaho have been considering adaptation of the local landmarking process. The City of Nampa Historic Preservation Plan (2020) suggests further research on the potential of such a program. The Ada County Historic Preservation Council (ACHPC), which is staffed by a planner in the Ada County Development Services department, has discussed delaying the issuance of demolition permits (presently administered by the Building Division) with a review by the ACHPC. One notion is to “flag” any demolition permit that would affect buildings over 50 years old and require review by the ACHPC. At present this process occurs informally between the building and planning divisions, with very few notices occurring over the past several years.

Examples from other states may be models suitable for use in Idaho, however State legislation, unique tax provisions and city management practices, may make adaptation to Idaho difficult. While Montana does not have any local landmarking programs, there are two examples that may be suitable from Wyoming (TBD):

- Teton County, Wyoming  
<https://tetonhistoricpreservation.org/ordinance/>
- Green River, Wyoming  
[https://library.municode.com/wy/green\\_river/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=CD\\_OR\\_D\\_CH16HIPR](https://library.municode.com/wy/green_river/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CD_OR_D_CH16HIPR)



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## Meridian HPC Preservation Program

The Meridian HPC “works to preserve the character and fabric of historically-significant areas and structures within the City...to honor and preserve its rich heritage for future generations.” They have focused their work on the study of the City’s historic resources, as well as the education and promotion of preservation activities. While the local preservation ordinance allows the City of Meridian HPC to make recommendations to improve planning processes, including the adoption of ordinances for the purposes of preservation of historic resources, the HPC has not undertaken any local designations or design review programs.

**National Register District.** In September 2023 TAG Historical and Research Consulting concluded a two-phase reconnaissance-level survey of North Main Street for the HPC. The objective of the survey was to identify eligible, or potentially eligible, properties for listing in the National Register. The East Idaho Avenue and the North Main Street areas were determined to be potentially eligible as NRHP districts. As discussed above, the National Register does not provide any protection of the historic properties. To accomplish this, a local historic district could be formed (with the same boundaries or a variation), an ordinance and design guidelines prepared and adopted, that would provide for review by the HPC for changes within the district.

**Local Landmarking.** Earlier this year, the HPC commissioned this study to determine the viability of a local landmarking program. As part of this analysis, HPC staff (in the Parks and Recreation Department) coordinated with the Meridian Planning Department to utilize a map layer of potential historic resources to provide for a “History Check” datapoint to the maps maintained by the department. This enables a planner to notify the HPC liaison if an application is made on or near mapped properties. This is similar to the informal program used by Ada County during their demolition permit review process; however, the City of Meridian demolition permit is currently an over-the-counter process with no wait time. That process could be adapted in the future to enable a review period that would provide an opportunity for closer review and possible notification of the Meridian HPC.

Unlike the local historic district process, the landmark process may be applied to sites that are located *throughout* the city, rather than concentrated in one geographic area. This describes the presence of Meridian’s resources, encompassing former farmsteads, individual residences, and prominent civic buildings. While a local historic district is possible, it is by its nature confined to a specific contiguous area.

The Local Landmarking process involves 1) the designation of the sites to be landmarked, and 2) a determination of what the HPC might want to review. For example, the HPC may simply want to ensure that the property is not demolished, rather than address exterior modifications to the





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building. Or perhaps the HPC might be interested in any changes to the property that require a building permit. Criteria for design and development review would be necessary if the HPC opted for the latter.

## Next Steps for the Local Landmarking Program

The initial appeal for a local landmarking programs has been that it may be applied to individual, locally significant properties to recognize their importance to the City's heritage. Furthermore, the landmark status would be so noted on zoning maps and other land development databases, so that prior to issuance of any permits on the landmarked property the HPC would be notified. Depending on the provisions established by the City of Meridian, the HPC could provide comment and recommendations on the proposed permit request. In order to achieve this objective, or some variation thereof, the following should occur:

### **Determine which properties would be included in the landmark program.**

The City may choose the properties to designate as landmarks. These may be restricted to properties listed on or eligible for the National Register. Another option would be to landmark properties specifically selected by the HPC meeting based on specific criteria. These criteria may include age, significance (to local history or contributing to local architecture), building condition, unique location, or other attributes.

The latter option is similar to the City of Ketchum approach that consists of a specific list of important sites that include properties that are not in the NRHP and may not be eligible. Some older buildings and sites are important to Meridian residents, such as the *Modern Woodman Hall* building, but are not in the National Register or eligible for listing.

In order to consider possible landmark sites, the HPC will need to enhance their understanding of the SHPO's Idaho Cultural Resource Information System (ICRIS) program. This publicly accessible database of surveyed historic sites launched this year and is essential to understanding the location of historic properties. Initial conversations between the City of Meridian and the SHPO did not yield a simple way to transfer the information to merge with City data. However, analysis of the data by the HPC and HPC staff would be possible to create an initial list of potential landmark sites. The addition of new resources to the system is also facilitated by ICRIS and would prove useful for the HPC.

### **Determine what types of activities on Landmarks would trigger HPC review.**

Some landmark programs confine their interests to the potential demolition of a landmark. This typically becomes apparent to a city when a Demolition Permit is issued. As discussed above, the demolition permit process in Meridian is relatively simple and "over the counter." In order to





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engage the HPC in the review of landmark property actions this process would need to be reconsidered.

The HPC might also want to be made aware of other permits issued by the City including discretionary permits (rezones, special use, variances) or building permits (re-roofs, fences, accessory buildings). Once aware of the permit application, the HPC would need to have a clear purpose and criteria for their review. Typically design review by preservation commission is confined to physical changes that are on the primary façade or visible from the road. This assures that the HPC is confining their review to what is in the public interest and will ensure the protection of the local historic site.

Once it is determined what types of permits will be reviewed by the HPC the potential for review of HPC decisions and what decision-making body will hear those appeals must also be determined and provided in City Code.

### **Establishing options for consideration of demolition or design review.**

The HPC should have a clear understanding of the possible requirements or recommendations they might provide during the review of landmark property requests. Is it the intention of the HPC to provide opinions, advice, or delay demolition? Will the HPC offer options for the deconstruction and relocation of the structure? If the HPC elects to review permit applications for landmark properties, are they prepared to provide design recommendations to the applicant?

## **Conclusion**

Recommendation from Meridian HPC TBD.

## **APPENDICES**

- A. Relevant Idaho State Statutes
- B. Sample Idaho Local Landmarking Program Ordinances (TBD)



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## Appendix A: Relevant Idaho State Statutes

### TITLE 67

#### STATE GOVERNMENT AND STATE AFFAIRS

#### CHAPTER 46

#### PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC SITES

67-4614. DESIGNATION AS HISTORIC PROPERTY. The local governing body of any county or city may adopt an ordinance designating one (1) or more historic properties on the following criteria: historical, architectural, archeological and cultural significance; suitability for preservation or restoration; educational value; cost of acquisition, restoration, maintenance, operation or repair; possibilities for adaptive or alternative use of the property; appraised value; and the administrative and financial responsibility of any person or organization willing to underwrite all or a portion of such costs. In order for any historic property to be designated in the ordinance, it must in addition meet the criteria established for inclusion of the property in the national register of historic places. For each designated historic property, the ordinance shall require that the waiting period set forth in section 67-4615, Idaho Code, be observed prior to its demolition, material alteration, remodeling or removal. The ordinance shall also provide for a suitable sign or marker on or near the property indicating that the property has been so designated; provided however, that nothing in this chapter shall authorize or be construed to allow the designation, regulation, conditioning or restriction by ordinance or other means of any property or facility owned by the state of Idaho.

History:



67-4616. CHANGE IN USE OF HISTORIC PROPERTY. (1) A historic property designated by ordinance as herein provided may be demolished, materially altered, remodeled, relocated or put to a different use only after one hundred eighty (180) days' written notice of the owner's proposed action has been given to the local historic preservation commission. During this period, the commission may negotiate with the owner and with any other parties in an effort



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to find a means of preserving the property. During this period, or at any time prior thereto following notice of designation to the owner as provided in section 67-4615 d., Idaho Code, and where such action is reasonably necessary or appropriate for the continued preservation of the property, the commission may enter into negotiations with the owner for the acquisition by gift, purchase, or exchange of the property or any interest therein. The commission may reduce the waiting period required by this section in any case where the owner would suffer extreme hardship, unless a reduction in the required period were allowed. The commission shall have the discretionary authority to waive all or any portion of the required waiting period, provided that the alteration, remodeling, relocation or change of use is undertaken subject to conditions agreed to by the commission insuring the continued maintenance of the historical, architectural, archeological or cultural integrity and character of the property.

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