



SPECIAL MEETING OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

City Council Chambers, 33 East Broadway Avenue Meridian, Idaho

Friday, December 12, 2025 at 4:30 PM

MINUTES

ROLL-CALL ATTENDANCE

<u>X</u> Blaine Johnston, Chair	<u>X</u> Patrick Gittings, Vice Chair
<u> </u> Hailey Stewart	<u>X</u> Ken Freeze
<u>X</u> James Abdel-Monem	<u>X</u> Harold Gregory Wilson
<u>X</u> Heather Giacomo	

City Staff: Arts and Culture Coordinator C. Schiffler, City Deputy Attorney E. Kane, and Deputy Director of Planning and Development Caleb Hood were also in attendance.

B. Johnston called the meeting to order at 4:30pm.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

K. Freeze moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by P. Gittings

All ayes; motion passed

APPROVAL OF MINUTES [ACTION ITEM]

- Approve:** Minutes from the 11-14-25 Special Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission

K. Freeze moved to adopt the minutes, seconded by J. Abdel-Monem

All ayes; motion passed

NEW BUSINESS [ACTION ITEMS]

2. **Adopt:** Meridian Historic Preservation Plan

Discussion: C. Schiffler (Arts & Culture Coordinator) confirmed that all edits from the previous month were incorporated into the final plan.

P. Gittings moved to adopt the Historic Preservation Plan, seconded by K. Freeze

All ayes; motion passed **[12:10]**.

3. **Presentation:** Drafted Standard Operating Procedure for Coordination of HPC and Current Planning Development Review ~ *Cassandra Schiffler, Arts & Culture Coordinator*

- **Summary:** Cassandra Schiffler and Caleb Hood (Deputy Director of Planning) presented a new formal process to identify and review historic sites during development applications. The goal is to flag potential impacts to historic features early in the planning process. Commissioners should reference the attached SOP for full details.
- **The Workflow:** * **Trigger:** When a developer submits an application, Planning staff checks a GIS (Geographic Information System) layer.
 - **Data Verification:** Cassandra Schiffler (Arts & Culture Coordinator) reviews the "ICRIS" database for IHSI forms and information (Idaho Historic Sites Inventory) and performs a "Google survey" (Street View) to see if structures still exist. **[17:41]**.
 - **Site Visits:** If the site appears intact, a commissioner is assigned to conduct a visual site visit from the public right-of-way (e.g., sidewalk or street) to verify the current state.
 - **Recommendations:** If historic features are intact, the HPC will meet and provides formal comments to the Planning Department. These may include requests for professional photography (documentation), incorporating historic signage/art, or maintaining downtown character.
- **Key Discussion Points:**
 - **Administrative Timelines:** Caleb Hood (Deputy Director of Planning) noted that "Certificate of Zoning Compliance" (CZC) applications move very quickly—often 5 to 10 business days—leaving a narrow window for HPC input.
 - **The "Over-the-Counter" Demolition Issue:** Commissioner Ken Freeze raised a significant concern that demolition permits are currently issued immediately without planning oversight. He advocated for a waiting period for "tagged" historic properties to allow for documentation before structures are destroyed. **[25:34]**.
 - **GIS Integrity:** The current GIS layers are based on a 15-year-old data entries. Both staff and the commission agreed that the data needs updating to ensure historic sites aren't missed for this new SOP.
 - **Public Tracking:** Caleb Hood instructed the commission on using the "Accela Citizen Access" (ACA) portal to track development applications in real-time, even before they reach the public hearing stage and will follow up with instructions via email.

4. Discuss: Exploring Options for Nominations to the National Register of Historic Places

The commission discussed shifting strategy after the Zamzow family declined interest to pursue a nomination for the historic mill. **[35:06]**.

- **The Meridian Water Tower (New Priority):**
 - **Eligibility:** SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) recommended the water tower as a prime candidate because it turns 50 this year, making it newly eligible for the National Register
 - **Commission Consensus:** Commissioners expressed strong support, noting the tower is an iconic Meridian landmark. Public Works has also expressed support for the nomination
 - **Next Steps:** Cassandra will move forward with research and gather consulting proposals for the Water Tower
- **Downtown Historic Districts (Longer Term Priority):**
 - **Proposed Districts:** The commission is exploring two districts: **Idaho Street and North Main Street**
 - **The TAG Survey:** A professional survey update by the consulting firm TAG is anticipated at the end of February 2026. To proceed with a National Register District, TAG should finish the survey update.
 - **Owner Support:**, and the city must prove that 50% or more of the property owners are in favor. Cassandra noted that informal support (emails/letters) is sufficient for this stage. Chair Johnston will work on a property owner list for the districts.
 - **Role of the Masonic Hall:** Rather than a standalone nomination, the Masonic Hall will likely be an anchor building for the Idaho Street district
 - **March Meeting:** The commission decided to invite SHPO representatives to their March 2026 meeting. At this meeting, they will review the TAG survey results and discuss the boundaries for the proposed historic districts

5. Discuss: Planning for National Historic Preservation Month Activities (May 2026)

Discussion: Suggestions included tying activities to the "America 250" celebration in 2026, hosting walking tours, and setting up a booth at the Farmers Market to display posters of proposed historic districts

Q&A: Commissioner Abdel-Monem suggested specific outreach to families and students to increase engagement

6. Discuss: Social Media Subcommittee

Discussion: The goal is to generate better creative content (photos and history) for existing city accounts. Legal counsel (E. Kane) advised that the subcommittee must include no more than 3 members to avoid a quorum issue and must adhere to city branding and ADA compliance standards **[52:01]**.

ADA Compliance: New federal guidelines for digital content accessibility take effect in April 2026 **[57:20]**.

Volunteers: Chair Johnston, Commissioner Abdel-Monem, Commissioner Freeze and Commissioner Stewart (absent) were identified as potential members.

OLD BUSINESS [ACTION ITEMS]

7. **Section 106 Review Update:** Memorandum of Agreement for NWW-2024-00522 Baratza Subdivision Between SHPO and Developer for Lemp Canal Historic Signage

Summary: Cassandra Schiffler reported that the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between SHPO and the developer has been executed to create historic signage [\[01:01:42\]](#).

8. **Discuss:** Elongated Coin Machine

Update: Chair Johnston is waiting for a follow-up from the potential sponsor, Mr. Everts. Commissioner Freeze noted that the machine can process various coins, not just pennies, making it more sustainable given current currency trends [\[01:02:35\]](#).

NEXT MEETING: JANUARY 22, 2026 (December 25 Regular Meeting to be Cancelled - Happy Holidays)

(Note: Regular elections are held in January)

ADJOURNMENT [ACTION ITEM]

K. Freeze moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by J. Abdel-Monem

All ayes; motion passed

Meeting adjourned at 5:26 pm.

***Portions of this document were drafted with support from Google Gemini AI. All content was edited and reviewed by Cassandra Schiffler, Arts & Culture Coordinator.**