

To: Mayor Kevin Freeman and Millwood City Council  
Date: October 28, 2024

The members of the Millwood Historic Preservation Commission realize that the City underwent rapid changes in staff during the summer of 2023. However, Mayor Freeman's characterization of the HPC as "aimless and a little lost" and having a "lack of professional input" at the October 8 City Council meeting cannot go unaddressed. Not only are these comments less than accurate, they portray the Historic Preservation Commission in a very negative light.

At the time that HPC meetings ceased in 2023, coinciding with the departure of Christina Janssen, we were poised to do the following:

- Add the Brown Building, the Salmon House, and the Buckland House to the local Historic Register
- Encourage residents whose homes are 100 years old to display the decal designed for that purpose
- Facilitate applications for potential nomination to local, state, and national registers
- Continue protections according to the Secretary of the Interior's guidelines for preservation of landmarks (discouraging painting on brick, etc.) within the Historic District
- Provide plaques identifying historic homes and businesses
- Identify the Millwood Historic District through appropriate vintage signage.

Our recent accomplishments include the following:

- A grant for \$10,000 providing instruction in historic preservation issues by Northwest Vernacular, which provided an expansive library of preservation resources
- A \$6,000 grant we wrote post-COVID that funded production of four videos on local historic homes, which currently run on the City's website.
- A collegial and productive relationship with the Washington Department of Archaeological and Historic Preservation (DAHP).
- Annie Oakes's professional presentation on historic Millwood at the Northwest Anthropology Conference in April 2023.
- Working with the grassroots group Millwood History Enthusiasts at Millwood Daze, Millwood History Days at Argonne Library, and the upcoming 2025 MAC Mother's Day Historic Neighborhood Tour of Millwood Homes.

When we asked City staff when meetings would again be held, we were repeatedly told that there was "not enough staff" for us to meet and received no other information. MHPC members cannot meet without following Open Public Meetings protocol requiring participation and notices by City staff. The MHPC was placed in a double-bind and are now labeled "aimless and a little lost." Comments were also made about a "lack of professional input." Ms. Major and Dr. Oakes were originally appointed to the Commission by Tom Richardson and approved by the Mayor precisely because of their professional experience and educational background in cultural heritage. Our work with DAHP has enhanced preservation of Millwood's unique history, and we are always open to professional guidance from any resources available.

Please keep in mind that the Millwood HPC represents the concerns of not merely a few individuals on the Commission but hundreds of Millwood residents, past and current. The MHPC would like to respond and clarify our position. We will continue to preserve and protect our historic heritage be it under a City-endorsed entity or personally as residents and representatives of our culturally rich community.

Regards,

Millwood Historic Preservation Commission