

**CITY OF ESCANABA
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Official Minutes – December 18, 2023**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

A meeting of the Escanaba Historic District Commission was held on Monday, December 18, 2023, at 4:15 PM in Room C101 at City Hall, 410 Ludington Street, Escanaba, MI 49829.

Chair Curran called the meeting to order at 4:15 PM.

ROLL CALL

Chair Don Curran	Present	Comm. Monte Morrison	Present
Vice Chair Judith Fouts	Present	Comm. Ellie O'Donnell	Present
Secretary Karen Lindquist	Present	Comm. Myra Croasdell	Absent
Comm. Rebecca McIntyre	Absent		

With five in attendance, a quorum of the Historic District Commission was present.

ALSO PRESENT

City Administration:

- Tyler Anthony, Planning & Zoning Admin
- Brianna Ecklid, Confidential Secretary
- Karen Moore, City Council Liaison

Others:

No other individuals were present.

MINUTES

Curran moved to approve the September 18, 2023 regular meeting minutes as proposed. O'Donnell seconded.

A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.

AGENDA

Moore asked whether the Commission's members listing on the agenda had been corrected; the City Council liaison was incorrectly listed as Ron Beauchamp instead of Moore. Beauchamp had believed that he had been appointed as liaison to this body without his knowing. Anthony explained that the error had been fixed, and all future agendas were to correctly list Moore as the City Council liaison.

Curran moved to approve the meeting agenda as proposed.

[Note: No second was made, but the motion was taken to a vote without issue.]

A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS**NB1: 2024 Meeting Schedule**

Anthony presented the proposed 2024 meeting schedule. He noted that the proposed dates were scheduled quarterly on the first Monday of each month, beginning in March.

Lindquist moved to accept the 2024 meeting schedule as presented. O'Donnell seconded.

A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.

NB2: Election of Officers

In accordance with the Commission's Bylaws, a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary were to be elected for the calendar year 2024.

Chair Curran called for nominations to the office of Chair.

O'Donnell nominated Curran for Chair.

No further nominations were made.

A viva-voce election was held. CURRAN WAS ELECTED AS CHAIR.

Chair Curran called for nominations to the office of Vice-Chair.

Lindquist nominated Fouts for Vice Chair.

No further nominations were made.

A viva-voce election was held. FOUTS WAS ELECTED AS VICE-CHAIR.

Chair Curran called for nominations to the office of Secretary.

Fouts nominated Lindquist for Secretary.

No further nominations were made.

A viva-voce election was held. LINDQUIST WAS ELECTED AS SECRETARY.

NB3: SHPO CLG 2023 Annual Report

Anthony explained that the Michigan State Preservation Office (SHPO) requires that each Certified Local Government (CLG) submit an annual report for the previous year. He then read aloud questions 6(B) and 7(A)-(D), (G)-(I) to the Commission for them to answer for the report.

Anthony asked the Commission to briefly describe top goals for the upcoming year (question 6B). Curran noted that he felt the Ogden Triangle project was to be the primary focus for the Commission. Discussion about goals then took place between all present.

Fouts asked, that if citizens did not seem to be invested in the Ogden Triangle project, would it have made sense to proceed. She shared her concerns about the lack of community involvement, and that she felt many people didn't understand what the Commission did; they would not have welcomed a local historic district out of either misinformation or fear. Fouts felt that

informational meetings or workshops might help with this problem. Anthony noted that hosting such meetings or workshops was a good goal to list in the report. O'Donnell thought that publishing articles in the local paper could be another way to get information out to the public. Moore said that a public hearing was a very good idea. All present discussed which was the best way to move forward with the Commission. They agreed that holding workshops and publishing articles in the newspaper was to be their course of action.

Anthony noted that Gladstone was doing a walking tour of historic houses, and that it could have been something the Commission could explore. Lindquist was helping Gladstone with this project at the time, and that the Delta County Historical Society (DCHS) had very good luck with a historic house bus tour in the past. She felt that it could be another good goal for the Commission to pursue.

O'Donnell moved to answer question 6(B) with the the goals of “1) hosting informational meetings and publishing articles,” and “2) creating a historic walking tour.” Fouts seconded.

A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.

Anthony read to the Commission question 7(A) from the report, asking what they would like the new CLG Coordinator to understand about Escanaba. All present discussed how difficult it was to define any clear historic areas in the City. Curran and Anthony both agreed that significant properties could be found everywhere in town. Moore noted that historic renovations on Ludington Street should be made a priority.

Fouts moved to answer question 7(A) with “Escanaba has difficult to define areas of historic properties, and there are few areas with high enough concentrations to justify historic districts.” O'Donnell seconded.

A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.

Anthony then read question 7(B), asking the Commission what they were most proud of in 2023. They agreed that completing the Ogden Triangle Summary Report was a great source of pride.

Lindquist moved to answer question 7(B) with “Completion of the Ogden Triangle Summary Report is what we are most proud of.” Morrison seconded.

A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.

The Commission discussed question 7(C), noting that the problems or challenges faced in 2023 were due to public awareness and funding issues. Moore suggested that there were whole sections of Escanaba mapped as “economically disadvantaged” for grant purposes; she recommended that the Commission note that in their motion. Anthony asked the Commission if they felt that it was germane to the question; they agreed that it was. Curran also noted that Escanaba did not have any compact historic areas. There were pockets of historic buildings scattered throughout the City.

Lindquist moved to answer question 7(C) with “Public awareness, funding issues, and portions of the City being economically disadvantaged were all faced in 2023.” Fouts seconded.

A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.

The Commission discussed question 7(D), which asked about critical preservation needs. Curran noted that staving off further building deterioration was a major concern. Moore asked if stimulating downtown preservation counted, which the Commission discussed. Lindquist felt that funding was a pressing issue. She noted that the DCHS often fielded calls from residents and businesses who purchase historic buildings; they wanted to restore them, but the funding wasn't available to do so.

O'Donnell moved to answer question 7(D) with "Lack of funding and continuing building deterioration are the most critical." Lindquist seconded.

A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.

Anthony posed question 7(G) to the Commission. This question asked if they had any upcoming projects which they wished to discuss with SHPO for a potential CLG grant application.

Morrison moved to answer question 7(G) with "Yes; the historic houses tour as listed in report section 6(B)." O'Donnell seconded.

A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.

The Commission briefly looked at question 7(H).

O'Donnell moved to answer question 7(H) with "Yes." Morrison seconded.

A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.

Anthony asked if there was anything the Commission would have liked to share with SHPO, per question 7(I). They decided that SHPO deserved thanks for helping them finish the Ogden Triangle Summary Report; having Alan Higgins come to Escanaba to speak was also very nice. They also noted interest in learning how cities like Escanaba, with historic housing and interests scattered throughout the town, have made their historic districts work.

Fouts moved to answer question 7(I) with "Thank you for your help with the Ogden Triangle Summary Report, and thank you, Alan Higgins, for coming to speak with the Commission. The Commission is also interested in learning how cities with similar issues have made their Historic Districts work." O'Donnell seconded.

A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.

NB4: Ogden Avenue Historic District Study Committee

Anthony noted that, at the September 18th meeting, the Commission directed staff to research and provide a course of action to establish a Historic District Study Committee for the "Ogden Triangle". He then presented the research and the most appropriate makeup of such a committee. Curran volunteered to be one of the two Commission members on the Committee. Morrison also volunteered. Curran asked Lindquist if she could broach the idea at the next DCHS meeting, since two other members were to be appointed from that group; Lindquist agreed to do so. Moore volunteered to be on the Committee as one of the two citizen members since she lived in the "Ogden Triangle" area at that time. Curran asked Anthony if Moore could be appointed since she was on the City Council. The Commission discussed other options. Anthony noted that it would be a good idea to advertise in the paper as a way of gaining more community engagement. Moore asked if Anthony could be appointed dually as both City staff and as an architect. He declined,

explaining that he was not a registered architect. Moore then posed Ryan Brayak as an option; she was friends with him at the time, she believed him to be an architect, and she felt he would be a good fit. Anthony noted the request and asked the Commission if they had any other ideas. Moore offered to contact Brayak as soon as possible. Fouts and Linquist both thought the idea of advertising for committee members was the best idea; Curran agreed. Commissioners also considered the idea of holding a special meeting once the DCHS had offered two names for the committee in February. Their next meeting was to be held that month.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

COMMISSIONER/STAFF COMMENT & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anthony read some announcements from emails he received from SHPO and MHPN since the last Commission meeting. He noted a free webinar, scheduled for January 25th, about renovations to the Vermillion Life-Saving Station on Lake Superior.

Lindquist announced that the Sand Point Lighthouse and DCHS Muesum were to be opened for their annual Christmas open house on December 26th and 27th, inviting the public to attend.

ADJOURNMENT

Curran moved to adjourn the meeting.

[Note: No second was made, nor was there a vote; the motion proceeded unopposed.]

The meeting adjourned at 5:21 PM.

APPROVAL

I, Karen Lindquist, Secretary of the City of Escanaba Historic District Commission, hereby certify that the foregoing constitutes the true and complete proposed minutes of a meeting of the Historic District Commission of the City of Escanaba, County of Delta, State of Michigan, held on 18 December 2023; that I have reviewed said proposed minutes; and that said proposed minutes shall be made publicly available.

REVIEWED:



Karen Lindquist, Secretary
City of Escanaba Historic District Commission

Reviewed on: 12/19/2023
Available on: 12/19/2023 -A

I, Don Curran, Chair of the City of Escanaba Historic District Commission, hereby certify that the foregoing proposed minutes are now approved; that the foregoing approved minutes shall be made publicly available; and that all the foregoing was/is made/given/kept in accordance with the Open Meetings Act (MCL 15.261 et seq.), the Local Historic Districts Act (MCL 399.201 et seq.), said City’s Code of Ordinances, and said Commission’s Bylaws.

APPROVED:

Don Curran, Chair
City of Escanaba Historic District Commission

Approved on: _____
Available on: _____