

**CITY OF ESCANABA  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
Official Minutes – Monday, March 18, 2024**

---

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

A meeting of the Escanaba Historic District Commission was held on Monday, March 18, 2024, at 4:15 PM in Room C101 at City Hall, 410 Ludington Street, Escanaba, MI 49829.

*Vice-Chair Fouts called the meeting to order at 4:16 PM.*

---

**ROLL CALL**

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

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
- Roy Webber, Planning Comm. Liaison

**Others:**

- John Anthony, 1011 Lake Shore Drive
- Karen Flynn, 318 Lake Shore Drive
- Mike Growdon, 314 Lake Shore Drive
- Terry Reynolds, 215 Ogden Avenue
- Jim Shapy, 215 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South

Five other unnamed individuals were present.

---

**MINUTES**

**Croasdell moved to approve the December 18, 2023 regular meeting minutes as proposed. Lindquist seconded.**

Tyler Anthony suggested one amendment; on page 4 of the minutes, the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office was wrongly listed as the "Michigan State Preservation Office". He hoped to see this error fixed.

**A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.**

---

**AGENDA**

**McIntyre moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Croasdell seconded.**

**MOTION PASSED by unanimous consent.**

---

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

None.

*Commr. O'Donnell entered the meeting at 4:21 PM.*

---

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS<sup>1</sup>**

John Anthony commented on NBI. He thanked the Commission for their work and noted that Tyler Anthony was his nephew. While his residence was outside of the proposed study area, he was interested in the project because his daughter and son-in-law had just bought property in that area. Since they were not residents of Michigan, he questioned whether State income tax credits were still available to them, or to other “snowbirds”.<sup>2</sup> John Anthony also felt that, while there were many positives for a local historic district, he wanted the Commission to understand that there were still many outstanding questions and concerns.

Reynolds also commented on NBI, noting that he lived in the proposed study area. He reminded Commissioners of the mess that happened with the House of Ludington.<sup>3</sup> He felt that, since the House of Ludington received a historic property designation, it had caused a lot of snags in the building’s sale. Because of that trouble, the building lingered in a poor state for many years.

After Reynolds’ comments, Fouts asked Tyler Anthony to explain the difference between a local historic district and what was done with the House of Ludington. Tyler Anthony explained that adding a property to the National or State Register of Historic Places was only honorary; there were no rules or protections that came from such a title. He then explained that local historic districts were not meant to freeze a place in time, but to keep certain historic traits, which would have then kept the district’s character intact. Tyler Anthony then described “contributing” and “noncontributing” resources in historic districts, and how they might be handled. He added that local historic districts could not be made unless at least 51% of all property owners were to sign on to the idea; City Council could not create it on their own.

Growdon spoke from the audience. He asked if a time for questions and answers could be added to the agenda, since many seemed to have them. A brief discussion ensued among Commissioners about adding an open discussion item to the agenda. Despite this, no action was taken.

Growdon continued, stating that he felt there to be strong opposition to a local historic district, and that he saw no point in discussing an idea that had no support. He feared that there were no options for landowners in the proposed district – that once a decision was made, there was no way out of it. Fouts asked him to explain his concerns in more detail. Growdon claimed to see no financial benefits to homeowners, that there were no grants or other help for homeowners to do work on their properties. He also worried that it would have created more red tape, and that it would not have helped citizens at all. Growdon understood the want to preserve the character of Escanaba, but he stressed that forcing such a decision on people was not the right way to go.

Moore interrupted Growdon, noting that the meeting might have been getting off-track. She explained that the point of an HDSC was to explore the idea of a district, not to create one. If it

---

<sup>1</sup> Not all comments or speakers were properly recorded – some were not recorded at all – due to a lack of order during the meeting.

<sup>2</sup> The State Historic Tax Credit program authorized under Public Act 343 of 2020.

<sup>3</sup> A senior housing redevelopment proposal for the House of Ludington, located at 223 Ludington Street, was brought to the Planning Commission at least twice in 2015 and 2016. Per the January 14, 2016 minutes, an earlier conditional approval by the Planning Commission hurt the developer’s State funding approvals and likely caused the project to fail. A nearly identical proposal was brought to the Planning Commission on February 26, 2019, which was also conditionally approved. This second attempt’s fate was not clear upon examination of records.

turned out that there was very little support, then there would have been no need to continue. Moore added that any rules were not set in stone, and that they could have been made as lax or strict as needed.

Commissioners and Growdon discussed whether the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) could have the ability to tell people what to do with their homes. The topic then drifted through zoning matters and how long the timeline for approvals might be. Growdon thought it very helpful if the Commission were to create a “Pros/Cons” list for people to understand local historic districts and all that they involved.

Flynn spoke from the audience. She asked Moore to explain who was going to choose the HDSC’s members, and how the idea of a historic district had come about. Moore described, at length, how the idea of a residential historic district had originally started. McIntyre explained that, at that point, the Commission was starting from zero and working their way up. She added that the Commission could have only made recommendations on an HDSC, not final decisions. At the time, the Commission was only in the planning process. She was pleased with how many residents were asking questions, as the engagement helped to make better decisions. Anthony noted that the Commission was so early in their work that they didn’t have many answers to the questions posed to them that night. Normally, the level of engagement that took place at this meeting was only seen late in a process when things could not be changed – this time, there was nothing yet to change.

Shapy approached the podium. He noted that there was too much misinformation floating around on this project. He felt that residents could get more involved, and that the Commission could use other forms of engagement – like radio – to help get their message out. Shapy added that, when the cruise ships came to town, he was told by passengers that Escanaba felt like a movie set.<sup>4</sup> He wanted to keep Escanaba beautiful, and he hoped that a historic district could help keep the City looking good.

---

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None.

---

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

---

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **NB1: Historic District Study Committee Recommendation**

Tyler Anthony introduced the item.<sup>5</sup> McIntyre asked him to clarify what the HDSC would and would not do. After some discussion, it was understood that no decisions on historic districts could have been made until after an HDSC’s work had begun. Fouts asked if the Commission was choosing people for the committee at this meeting; Tyler Anthony explained that the Commission could recommend a slate of members, but the City Council would have made the final decision.

---

<sup>4</sup> During summer 2023, American Queen Voyages had Escanaba as a port-of-call. From May through October, two vessels visited a total of 28 times.

<sup>5</sup> See Appdx. 1, NBL.

Moore noted that she had been contacted by some people interested in serving on an HDSC, and that they might have made for good choices. McIntyre felt that the Commission should not deviate from the plan set forth in the packet. This included advertising in the newspaper, and following OMA rules.

Discussion ensued over an HDSC's composition and how to balance the number of residents with other qualifications. McIntyre wanted to see more residents on the HDSC. After more discussion, it was suggested that this item be tabled until the end of the meeting.

**McIntyre moved to table NB1 until the end of the meeting so that Commissioners could explore options for the committee. O'Donnell seconded.**

**A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.**

### **NB2: Newspaper Outreach Strategy**

Anthony introduced the item.<sup>6</sup> Fouts dislike the articles, finding them to be dry and irrelevant to Escanaba. She noted that many of them had examples from large cities. Fouts felt it would have been better to focus on smaller cities – especially cities in Michigan – and what they were doing with their historic districts. Lindquist agreed, adding that it made sense to focus on Escanaba, what we had already lost, and what we were in jeopardy of losing.

Commissioners discussed options to approach the articles at length, figuring on what the best focus might have been. Tyler Anthony recommended that the Commission reject the articles as presented before acting any further.

**McIntyre moved reject the newspaper outreach plan. Lindquist seconded.**

**A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.**

Tyler Anthony then asked Commissioners what they wanted to do instead of the proposed articles. Further discussion ensued. After some time, McIntyre and Tyler Anthony agreed to write two articles for the newspaper.

### **NB3: Bylaws Adoption**

Tyler Anthony introduced the item.<sup>7</sup> Hearing no comments or questions, Fouts then for a motion.

**Lindquist moved to amend the bylaws. Croasdell seconded.**

**A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.**

### **NB1: Historic District Study Committee Recommendation**

**McIntyre moved to take NB1 from the table. There was not a second.**

**MOTION PASSED by unanimous consent.**

McIntyre noted that a citizen's committee was an option that could have been used in conjunction with an HDSC. This, she noted, could have helped the Commission gather information, do public outreach, education and listen to concerns. Discussion ensued about what the actual charge of a Commission committee might have been.

---

<sup>6</sup> See Appdx. 1, NB2.

<sup>7</sup> See Appdx. 1, NB3.

Growdon spoke from the audience. He asked who this other committee would have answered to, and what their purpose would have been. Commissioners and Growdon discussed this point. McIntyre explained that such a committee could have provided another layer of discussion, and to have allowed for more flexibility in the Commission's work. Tyler Anthony added that he would have to check over some supporting documents to figure out how to approach a committee.

**McIntyre moved to have Anthony explore a citizen committee for the next meeting. Croasdell seconded.**

**A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.**

Further discussion took place over a citizen committee.<sup>8</sup>

---

### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Flynn approached the podium to express her concerns over a residential historic district. She explained that she had previously asked to be added to an HDSC volunteer list, but that Commission staff were confused by her request. She added that it made much more sense to have a historic district on Ludington Street than to have one in a residential area. Flynn then described her home, its historic traits, and how she felt that it was not a historic resource.

Fouts stated that she didn't believe that Ludington Street was a historic district; Anthony explained that it was a Historic District listed under the National Register of Historic Places. Discussion ensued over existing and earlier proposed local historic districts in Escanaba.

---

### **COMMISSIONER/STAFF COMMENT & ANNOUNCEMENTS<sup>9</sup>**

Tyler Anthony reported that the City's membership with the Michigan Historic Preservation Network had been renewed for 2024. He also reported that the MHPN's annual statewide conference was planned to take place in Kalamazoo in May. Finally, he reported that the Annual Certified Local Government Report had been submitted to SHPO.

Croasdell thanked all present for coming to the meeting.

Fouts hoped that residents would have helped the Commission get accurate information out to the public.

McIntyre felt that there were many ways to do a historic district, and that exploring those options was best for Escanaba.

Growdon thanked the Commission for taking everyone's concerns seriously.

---

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**O'Donnell moved to adjourn the meeting. Croasdell seconded.**

**A voice vote was taken. MOTION PASSED.**

*The meeting adjourned at 6:04 PM.*

---

<sup>8</sup> The audio recording did not capture enough of this discussion to support these minutes.

<sup>9</sup> Some discussion with the audience took place during this item, but such talk was omitted for brevity and clarity.

---

**EXHIBITS TO THESE MINUTES**

**Appendix 1:** The meeting agenda and packet.

---

**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 March 2024; that I have reviewed said proposed minutes; and that said proposed minutes shall be made publicly available.

REVIEWED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Lindquist, Secretary  
Escanaba Historic District Commission

Draft reviewed on: 3/20/2024

Draft available on: 3/21/2024

I further certify that the foregoing proposed minutes are now approved; that these 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 Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MCL 125.3801 et seq.), the Local Historic Districts Act (MCL 399.201 et seq.), said City's Code of Ordinances, and said Commission's Bylaws.

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Lindquist, Secretary  
Escanaba Historic District Commission

Final approved on: \_\_\_\_\_

Final available on: \_\_\_\_\_