

**Historic District Commission
Minutes Of February 19, 2025**

151 Martin Street, City Commission Room 205, Birmingham, MI

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Historic District Commission ("HDC") held February 19, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

1) Roll Call

Present: Vice Chair Keith Deyer; Board Members Timothy Collins, Gigi Debbrecht, Michael Willoughby; Alternate Board Members Mary Jaye, Steven Lemberg

Absent: Chair Dustin Kolo; Board Members Patricia Lang, Natalia Dukas

Staff: Planning Director Dupuis; City Transcriptionist Eichenhorn

2) Nomination of Temporary Vice Chair

01-01-25

**Motion by Willoughby
Seconded by Debbrecht to nominate Mary Jaye.**

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Jaye, Willoughby, Lemberg, Debbrecht, Collins, Deyer

Nays: None

3) Approval of the HDC Minutes of December 4, 2024

01-02-25

**Motion by Jaye
Seconded by Debbrecht to approve the December 4, 2024 minutes.**

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Jaye, Willoughby, Lemberg, Debbrecht, Collins, Deyer

Nays: None

4) Courtesy Review

5) Historic Design Review

6) Sign Review

7) Study Session

A. Historic Preservation Master Plan

PD Dupuis presented the item and answered informational questions from the HDC.

HDC members raised the following points during discussion:

- It is important to consider the different audiences for each aspect of the plan, and to write each aspect accordingly.
- The City's 2040 Master Plan was written in language accessible to the layperson, and this plan should likely follow that style.
- Including the homeowner requirements for historic designation can help reduce concerns and misinformation about the process.
- Additional information could also be available for homeowners that own houses built by architects of note.
- There is a lack of public understanding around the topic of historic preservation. A historic preservation public education process should occur before public opinions are solicited for the plan.
- A second survey could ask for people's general feelings on historic preservation, whether they personally would designate their home, and what incentives for historic preservation might be appealing.
- The survey should also ask whether the participant lives in a historic home, so responses can be filtered accordingly.
- It would be helpful if there were funds budgeted towards historic preservation signage or other publicity.

B. Historic Plaques

VC Deyer and PD Dupuis presented the item and answered informational questions from the HDC.

HDC members raised the following points during discussion:

- Including a bit more information on the heritage home plaques could be useful, so readers understand the significance.
- Including the year the building was built might be worthwhile.
- Announcing the plaques via the news, social media and/or other City communications would help raise awareness for historic preservation.
- Commercial historic signage could have more information than the signs intended for private homes.
- The plaques could possibly be ordered in bulk with the individual years added after the fact in order to conserve funds.
- Since there is a limited budget, installing the plaques one neighborhood at a time could be appropriate.
- Heritage home signs and designated historic home signs could be different shapes and/or different colors.
- Adding signage to older homes would raise awareness of historic preservation as well.
- This is a way to also recognize homeowners that put effort into preserving their older homes.
- The prior sign for the Bates Street Historic District could be installed, and feedback solicited.
- The historic district signage should be distinct from street signs.
- The house plaques should at least complement the proposed wayfinding signage designs.

- It would be nice to put up signs for the Bates Street Historic District the weekend of the Birmingham Hometown Parade.

8) Miscellaneous Business and Communication

HDC members raised the following points during discussion:

- Incredulity was expressed that residents liked the wayfinding signage.
- The wayfinding package's proposal for historic district signage has neither a historic feel nor any indication that it denotes a historic district.
- The wayfinding sign designs look like fast food chain signs.
- The points on the wayfinding signage do not feel sensitive or appropriate for a historic context.
- It was unfortunate that the overall wayfinding designs were approved.
- The wayfinding signage designs were 'hideous' and 'a tremendous waste of taxpayer dollars'.
- There should be an alternative design for the historic plaques and other signage, because this is an effort to distinguish historic from non-historic properties and areas.

- A. Pre-Application Discussion**
- B. Draft Agenda**
- C. Staff Reports**

It would be appropriate to bring proposed historic district signage to an upcoming meeting that does not resemble the points of the wayfinding designs.

- 1. Administrative Sign Approvals**
- 2. Administrative Approvals**
- 3. Demolitions**
- 4. Action List**
- D. Communications**

8) Adjournment

No further business being evident, the HDC motioned to adjourn at 8:03 p.m.



Nick Dupuis, Planning Director



Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist