



Heritage Preservation Commission

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, August 26, 2025, 6:30 PM
106 Center Street

Members of the public may attend the Heritage Preservation Commission meeting either in person or by joining via Zoom either online or by telephone at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87372008713?pwd=0LRaparZI0aer3eYbEGTGD8HGRuvXW.1>

Meeting ID: 873 7200 8713

Passcode: 020661

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,87372008713#,,,,*020661# US (New York)

+13017158592,,87372008713#,,,,*020661# US (Washington DC)

Some items on this agenda are important enough to City Councilmembers that a quorum of the Council may be present to receive information leading to their future deliberations and eventual decision.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Agenda Approval
3. Consent Agenda
 - A. July 9, 2025, Heritage Preservation Commission Special Meeting Minutes
 - B. July 22, 2025, Heritage Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes
4. Citizen Reports or Comments
 - A. City Council Liaison O'Hanlon
5. New Business
6. Unfinished Business
7. Communications and Reports
 - A. Next City Council Meeting - September 2, 2025
 - B. Next HPC Meeting - September 23, 2025
 - C. Sign Ordinance Subcommittee Update
 - D. PreserveMN Conference
 - E. HPC Training - September 2025

F. Updates

8. Future Agenda Items
9. Adjournment

**City of Excelsior
Hennepin County, Minnesota**

**Heritage Preservation Commission Special Meeting
Minutes**

Tuesday, July 9, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Caron called the July 9, 2025, special HPC meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

Present: Caron, Gephart, Mark, Dahlstrom, Anderson, Macpherson

Absent: None

Also Present: Julia Mullin (Community Development Director), Ali Cameron (Senior Planner),
and Amy Lucas (Historic Consultant)

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Macpherson motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Gephart seconded. Motion passed 6/0.

3. CONSENT AGENDA (including review and approval of minutes from previous meeting)

N/A

4. CITIZEN REPORTS OR COMMENTS

N/A

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. 262 Lake Street – Amendment to Site Alteration Permit (HPC 2025-13)

Staff introduced the item. Construction did not conform with the approved plans and a stop work order was placed on the project. City staff and the historic consultant administratively approved some changes. Two items require Commission review and approval: the garage height and the construction of the front porch.

The applicant presented the application.

Commissioner Gephart motioned to direct staff to draft a resolution approving the amendment to the site alteration permit that captures the comments and conditions made by commissioners and bring to the July 22nd HPC meeting for approval. Commissioner Macpherson seconded. Motion passed 6/0.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

N/A

7. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

Staff provided updates on the 10 Water Street Preliminary PUD. Commissioners reiterated concerns about height, parking, the theater, and public benefit.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioners requested that the election of a Vice Chair be placed on the future agenda.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Macpherson motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Gephart seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ali Cameron, Senior Planner

**City of Excelsior
Hennepin County, Minnesota**

**Heritage Preservation Commission Meeting
Minutes**

Tuesday, July 22, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Caron called the July 22, 2025, Heritage Preservation Commission meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

Present: Caron, Gephart, Mark, Dahlstrom, Anderson, and Macpherson

Absent: Mark

Also Present: Ali Cameron (Senior Planner), Amy Lucas (Historic Consultant), Chrystal O'Hanlon (City Council Liaison)

a. Election of Vice Chair

Chair Caron nominated Commissioner Macpherson as Vice Chair. Commissioner Macpherson accepted.

Commissioner Gephart motioned to elect Commissioner Macpherson as Vice Chair. Commissioner Anderson seconded. Motion passed 5/0.

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Macpherson motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Gephart seconded. Motion passed 5/0.

3. CONSENT AGENDA (including review and approval of minutes from previous meeting)

a. June 24, 2025, Heritage Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Macpherson requested a correction to Item 7E. Chair Caron requested a correction to the first paragraph.

Commissioner Gephart motioned to approve the June 24, 2025 minutes with noted corrections. Commissioner Macpherson seconded. Motion passed 5/0.

4. CITIZEN REPORTS OR COMMENTS

a. Quarterly Council Liaison O'Hanlon

Council Liaison O'Hanlon introduced herself as the new Q3 Liaison from City Council and gave brief updates on the 10 Water Street Preliminary PUD recommendations from City Council on July 21, 2025, and the approval of a work group to assist the HPC.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. 173 Second Street, Site Alteration Permit (HPC No. 2025-10)

The city's historic consultant Amy Lucas presented on the item. Ms. Lucas provided background on what had happened with the historic windows and the HPC's previous decision. It was noted that the newest SAP application with a complete set of photos was missing from the packet and would be sent to HPC commissioners after the meeting.

Mitch Day (Applicant): Mr. Day presented on the item, stating that he and his family moved to Excelsior in 2020 and purchased the property in April 2025 with a good understanding of the home's history with the HPC. Mr. Day wanted to acknowledge Resolution 2023-15 that was passed by the HPC and shared his commitment to respecting the requirements.

Chair Caron mentioned that there was a former requirement to paint the window sash and storm white, stating that black paint would not properly showcase the craftsman style of the sashes. Historic consultant Lucas shared that she has the same types of windows on her house with both the sash and storm window painted black, and it does not obscure the style nor visibility from the street.

Chair Caron requested that we provide a clarifying condition in the resolution about why the HPC is allowing the window sash and storm color to be black, even though the HPC had formerly recommended white. The reasons to allow the black color are because it will not obscure the window detail that the HPC was previously concerned about, it better matches the historic character of the house, it is potentially reversible in the future, and staff shared their opinion.

Commissioner Gephart motioned to approve the Site Alteration Permit and HPC Resolution 2025-11 with the added condition. Commissioner Dahlstrom seconded. Motion passed 5/0.

b. 345 Water Street, Site Alteration Permit (HPC No. 2025-11)

Staff introduced the item and stated corrections for the SAP application and the resolution language.

Aimee Yanik (Applicant): Ms. Yanik introduced the project to install a projecting sign on behalf of the owner, Chip Ray of Art Rocks, the new tenant at 345 Water Street. Ms. Yanik shared the background of the new retail shop, that it would be an interactive art gallery featuring art related to music, oil and color paintings by renowned and national artists, and it would support artists and first responders. Ms. Yanik also stated that they are aware they are to drill holes in the mortar, not the masonry.

Commissioners inquired about the material of the sign, the reflectivity, and the sign's connection to the bracket. Commissioner Dahlstrom and Chair Caron recommended finding a more suitable bracket connection with the eyelet. Chair Caron reminded the applicant that the city likes the spaces to retain their brackets when the business changes over.

Commissioner Macpherson motioned to approve the Site Alteration Permit and HPC Resolution 2025-10 with staff corrections. Commissioner Anderson seconded. Motion passed 5/0.

c. 305 Water Street Ticket Booth, Site Alteration Permit (HPC No. 2025-12)

Staff introduced the item, the historical significance of the ticket booth, and the extent of need for the solar panel at the ticket booth.

Karen Kertzman (Applicant) and colleague Tom Heimer: Ms. Kertzman and Mr. Heimer introduced the project and the options they had explored for bringing electricity to the ticket booth. They explained that the solar panel would be the most economical and safest option.

Commissioners inquired about alternative placements for the solar panel, and recommended making the solar panel and the wiring as inconspicuous as possible. whether alternative poles down the rail line had been explored for more sun exposure. Commissioners recommended the applicant conduct a trial run to ensure there's adequate sun exposure at the proposed location on the outrigger of the pole next to the structure. Commissioners also recommended making it as safe and inconspicuous as possible, by using a black colored wiring and threading the wire through the existing wire opening in the ticket booth. Commissioners also inquired about the type of framing for attaching it to the outrigger and requested the height of the bottom of the solar panel be mounted at 13 feet high.

Commissioners requested adding conditions to the resolution, namely 1) that the bottom of the solar panel be mounted 13 feet above ground and can be higher at the applicant's discretion; 2) that the applicant is allowed to mount it on the outrigger of the pole; 3) that the wire from the solar panel to the building shall be approved by staff; 4) that the attachment of the panel to the outrigger shall be approved by staff.

Commissioner Gephart moved to approve the Site Alteration Permit and HPC Resolution 2025-10 with the added conditions. Commissioner Macpherson seconded. Motion passed 5/0.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. HPC Resolution 2025-12 – Resolution Approving an Amendment to a Site Alteration Permit for garage and front porch at Kalorama Cottage at 262 Lake Street.

City staff shared that this is the resolution with recommendations and conditions that the HPC had requested staff put together after the previous meeting on June 24, 2025.

Chair Caron pointed out discrepancies to the language that needed to be edited, and requested that one more clarifying condition be added, stating that the conditions of earlier adopted resolutions are not being waived and remain in effect.

Commissioner Anderson motioned to approve the Amendment to the Site Alteration Permit and HPC Resolution 2025-12 with the corrections and added condition. Commissioner Gephart seconded. Motion passed 5/0.

7. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

- a. Next City Council Meeting – August 4, 2025
- b. Next HPC Meeting – August 26, 2025

c. Sign Ordinance Subcommittee Update

Chair Caron provided an update to the HPC about the two subcommittee meetings that have taken place already, with plans for a third meeting to take place the first week of August.

d. HPC Training Update – August 2025

City staff provided an update that the HPC training shall shift to August or September 2025 based on internal availability and workload. Commissioners shared topics of interest that they would be interested in. Commissioners also agreed to move the training to September 2025 so that all commissioners can attend.

e. Updates

PreserveMN September 10-12, New Ulm MN: Staff provided updates on the scholarship available from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for up to 5 attendees from the HPC, city staff and officials to attend the event. Commissioners Macpherson, Gephart and Dahlstrom nominated themselves for attendance this year. Staff member Cameron to also attend. Commissioner Anderson expressed desire to attend the 2026 event.

Staff provided project updates for 236 Lake Street, 262 Lake Street, and 205 Water Street.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

N/A

9. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Macpherson motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Gephart seconded. Motion carried 5/0. The meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ali Cameron, Senior Planner

HPC Subcommittee Recommendations for Zoning Revisions to Sign Ordinance

August 14, 2025

The following recommendations are proposed to promote consistency where possible between the existing Zoning Code Sign Ordinance and the Preservation Design Manual (PDM) Guidelines used by the HPC to review signage in the downtown historic district. Following the City’s adoption of a revised sign ordinance, the HPC intends to propose updates to its PDM Guidelines for signage to minimize conflicts with the new ordinance.

	Recommendation	Code Section	Explanation
1	Awnings: Clarify that signage on awnings should be placed on the valance only.	24-9 and 24-10	Aligns with PDM Guidelines
2	Lighting Conduit: Add standards for locating the conduit for lighting signs in less visible locations, and in a manner that doesn’t damage masonry surfaces; prohibit lighting under awnings and up- and down-lighting of building facades.	Add to 24-11	Conduit lighting standards are not included in the Sign Ordinance or in the PDM.
3	Grandfathering: Limit grandfathering of non-conforming and non-compliant signs upon their replacement, disappearance, discontinuation, or alteration, to maximum extent legally permissible.	15-6(f)	Current Sign Ordinance states that if a non-conforming sign is abandoned or discontinued for a period of 30+ days, it must be discontinued, and the new sign must conform to current regulations. Recommend reducing this to 15+ days, or whatever reduction is legally permissible.
4	Freestanding, Portable and Sandwich Board Signs. A business may have 1 portable freestanding business sign per street frontage. Incorporate material standards for free-standing signs from the City’s	24-5(10) p. 28 of Design Standards under “Sign Type” CS.14	Limit use of sidewalk signs for sidewalk safety and minimizing clutter. Some businesses appear to be keeping their sandwich boards up during non-business hours, so we need a standard for enforcement. Current Sign Ordinance doesn’t incorporate appropriate historic district materials, design

	Design Standards into code, whereby signs should be constructed of wood, metal, or other material consistent with the downtown historic district. Backlit plastic sign panels, awnings, or translucent materials discouraged. Restrict portable, sandwich or menu signs to be displayed only during business hours.	Materials and illumination sections in the PDM Guidelines	standards or PDM requirements when it comes to sandwich boards. Most sandwich boards end up being made of plastic, which are in appropriate in the downtown historic district.
5	Window Signs, Decals, Graphics. Standardize percentage of windows (up to 25%) that may be covered in window signs, decals, or business graphics, along with the number of window signs, decals and graphics. Allow maximum of 2 window signs or business graphics.	24-4 Prohibited Section 24-9 24-9(1) 24-10(1) 24-5(5) PDM CS.7 PDM p. 93 PDM p. 39	The current Sign Ordinance exempts window signs under 6 square feet from being part of the maximum allowance of signs and sign space, which leads to administrative complexity. Decals are not included in the Sign Ordinance and can be extensively added to windows by business owners. Limiting their use will align with the PDM Guidelines, but the Sign Ordinance is not clear enough. Add new clause to make this clear. Current Sign Ordinance only prohibits sign space in windows if it is a temporary sign but does not mention permanent sign. This restriction should apply to all window signs, both temporary and permanent.
6	Temporary Signs. Clarify duration and manner of mounting of temporary signs (real estate) and temporary lighting (patio)	24-6	
7	Rear Signage. Make rear signage less prominent than front entrance signage and prohibit signage where not adjacent to an obvious entrance.	New	Aligns to PDM Guidelines.
8	PDM and Ordinance Complementarity. Provide that the sign ordinance does not override the requirements of the Design	24-5(8)	Aligns to PDM Guidelines

	Standards and Preservation Design Manual and applies to PUDs unless specifically exempted.		
9	Freestanding Post Sign Clarity. Include language that 4.5-foot freestanding post signs are allowed in the DC district; up to 6 feet in the front yard of a residential structure that is being used for commercial purposes.	24-10(6)	The 6-foot front yard clause is mentioned in the PDM Guidelines, but not in the Sign Ordinance. Need to include in both.

The HPC Subcommittee has the following general recommendations regarding the draft sign ordinance prepared by WSB (Note: No marked comparison to the existing ordinance was available for HPC review).

- **All Signs Shall Require a Permit.** Specify that every sign needs a permit, unless official and permitted by state law (e.g., campaign signs during election periods) and signs that would not normally be thought to require a permit (e.g., temporary graduation lawn signs). The Sign Ordinance currently says permits are not needed for temporary signs in residential districts that don't exceed five (5) square feet (24-5(7)); three signs, not exceeding four (4) square feet each (24-7(9)), and for portable signs occupying public or private sidewalk within commercial zoning districts (24-7(10)). Having so many exemptions creates administrative complexity, and allows certain types of business signs to go unnoticed or become unrecorded. Requiring permits for all types of signs would reduce administrative complexity and ensure accurate accounting of all signs (Reference.80_9.and.80_1in.Ordinance.and.WSB.80_2);
- **Separate Monument Signs from Freestanding Signs in Historic District.** Limitation of freestanding signage to one monument sign per property and one wall sign per tenant is not workable in the downtown historic district where there is not much room for monument signs. Monument signs are also not considered historically appropriate since they can obstruct views of historical buildings and architectural features, cause visual clutter, and disrupt pedestrians in an area with limited space. Instead, freestanding post signs seem to be more typical in the DC and CC areas of the historic downtown. Many buildings also have multiple small signs per tenant, all of which would become non-conforming.

Prohibiting the use of monument signs in the DC Historic District for the Ordinance would align with the PDM Guidelines. (Reference.Sign.Ordinance.80_76(2).Add.to.existing.clause.about.freestanding.signs)

- **Valet Signage.** The HPC recommends creating standards around valet parking signs, and limit only one (1) valet parking sign next to a valet booth per business. It is also recommended to require a booth layout and sign location plan with the valet parking license. Currently, valet signs cause clutter in the right of ways, and there is no standard in the Ordinance capping the number of valet parking signs allowed.(Reference.Valet.License.Ordinance.74_78(5);
- **Murals.** Murals shall be defined as artwork, applied on a wall, that contains no logos, slogans, brands, names, trademarks, advertising messages, or graphics of any kind, and not considered as signs. All other signs painted on a wall or backdrop are to be considered wall signs. Murals and painted wall signs shall not be applied directly on unpainted brick or stone masonry, although exceptions may be made for concrete block. This should be applicable not just to the downtown historic district, but all of Excelsior. Mural definitions and guidance are included in the PDM Guidelines and says to refer to the Sign Ordinance if a mural is considered a “commercial sign”, and there should be more clarity on when that is triggered. There should also be a prohibition against lighting of murals (not including painted wall signs), since there is no restriction on mural lighting in the PDM Guidelines nor the Sign Ordinance. The current Sign Ordinance doesn’t have language or guidance around murals at all. Without language or guidance, it leads to administrative complexity in guiding decisions. The Sign Ordinance should include information on murals and distinguish that anything painted on a wall would be considered a wall sign, subject to the ordinance’s Commercial Signage Guidelines. (New?Aligns.with.PDM.M;7)
- **Lawn Signs.** Include a maximum amount of lawn signs, up to three (3). There is no maximum established currently in the Sign Ordinance, nor the WSB recommendation draft. (Reference.WSB.Draft.80_6(e))
- **Comprehensive Sign Plans.** Comprehensive sign plans should be required for all multi-tenant buildings, including single-story.
- **Portable Directional or Business Signage.** The HPC recommends that this should not be allowed (such as sandwich board signs or lawn signs installed with wires or stakes on street corners far removed from business entrances). This can lead to visual clutter in spaces not occupied or owned by the business.

- **Event Signage.** Temporary or portable city-approved event signage shall be reviewed by the city's event coordinator and be stamped. Signage without the official stamp may be removed by city officials (e.g., event flyers, parking sandwich boards). Currently, there are not clear standards over event signage and it has a tendency to cause clutter.
- **Backlighting of Signs.** Limiting lighting of signs in the historic district within the Sign Ordinance will align with the PDM Guidelines. Backlit signs are not appropriate. Installing conduit for illuminated signs may cause irreparable damage to historic masonry or building architectural features. The City should reduce excessive lighting as much as possible. Some neon signs are currently permitted, such as small interior window signs and neon signs for midcentury or art deco buildings. In those cases, exceptions may be made for interior neon signs where historically appropriate. Moreover, the HPC recommends restrictions on illuminated real estate signage in windows, requiring that they have warm lighting. (Reference.Sign.Ordinance.80_0)
- **Maximum Sign Area Calculations.** WSB recommends to calculate the maximum sign area as a specific percentage of the wall space in which a sign is installed. The HPC recommends continuing to calculate maximum sign areas based on a square footage cap rather than a percentage of the wall space, as this leads to administrative complexity.
- **Building Damage.** Whether temporary or permanent, signage and installation shall not pose potential damage to the building. Many signs outside of the historic district are installed without guidance from the Sign Ordinance on minimizing damage to the buildings, and damage could manifest years later. The PDM Guidelines provide guidance on reducing damage in the historic district with specifications on drilling into the mortar, not masonry. The HPC recommends reiterating this in the Sign Ordinance. The HPC also recommends including a reduction of damage for all signs outside of the historic district for longevity. This should include prohibiting the use of individual letter and number signs on masonry walls, unless mounted on board to prevent damage to building surfaces.



Item: 7.E.

ITEM REPORT

To: Heritage Preservation Commission

From:

Meeting Date: August 26, 2025

Department/Office: Community Development

Item Name: HPC Training - September 2025

Summary:

Recommended Action:

Budget:

Attachments:

None