

NEW HISTORY

MEETING MINUTES

Kick Off Meeting

Date: January 27, 2020 11:00am-12:30pm
Albert Lea City Hall
221 East Clark Street, Albert Lea

Project: Historic Preservation Chapter – Albert Lea Comprehensive Plan

Written By: Laurel Fritz, fritz@newhistory.com, 612-843-4140

Reviewed By: Peter Hendee Brown, peter@peterhendeebrown.com, 612-843-4140

Attendees and Copy List

Name	Role	Present
Linda Bryan	Albert Lea Heritage Preservation Commission	X
Becky Johnson	Albert Lea Heritage Preservation Commission	X
Stephanie Kibler	Albert Lea Heritage Preservation Commission	
Brad Kirchner	Albert Lea Heritage Preservation Commission	X
Jennifer Levisen	Albert Lea Heritage Preservation Commission	
Charles Newell	Albert Lea Heritage Preservation Commission	X
Tami Staker	Albert Lea Heritage Preservation Commission	
Megan Boeck	City of Albert Lea	X
Peter Hendee Brown	New History	X
Laurel Fritz	New History	X

Discussion Items

1. **Success:**

Looking back on this project in 5-10 years, if this project was “successful,” what did we do and what has been the outcome?

- a. Momentum for revitalization of the Downtown Historic District has continued
- b. No more empty/boarded up buildings in the Downtown Historic District
- c. Increased diversity of uses within the Downtown Historic District – more retail, introduce housing at upper levels
- d. Historic Preservation in the Downtown Historic District has been received positively by the public
- e. The HPC has support and bandwidth to start looking at additional properties outside the Downtown Historic District that may benefit from local designation.



Properties mentioned include churches in and adjacent to downtown, Depot buildings, Navy Hospital

2. Constraints:

What are the constraints facing historic preservation in Albert Lea?

- a. Misconceptions.
 - Financial commitment (real or perceived) for building owners “preservation is too expensive/more expensive”
 - Downtown is in terrible shape/falling apart
- b. Education. Property owners in the Downtown Historic District and also the general public need education about
 - the benefits of local preservation
 - the local preservation process
 - grant and tax credit funding opportunities and logistics
 - building code enforcement
- c. Skilled Labor.
 - There is a lack of skilled labor (masons, wood windows, etc.) available in Albert Lea. This is an issue that reflects national trends and will require pragmatic solutions both locally and state-wide.
- d. Communication with SHPO
 - Need for better communication structures with SHPO during Historic Tax Credit projects. Sometimes project needs and review outcomes don't align.

3. Opportunities:

What are the opportunities for historic preservation in Albert Lea?

- a. Within the existing Downtown Historic District
 - Target areas include Washington Avenue, East and West Clark Street, and the 300 block of Broadway Avenue
 - Promotion and use of the existing Façade Improvement grant program
 - Potential to revise the District boundary to include adjacent properties (theory will need to be vetted)
 - Increased Civic activation to take advantage of Downtown Historic District resources – Wind Down Wednesdays, Public Art, Pop-up parks/libraries/etc.
- b. Education. This is both a constraint and an opportunity. See item 2.b.

4. Historic Preservation Chapter Content

- a. Concrete and actionable plan – not amorphous theoretical language
- b. Focus on Downtown Historic District – expansion of HPC purview and responsibilities is the next step after the Downtown District
- c. Desire expressed for New History to attend a future HPC meeting as public engagement following development of the draft chapter

Action Items

Action	Description	Responsible Party	Date Completed
1.1	Develop Action Plan for Public Engagement	New History lead	

Next Meeting

TBD

Weekly Calls

Megan Boeck/New History
Tuesdays 9:00-9:30am

Meeting Adjourned: 12:30pm

Meeting Minutes prepared by **New History** and represent the author's understanding. Any clarifications or corrections shall be reported to **Laurel Fritz** (fritz@newhistory.com) at **New History**, cc-ing **Megan Boeck at the City of Albert Lea** (mboeck@ci.albertlea.mn.us) (by February 14, 2020). Corrected meeting notes will be reissued, and items in **RED** shall represent corrections or revisions to the document.