

Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

Subject to review and approval

Tuesday, November 11, 2025, at 7:00 PM
via Zoom Video Conference

Commission Members Present: Eric Gilbertson (Chair), Robert McCullough (Vice Chair), Paul Carnahan, and Linden Chozinska

Members Absent: Bryan Jones

Others Present: Meredith Crandall (staff); Jon Copans (briefly)

1. Call to Order: 7:03 PM
2. Public Comments: None.
3. Approval of the Agenda: Bob moved to approve the agenda. Paul seconded. The agenda was approved 4-0.
4. Comments from the Chair. None.
5. Report for 87 State St. / Federal Building by Paul Carnahan. Paul noted that a recent community meeting led by Jon Capens provided information on several fronts. Consultants Jeffrey Glassburg and Samantha Dunn have been hired to conduct due diligence on the sale of the building and to identify potential buyers. Consultants have consolidated federal reports, arranged for an appraisal, including structural assessments by engineers. Notably, they discovered that prior to the government shutdown, GSA had conducted an environmental survey of the building and its site but had not yet circulated that report, for reasons that were not explained.

Lindsay Kurrie, Vermont Secretary of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, wants to see the project succeed, and the state is trying to help with funding. Currently, GSA is at the stage of the process where the building must be offered to a municipal entity. Then it goes to the open market, with no specific requirements as to vetting potential buyers. In the current exploratory phase, there is considerable speculation about potential uses, including condominiums on the upper floors; a hotel; and affordable housing. Architect Greg Gossens resigned from Montpelier's Commission on Recovery and Resilience, and has been working on design concepts. Negotiations between the city and GSA will begin very soon.

Separately, Eric noted that USPS offices are disgraceful.

6. Status of Public Presentation of Historic Resources Scoping Study. We are focusing on a May 4th date for Lyssa Papazian's presentation of her study. Eric hopes that John Russell and Beverly Hill will contribute to the cost of Lyssa's honorarium, and that the city will contribute as well. Timing of the funding may be an issue for the city, and the presentation may also conflict with the window of time available to apply for CLG grant money. Eric has assembled information about the study for Bev Hill.
7. Staff Report--CLG Coordinator Meeting. Meredith attended the meeting led by Elizabeth Peebles from the SHPO office. Elizabeth hopes to continue these CLG meetings to engage in trouble shooting and provide Q&A sessions. VTSHPO has now produced a 2024-2029 Vermont Preservation Plan, and a copy of the lengthy document is available in Meredith's office. The document is also posted on the SHPO web site, and Meredith will circulate a link. Elizabeth is also in the process of creating a CLG list-serve to connect the state's 21 CLGs. Currently, SHPO is behind schedule in the normal CLG grant administrative process.

Separately, SHPO has updated all of its survey of historic sites and structures inventory forms, specifically to address the need for surveys of cultural landscapes, including cemeteries, for the State Register of Historic Places.

SHPO has also prepared a new "How-To Guide" for volunteers who are preparing inventory forms.

NAPC has also scheduled a series of webinars for statewide members of CLGs and HPCs, and those workshops are free for members of Montpelier's HPC through the State coordinated NAPC membership for CLG communities. SHPO is also encouraging that CLG communities consider hosting a NAPC camp/conference – either individually or in coordination with other CLGs for local HPC officials.

As to possible CLG projects in Montpelier, Meredith believes that a study of historic resources along river valleys would be opportune, given the current focus on watershed protection. Lyssa Papazian noted that the Granite Street Baltimore Truss, the city's oldest surviving metal truss bridge, is not listed on the NR, and Eric noted that a nomination would be a good project. Bob has confirmed that the bridge is not listed on the NR. An inventory of buildings in the Meadow would be useful.

Eric noted that an archeological study of logs dug up during the State Street project may determine that they date from the city's early settlement. Meredith will inquire about those logs from Public Works, connecting with Zach. Eric also noted that plans to replace the Rialto Bridge, which should be a state project, may be underway.

8. Review and Approve Minutes: 4/8, 8/12 & 9/9/2025. Bob moved to approve the minutes and Paul seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by a vote of 4 to 0.
9. Other Business. Bob inquired about progress to address future flooding in Montpelier. In that regard, Meredith and Paul reported that demolition of the Davis House at 5 Home Farm Way

has been completed, and plans are underway to rehabilitate the flood plain at the site. Substantial quantities of soil will be removed to increase depth, and Eric noted that archeological review will be necessary. Removal of the dams at Pioneer Street and another location will also occur in an effort to restore the river's natural corridor.

Plans to conduct a building-by-building assessment in the downtown will also help shop owners, as will workshops for building owners. The city's Commission for Recovery and Resilience is trying to organize community connections throughout the watershed and to provide better channels of communication in the event of an emergency.

The first home elevation project on lower state street is in beginning stages, and FEMA buyouts of key properties has occurred; the city now owns some of those properties. Overall, progress will depend on success of the city's hazard mitigation grants, a key first step. The federal building project might help to move parking off the riverbank, allowing that area to become part of the natural flood plain.

Separately, Patrick Malone is moving ahead with plans for a Boutique Hotel at 140 Main St., the Design Review Committee recommended approval of plans. Lucky Boardman has acquired the old CVS/Walgreens pharmacy building on Main Street and also the Resurrection Baptist Church on Elm Street, and plans for both projects are underway.

Next Regular Meeting: Tuesday, December 9th 7:00 PM

10. Adjournment: Eric adjourned the meeting at 8:05 PM.