

**AGENDA**  
**BIRMINGHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY COMMITTEE**  
**MUNICIPAL BUILDING-CONFERENCE ROOM 202 & 203**  
**151 MARTIN STREET**  
**MONDAY NOVEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup>, 2019**  
**\*\*\*\*\*5:30 PM\*\*\*\*\***

- 1) **Roll Call**
- 2) **Approval of the HDSC Minutes of June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019**
- 3) **Collaborative Preservation Projects**
- 4) **Study Session – Heritage Home Program**
- 5) **Adjournment**

Notice: Individuals requiring accommodations, such as interpreter services, for effective participation in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's Office at (248) 530-1880 at least on day in advance of the public meeting.

Las personas que requieren alojamiento, tales como servicios de interpretación, la participación efectiva en esta reunión deben ponerse en contacto con la Oficina del Secretario Municipal al (248) 530-1880 por lo menos el día antes de la reunión pública. (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964).

**A PERSON DESIGNATED WITH THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE DECISIONS MUST BE PRESENT AT THE MEETING.**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES OF JUNE 17, 2019**  
Conference Rooms 202 & 203  
151 Martin, Birmingham, Michigan

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Minutes of the regular meeting of the Historic District Study Committee ("HDSC") held Monday, June 17, 2019. City Planner Nicholas Dupuis called the meeting to order at 5:43 p.m.

**1. ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Board Members Paul Beshouri, Jake German, Colleen McGough, Michael Xenos

**Absent:** Board Member Jonathan DeWindt

**Administration:** Nicholas Dupuis, City Planner  
Laura Eichenhorn, Transcriptionist

Paul Beshouri volunteered to be chair.

**Motion by Ms. McGough**  
**Seconded by Mr. Xenos to appoint Mr. Beshouri as HDSC Chair.**

**Motion Carried 4-0.**

**VOICE VOTE**

Yeas: Beshouri, German, McGough, Xenos  
Nays: None

**2. COLLABORATIVE PRESERVATION PROJECTS**

City Planner Dupuis explained that the HDSC only meets when directed by the City Commission. He then presented the item.

The HDSC then discussed which projects:

- Seemed possible given the Committee's skill set, and
- Held interest for members of the Committee.

Mr. Beshouri clarified that the HDSC's main task has been researching and recommending the creation or dissolution of historic districts to the City Commission.

City Planner Dupuis suggested that encouraging property owners to pursue historic designation is an large aspect of the HDSC's work, and that raising awareness of Birmingham's historical assets is also an inherent part of the HDSC's work.

It was explained that "Eco City" refers to a Birmingham area where many houses were built from ready-made kits sold by Sears. This area exists largely to the east of Woodward, north of 14 Mile and south of Lincoln, though a few exist to the west of Woodward as well.

City Planner Dupuis said he would describe the Eco City survey as more of a 'windshield study', that he would share the information he had with the Committee members, and that current Historic District Committee Vice-President Keith Deyer may be able to provide more information regarding Eco City as well.

The Committee changed "historic walking tour - update/expand" to "historic walking tour - create" after discussion that no historic walking tour exists as of yet.

Ms. McGough and Mr. Xenos agreed that creating a historic walking tour would be interesting for the Committee to pursue. Ms. McGough explained that the City's historic nature holds appeal for people curious about relocating to Birmingham, and that a walking tour could promote community interest in the community's historic assets.

City Planner Dupuis asked the Committee if a walking tour was feasible since many historic properties are far apart from one another.

Ms. McGough noted that there are a number of historic districts near each other which could constitute the walking tour.

Mr. German stated there could be more than one walking tour based around groups of historic properties that are nearer together.

Mr. Xenos said:

- The Committee could consult the group that puts together the City's garden tour for advice on how to structure a historic walking tour.
- The possible joint items listed between the HDSC, Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board, Friends of the Museum and the Museum were not actually relevant to the HDSC's work, and he recommended removing those items from the list of projects the HDSC might participate in. Those items included updating, expanding, and digitizing the Greenwood Cemetery records, creating a historic headstone inventory and condition assessments for repairs, updating the Greenwood biographical information for the existing tour program, creating an interactive map of the Cemetery with online access, and locating Potter's Field at Greenwood.

City Planner Dupuis said he would set a joint meeting for discussion of the projects with the other Boards and Committees.

### **3. HDSC PRIORITY LIST**

City Planner Dupuis presented the item.

#### **Motion by Mr. Beshouri**

**Seconded by Mr. German to remove 'developing ordinance language for sandwich board signage in historic districts' from the HDSC's priority list.**

**Motion Carried 4-0.**

**VOICE VOTE**

Yeas: Beshouri, German, McGough, Xenos

Nays: None

Mr. Xenos said he would be interested in helping to develop infill guidelines for construction in Birmingham's historic districts, but also wondered how the HDSC would do that.

Mr. Beshouri said he was not sure the HDSC had the authority to develop infill guidelines for historic districts. He noted that infill guidelines require a lot of technical expertise in planning that is not generally part of the HDSC's work.

City Planner Dupuis said he was unsure how the HDSC would be directed to commence that task. He said if the Committee were to pursue that work, he would probably provide information and options and then the HDSC would craft recommendations to the City based on that.

Ms. McGough recommended keeping the item on the list for now, saying she would like to know how similar midwestern cities with similar historic housing stock construct their infill guidelines. She said it could be useful for finding ways to positively encourage property owners to maintain and register historic homes. She gave the examples of Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights in Ohio, Oak Park in Illinois, and the east side of Milwaukee, Wisconsin as communities worth researching.

Mr. Xenos stated that tax credits for historic homes would be a good way of incentivizing their preservation.

City Planner Dupuis noted the state is attempting to establish such a tax credit. This credit would allow a historic property owner's income tax liability to be reduced by up to 25% based on rehabilitation expenses.

Mr. Beshouri said it would also be interesting to see Birmingham's current language on infills in historic districts. He noted that Birmingham has historically designated houses, as opposed to historic districts like some other municipalities, which might make historic district infill guidelines less relevant to Birmingham.

Mr. Xenos and Ms. McGough discussed various homes designed by architect Wallace Frost throughout the City, and that without historic designation houses of historical and architectural value are not necessarily preserved.

The Committee also discussed that historically designating a home tends to lower its resale value since it limits what a new owner is permitted to do with the home.

Ms. McGough noted an owner purchased a Wallace Frost home by Holy Name Church, and that the couple chose to update the home instead of demolishing it. She said the progress has been beautiful and that the Committee should find a way to showcase what can be done with historic homes. She also suggested interviewing property owners that choose to maintain their historic properties in order to publicize the value of that decision. She also said she would like to see the Heritage House Plaque and Certificate program renewed by the Committee.

City Planner Dupuis suggested the Committee consider canvassing the City for both historic homes and heritage houses in order to creating an accurate resource. He noted that Committee members could not during their canvassing which plaques are rusted or in need of repair. He said he would provide the Committee with the most recent lists of historic and heritage homes available, as well as any available information on historic districts in the City.

Mr. Beshouri said creating a tour of Heritage Houses could also be a worthwhile project for the Committee to pursue.

City Planner Dupuis explained the Committee would need to request money from the City for the purchase of Heritage Home plaques. He said he would research whether the City traditionally charges property owners for those plaques.

The Committee discussed asking Museum Director Leslie Pielack and Historic District Committee member Gigi Debbrecht whether they had more information about heritage homes.

Mr. Beshouri requested information from City Planner Dupuis regarding how other municipalities create plaques or share information regarding older homes lacking official historic designation.

**Motion by Mr. German**

**Seconded by Mr. Beshouri to focus the HDSC's work on:**

- 1(a). Re-initiating the Heritage Home Plaque and Certificate Program,**
- 1(b). Auditing designated Historical Homes in Birmingham,**
- 2. Repairing all rusted plaques on historic buildings in the CBD,**
- 3. Composing an informational plaque for the Community House, and**
- 4. Publishing the Eco City Survey**

**pending information from City Planner Dupuis regarding background information on the tasks and how the Committee should pursue each item, prioritized in the order listed.**

**Motion Carried 4-0.**

**VOICE VOTE**

Yeas: German, Beshouri, McGough, Xenos

Nays: None

#### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

No further business being evident, the committee members motioned to adjourn at 6:27 p.m.

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Nicholas Dupuis, City Planner

DRAFT

COLLABORATIVE PRESERVATION PROJECT MATRIX – *PLANNING DIVISION*

	GREENWOOD CEMETARY	HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION	HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY COMMITTEE	MUSEUM	PARKS	BALDWIN LIBRARY	FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM	BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
<p>Reinitiate the Heritage Home Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>HDSC is working on reviving the HH program, which includes re-evaluating guidelines, purchasing new plaques, creating an application, and updating city records on condition/stock. A map has been created by the Planning Division highlighting current and future eligible homes)</i></li> </ul>			X	X				
<p>Audit designated historical homes and buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>HDSC is evaluating current plaque conditions with plans to update any information, and create a detailed electronic database</i></li> </ul>			X	X				
<p>Promote the history and designation of historic properties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The HDSC is getting creative in promotion through designs for an ArcGIS Story Map, themed walking tours, social media presence, and regular newsletter articles</i></li> </ul>			X	X				
<p>Publish Eco City Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Update photograph database and conditions</i></li> </ul>			X	X				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Publish Eco City Survey</i></li> </ul>								
<p>Obtain a historical plaque for the Community House</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Create detailed information database and content for sign</i></li> </ul>			X	X				
<p>Update/expand/digitize Greenwood Cemetery records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>GCAB is reviewing RFP for ground penetrating radar on 8/16. Part of project will be to obtain digital map that allows us the ability to add data and integrate with search software.</i></li> <li><i>City Clerk's Office continues, when time permits, to update BS&amp;A cemetery module with historical cemetery records. Current sales/burials are being updated quarterly when Elmwood supplies the office with the records for the quarter.</i></li> </ul>	X		X	X			X	
<p>Historic headstone inventory and condition assessment/repairs</p>	X		X	X			X	
<p>Update Greenwood biographical information for existing tour program, interactive map and online access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>One of outcomes sought from GPR project is interactive map that can be made accessible online.</i></li> </ul>	X		X	X			X	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Museum: Working with Friends, some Greenwood bios are complete and being updated on an ongoing basis.</i></li> </ul>							
<p>Locate Potter's Field at Greenwood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>GCAB and Friends of Museum member, Linda Buchanan, has extensive research on history of Potter's Field, including where/when some of original burials were moved. Am requesting that the information be assembled into written document.</i></li> </ul>	X		X	X		X	
<p>Preservation project Certified Local Government (SHPO) grant funding at Allen/Hunter Houses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Museum: assessment underway to determine appropriateness of Hunter House exterior restoration project for fall CLG funding cycle (Oct 1, 2019).</i></li> </ul>		X		X			
<p>Preserve and improve Museum site and adjacent trails for enhanced public access/ explore relevant grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Museum: working with Parks/DPS, trail maintenance and treatment of invasives underway. Heritage Zone plan being finalized for improvements in vicinity of Allen/Hunter Houses.</i></li> </ul>				X	X		

<p>Grants to be explored early 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DPS: Ongoing site improvements to landscape, invasive species and water issues. Collaboration ongoing with Museum.</li> </ul>								
<p>Integrated/continuity of park signage and wayfinding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DPS: Standing by for logo update and coordination efforts with Planning/Admin with any signage installations.</li> </ul>				X	X			
<p>Enhance/expand adult and child history-related enrichment programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Museum: programs for adults and children have been expanded and enhanced and will be ongoing.</li> </ul>				X		X	X	X

Historic District Study Committee Priority List 2019

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>
1	Reinitiate the Heritage Home program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase recognition plaques and certificates</li> <li>• Create an application</li> <li>• Re-evaluate guidelines</li> </ul>	Museum Museum Board
2	Audit designated historical homes and buildings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate historic plaque conditions – repair/replace</li> <li>• Update City information</li> <li>• Create detailed electronic database</li> </ul>	Museum Museum Board
3	Promote the history and designation of historic properties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an ArcGIS Story Map for City website</li> <li>• Research and create themed walking tours</li> <li>• Write regular newsletter articles</li> <li>• Increase social media presence</li> </ul>	Garden Tours* Museum Museum Board
4	Publish Eco City survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update photograph database</li> </ul>	Museum Museum Board
5*	Obtain a plaque for the Community House <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create detailed information database</li> </ul>	Museum Museum Board



# MEMORANDUM

Planning Division

**DATE:** November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
**TO:** Historic District Study Committee  
**FROM:** Nicholas Dupuis, City Planner  
**SUBJECT:** Study Session – Heritage Home Program

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## Introduction

The Heritage Home Program in the City of Birmingham was introduced in 2012 for the purpose of recognizing homes constructed 100 years or more in the past with a commemorative plaque and certificate that certified a home as a Heritage Home. Since the inception of the program, the City has ordered and presented several plaques throughout the City. Plaques were generally made available upon request from the homeowner without a formal application process, therefore there is little information available to the City as to the program and its participants.

A complete list of heritage homes appears to have been made in 2012, but it is uncertain as to whether or not a list was maintained as time moved forward. Due to this, the City has little records of the status of the original Heritage Homes and any information on new homes that have come into the program. A GIS analysis was performed to help ascertain where the certified Heritage Homes are, or were, located, and to determine how many homes have the potential to become Heritage Homes in the near future. A summary of the findings are presented below:

Certified Heritage Homes	51
Eligible Heritage Homes	439
Eligible Heritage Homes in Next 5 yrs.	973
Eligible Heritage Homes in Next 10 yrs.	1,756
Total Eligible by 2030:	3,168

In these figures, a number of things can be assumed: (1) some certified Heritage Homes may have been demolished from 2012-present, and (2) many of the eligible homes for certification may have been destroyed.

## Next Steps

The Historic District Study Committee, Historic District Commission and City Staff have expressed a desire to revamp the Heritage Home program to continue to offer as diverse an array of preservation tactics as possible. At this time, the Planning Division would like to gather the input of the Historic District Study Committee on the following:

- A formal application for the Heritage Home certification program
- If an application is developed, what kind of information should the City pursue?
- Plaques & Certificates
- Survey of existing certified Heritage Homes

- Survey of eligible homes in the near future
- Marketing and information pamphlets for the program

With the information gathered in this meeting, City Staff will begin the process of finding funds, developing an application (if desired) and starting an information database that can be easily be translated into marketing material and future Heritage Home studies.

- Heritage Homes
- Eligible Heritage Homes
- Eligible Heritage Homes in Next 5 Years
- Eligible Heritage Homes in Next 10 Years

