

**City of Portage – Historic District Commission**  
**Wednesday, June 01, 2022 @ 8:30 a.m.**  
**City Hall Conference Room 2**

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**Call to Order:**

**Approval of Minutes:**

\*May 04, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

**Discussion:**

The Michigan Historic Preservation Network Annual State-wide conference staff feedback

**Old Business:**

\*Approved letter to HD property owners for signatures

**New Business:**

\*Draft FY 2022-2023 Historic District Commission Goals and Objectives

**Citizen Comments:**

**Member Comments:**

**Adjournment:**

**Materials Transmitted:**

\*Draft FY 2022-2023 Historic District Commission Goals and Objectives

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Please notify Biqi Zhao at 329-4475 or [zhaob@portagemi.gov](mailto:zhaob@portagemi.gov) if you are unable to attend.

\* Printed items within the agenda

**City of Portage**  
**Historic District Commission**  
Wednesday, May 4, 2022  
City Hall Conference Room 2

Meeting Called to Order: 8:35am Chair Katie VanLonkhuyzen called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Nick Meyle, Laura Glass, Katie VanLonkhuyzen, Becky Lopez, and Suzanne M. Nemeth

Members Absent (excused): Jessie Duniphin and Martha Deming Maytnier

Staff: Biqi Zhao, Deputy Director of Planning and Zoning, and Daniel Harrington, City Planner-GIS

Approval of Minutes: Nick Meyle made the motion, seconded by Laura Glass, to approve the April 6, 2022, meeting minutes as submitted; motion approved 5-0.

Discussion:

- Draft sample letter to Historic District property owners: HDC had a brief discussion and confirmed the Portage Historic District was created in 1991. Becky Lopez made the motion, seconded by Laura Glass, to approve the sample letter to HD property owners, and HDC & staff will sign each letter in next (June 1<sup>st</sup>) HDC meeting. The motion was approved 5-0.
- HDC reviewed and approved the Draft HDC Annual Report annual report to be submitted to City Council at the May 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. Chair Katie VanLonkhuyzen will attend the City Council meeting to present the annual report. Katie VanLonkhuyzen suggested updating *Where the Trails Crossed* book and draft design guidelines for historic districts. Staff responded to add these to FY 2022-2023 HDC Goals and Objectives. HDC brainstormed on how to update *Where the Trails Crossed* book and how to sell/donate the current version hard copies of the book. HDC inquired if the City can pay the cost of printing hard copies of new version of the book and hiring a graphic designer. Staff advised they will consult with the Administration on this request.
- Historic Preservation Presentation: Staff liaison Biqi Zhao asked HDC to contribute pictures for the flyer in Portager for Historic Preservation presentation on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Martha Deming Maytnier presented her slide of Steve Rossio's photo published on the cover of Encore Magazine, and HDC elected to use this slide for the flyer of Historic Preservation presentation.

New Business: None.

Public Comments: None.

Member Comments: None.

- Laura Glass reported about HDC's participation at the May 1<sup>st</sup> Green-A-Thon Event and stated that HDC members handed out the flyers for May 21<sup>st</sup> presentation, made good connections, and received an inquiry from Parks & Recreation Department staff for a bike trail route promoting Historic District. HDC was not in support of having bike trail routes connecting riders with Historic District homes since most are private residences. HDC would support promoting a bike trail route for riders to connect with City's historical cemeteries and other historical sites.
- Katie VanLonkhuyzen read Jessie Duniphin's email for May 21<sup>st</sup> event preparation and to support Parks & Recreation Fall Festival on September 18<sup>th</sup>. HDC requested City support to record Steve's presentation as HDC document on the City's website. HDC also requested to open the historical buildings in Celery Flats Park after the presentation for this event. HDC volunteers will be present for each building that is

available to tour. Staff liaison Biqi Zhao responded that she will check with the Administration regarding these requests.

- Nick Meyle inquired on the rehabilitation of 1521 East Centre Avenue. Staff liaison Biqi Zhao will check the record if the rehabilitation has no change to the original materials and design/appearance of the building.
- Staff liaison Biqi Zhao circulated the information on Historic Preservation Network annual statewide conference on May 11-14, 2022, Holly, Michigan, Michigan Historic Network 2020 Annual report, and Historic Resource Council 2021 directory and this information can be obtained from their website.
- Staff Daniel Harrington mentioned CDBG program and Housing Mileage might be good resources for rehabbing historical properties.

Adjournment: There being no further comments or business, Nick Meyle made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 a.m. Becky Lopez seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Biqi Zhao, Ph.D., AICP  
Deputy Director of Planning and Zoning

DRAFT



June 1, 2022

Dear Homeowner:

Greetings from the Portage Historic District Commission. Your home has a history. In 1991, to safeguard and maintain the cultural history of the City of Portage, a local historic district was created, which includes 40 historic properties within the City of Portage.

To help guide homeowners through the process of making any exterior changes to their properties, the City of Portage established the Portage Historic District Commission. The Commission consists of nine Portage residents appointed by the City Council. Members of the Commission are owners of historic properties and volunteers interested in the importance of maintaining the city's historic heritage. The Commission meets the first Wednesday of each month at 8:30am at Portage City Hall. All owners of designated historic properties and any interested Portage residents are welcome to attend these public meetings.

The Portage Code of Ordinances, Chapter 38 (<https://tinyurl.com/HP-Ordinance>) explains and defines ownership responsibilities for the preservation and maintenance of historic properties in the City of Portage.

- The first step in the process of making any exterior changes to your designated historic property is to request a "Certificate of Appropriateness" from the City of Portage Department of Community Development: <https://tinyurl.com/COA-Application>
- Rehabilitation projects for designated historic properties may qualify for tax incentives from both the state and federal governments. Tax incentives are determined by adherence to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation: <https://tinyurl.com/NPS-Standard>

The Commission congratulates you on being one of the few to own one of Portage's historic district properties. We are looking forward to working together with you to preserve our city's history.

Sincerely,

*[Chair Signature]*

*[Staff Liaison signature]*

Portage Historic District Commission  
Katie VanLonkhuyzen, Chair  
Suzanne M. Nemeth, Vice Chair  
Martha Deming Maytnier, Secretary  
Becky Lopez  
Jessie Duniphin  
Laura Glass  
Nick Meyle

Biqi Zhao, Ph.D., AICP, Deputy Director of Planning and Zoning  
Department of Community Development

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**DRAFT FY 2022 – 2023 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

1. Safeguard the heritage of the City through the exterior preservation of the historic district by evaluating and considering applications for Certificates of Appropriateness. Identify and evaluate potential historically significant structures in the City of Portage Historic District.
2. Increase visibility and public awareness of the Portage Historic Preservation.
  - a. Update and digitalize the book of *Where the Trails Crossed* and the Portage Historic District Trading Cards.
  - b. Continue to support the historic educational programs with area youth via Portage Public Schools, the Portage Community Center and other outlets.
  - c. Continue communication and cooperation with similar historical organizations in the local community.
  - d. Initiate communication with Michigan State Historic Preservation Office.
  - e. Continue to observe the May National Preservation Month in conjunction with the Portage Historic District May Event.
  - f. Coordinate preservation initiatives with education, citizen participation, history, public art, digital engagement, and other programs.
3. Maintain a Library exhibit wall of framed photos representing the history of Portage. Continue to add new material periodically. This exhibit will be on display at the Portage District Library.
4. Present a Preservation Award to a property owner who has met the criteria as established by the Portage Historic Commission.
5. Advise the City Council in areas / subjects under the purview of the Historic District Commission.
6. Present a written report to the City Council in May in conjunction with National Preservation Month.
7. Provide education to HD property owners and create Portage Historic District Design Guidelines.