

Minutes

Historic Preservation Commission

City of Kalamazoo



Wednesday, January 14th, 2026

6:00 PM

City Commission Chambers at City Hall – 241 West South Street

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Called to order 6:02

Akina moved to approve

Morton 2nd

B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

Akina moved to approve

Morton 2nd

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Edison there was a typo of a couple of T's in words not sure where it is I will look again. Hibbard E 3 second line says make out and should be make our. Also in E 2 last line work should be word. F 2 says Vail to approve I think it should be Vail moved to approve and says 2023 O'Connor fund work plan obviously should be 2026. Edison seems to be a lot of text in this meeting. A lot of stuff went down last month but overall seemed like it was pretty well transcribed. Congrats. Morton my only thing to add is yes we have a great transcription going on thank you for all that your doing for the committee.

Vail moved to approve minutes as amended

Harris 2nd

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Pam just wanted to let everyone that the Michigan Historic Preservation annual conference is taking place May 7th through the 9th in Gross Point Shores at the Edsil and Eleanor Ford Community Center or visitors center. Luis and I, along with our advisor from Kalamazoo Community Foundation, are going to be giving a session on the creation of the O'Connor fund. I hope you can all make it. If you are not already a member of the MHPN, you should be. You would be having this information delivered right to your email address.

E. REPORTS

1. Financial Report
Pena read report

2. Preservation Month Report

Harris, as the report describes, we met as a subcommittee and sort of accomplished both of our A and B goal 1. The update for that is in blue. We plan on in the next few months sharing the rubric that we will use as a commission to judge the nominations that are submitted. Goal 1 is really focused on preparing for the award to live. Thinking about marketing this year as well. We will also be talking to the commission to talk to people and encourage them to come to celebrate with us in May at the awards. Hibbard any response from the City side from the marketing perspective? Pena let me look yes we sent over the email to set up the meeting. We will get it set up to meet.

3. Historic Tours Update

Paduk, I have the historic tours work plan working document with our meeting notes that we put together some of our ideas from our January 8th meeting. Focusing on goal 1, that is talking about the different areas of the tour. We pushed the due date back for goal 1, both A and B to our meeting in February for more time for research and finalize some things so we can bring them to the commission. Any input or ideas please send our way. We are leaning more towards electronic that will be easier and can always turn into something physical later down the line. We are planning on having the tours be a revenue source for the O'Connor fund. Hibbard, you said Cleo doesn't allow for payment is that right? I am currently not aware if it does or not we are trying to figure that out. Dusti sent one out that we could possibly use that has some options there for a revenue source or being able to pay to access the tour. Pena what software do you want to use? Paduk cleo I am personally more experienced with.

4. O'Connor Fund Update

Pam, Patrick you and I talked briefly after the meeting last month and I went back and looked at that policy. Its going to need some work after we affect the fund split. We cant do anything until we have fund split. I have some other news tonight regarding the O'Connor fund I want to share with you all Terry and I had lunch with some long time friends and supporters of the O'Connor fund they have been making annual gifts since we founded it in 2000. They have added the O'Connor fund to their estate plan. They would like us to use the gift sooner. He said after consulting with your friends at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation we have decided to make a \$100,000 gift to the fund for 2 years. The fund today is worth just a little bit under \$700,000. This will bump it up it todays dollars up to almost 15% in value. Pena thank you to the folks that have made that donation.

5. Cemetery Committee Update

Dusti, I defined some goals for us. Introduction to Kalamazoo Cemeteries. We want to focus on Mountain Home, Riverside and South Westnedge Park. These three have some really unique things

that the average person might not know or understand what they are looking at. That will be the focus of the two publications. Next months goal is to determine the medium for the goal. My goal is to have a pamphlet that you can put in your pocket and walk around with it. My budget that I am asking for is \$500.00. That is for the pamphlet not the booklet. I did have an ancillary budgetary concern which I would like to discuss the idea of offering some financial support from the HPC to the Friends of Kalamazoo's Historic Cemeteries for taking on the community outreach portion of cemetery preservation. We have talked about outside of meetings \$5000.00 as a gift to Garys group. Pena, where this would get slotted into now probably underneath the gifts excuse me mini grants. Which would require the FFOKHC Gary group that would require them to come before us to request the funds. Morton, in writing or a meeting? Pena both in writing and a meeting. There is a procedure on the website as well.

6. Community Engagement Report

Edison, have not met in a few months I have talked to Nora about this I think we are ready to mail out letters. We have accomplished 3 out of 6 goals. C looked like a hard goal to accomplish but we are doing that through mailing letters. F was passed on to future subcommittees. Passed on to the O'Connor fund. Time frame 2 months for letters similar to what Pam runs for her mailing parties we could have over at our house at some point. Pena, if you guys want to do it that way I will never discourage you to have a party with obviously less members in attendance than constitutes a quorum. Edison so if everyone comes we cant do it. Pena, that could potentially constitute a violation of the open meetings act. They will need to be mailed in our envelopes and I will need to know how many envelopes to your house.

7. 106 Reviews 2025

Pena presented

F. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM

1. Kalamazoo State Hospital Water Tower Report by Sharon Ferraro
Pena, Sharon has been keeping an eye this and we have discovered this is not an open and shut case. First off property ownership Sharon has outlined the outlined the maze we are trying to go through. It is complicated the land is separate ownership from the actual property of the structure. That is my first and foremost concern. Setting up some time with folks from the state to see what we

should do about that is a separate concern. We need to get appropriate permissions before we take folks up this water tower. We will talk to the folks at Shipo to figure out what's going on. It may take some time. Sharon has spoke to Tom Neil with Neil Civic Engineering and Blair Bates he is a mason. They have agreed to look at the water tower. There are terracotta tiles falling off they are extremely high up and don't want anyone to get hurt. Tom and Blair have agreed to go up to do a report for a full days work for us for \$2500.00. Pena, the owner ship needs to be established before we can send anyone up. Pam, I also had a conversation with Sharon and concurred with exactly what is said until we know who owns it for our mini grant policy if it were to become a candidate for that the ownership chain is important. We have specified in our grant program that properties may not be owned nonprofit organizations whose major budget is supplied by taxpayers dollars that can take care of their own buildings. Sharon, my husband works there noticed the pieces were falling off in July. In 2007 the 2 people that were primarily responsible for the condition assessments Blair Bates and Tom Neil. With the help of Luis took to the state historic preservation office explained what was happening they asked who owns it the answer I got about 5 months later was we don't know. We need to get a condition assessment done soon that the preservation commission consider giving us \$2500.00 out of O'Connor fund to be able to pay for this condition assessment. This tower is not going to come down they have said it is good for a century but we need to do repairs. The State Preservation office says their questimate is over a million dollars to repair. I want to know more about that and have not heard back. I want to see if this is a possibility and if the commission would consider paying for this assessment. Edison the kindergartners that raised pennies what year was that? Sharon 1976 it was a project they got a little funding from Bicentennial Commission, but a lot came from usual donors in Kalamazoo. Hibbard does the quote involve insurance for going up there? Sharon the land all around it is owned by the state it is controlled by WMU except the tower itself. The liability is already there. They let people go up there all the time to make repairs or go to the top of the roof of the main building. Liability is not something that you as a commission would not have to worry about. The people going up are professionals and carry their own liability insurance. Vail I do think this is a good thing for the O'Connor fund to support but I have concerns if we are exposing the O'Connor fund to the liability. That maybe a question for the city attorney. Pena I will draft something and I will get the appropriate party. Pam we don't own the fund the Community Foundation owns the fund that's where the liability would rest if they were to give us money to fund the project. So we need to know who owns it and what the clear chair of ownership is.

G. COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Pena presented

H. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Edison last meeting about the word endorsement you said you were going to check with the city on that did you find any more about that? Pena I have not I will follow up. The board wanted to know specifically how the KHPC can help with the garden bed project I will get with her.

Hibbard how about the online minutes? Pena when I meet with the communications team I will ask them what it looks like to put them on. I have found all of them, Sharon was

kind enough to put them together. They go back to 2012 I think digitally I don't know before that. When Nora and I met with them I will ask them what it looks like to put them up.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Hibbard moved to adjourn at 7:14 pm.

The mission of the Kalamazoo Historic Preservation Commission is to educate the public and city leaders on the value of preserving the City's historic resources and to advise the City Commission accordingly. Questions and comments regarding this agenda should be directed to the Historic Preservation Coordinator at 337-8804.

Comments under the "Public Comments" section of the agenda are limited to four minutes per speaker. During agenda items, comments from members of the public are also limited to four minutes each, unless the speaker is invited to join in the discussion by the Commission.