

FERGUS FALLS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
July 3, 2024

The Fergus Falls Heritage Preservation Commission met on Wednesday, July 3, 2024, at 12:00 PM in the Council Chamber of City Hall. Members present were Chair Jona Brown, Chris Schuelke, Lois Josefson, and Scott DeMartelaere. Absent were Brad Sunde, Paul Nelson, Ben Underwood, and Wayne Schuett, Planning Commission Ex-officio.

Staff present: Klara Beck and Jill Hanson.

Declare Quorum / Open Meeting:

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes

Lois Josefson motioned to approve the minutes from April 3, 2024. Seconded by Chris Schuelke. Motion passed.

Wright Statue

Chris Schuelke noted that 2026 will mark the 100th anniversary of the unveiling of the George B. Wright statue. He provided some historical background on the statue and mentioned that it might be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. He also pointed out that the statue needs restoration.

Klara Beck shared that the Public Arts Commission (PAC) has been attempting to restore the statue for about five years but has struggled to find a suitable contractor. There has been some debate about whether the statue is made of limestone or concrete. Chris mentioned EAI (Environmental Associates Inc) and Lois suggested the American College of Building Arts as potential resources for obtaining quotes or guidance on repairs. Klara noted there are some city funds available for the restoration of public art, but the funds are limited.

Chair Brown said that the Fergus Falls chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution is involved in cleaning, restoring, and maintaining historical artifacts like the Wright statue. There was discussion about the possibility of applying for a restoration grant from the DAR. Chair Brown offered to reach out to Naomi Schliesman (former PAC member) for any information she has gathered on the Wright statue.

Downtown Historic District Study

Klara Beck explained that the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has completed its review of Submission 1 by Pigeon Consulting. Based on the information provided, SHPO believes that the Fergus Falls Commercial Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its significance in Commerce, with a period of significance from 1857 to 1978. The next submission is expected to include the remaining inventory forms, particularly the one for the Fergus Falls Commercial Historic District (OT-FFC-00524) itself. After reviewing the district evaluation, SHPO will assist in finalizing the boundaries and determining the contributing status of properties within the district. There was discussion about the potential boundaries, properties in the district, and the HPC's role in the process.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:52 PM.

Next meeting will be August 6, 2024 at noon.


Chair