

Michigan State Historic Preservation Review Board Meeting Minutes May 30, 2025

Minutes of the State Historic Preservation Review Board Meeting

Friday, May 30, 2025, 9:30 a.m.

*Lake Michigan Room, Michigan Economic Development Corporation
300 North Washington Square, Lansing, Michigan 48913*

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Devan Anderson, Daniel Bollman, Matthew Daley, Lane Demas, Sharon Ferraro (9:52), Lakota Hobia, Krysta Ryzewski, Ann Scott, Ronald Staley

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

None.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Martha MacFarlane-Faes, Nathan Nietering, Haley Schriber, Ryan Schumaker, Sarah Surface-Evans, Todd Walsh, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

Jon Stuckey and Austin Wright, Michigan Office of the Attorney General (AG)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT

From list.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Board Chair Ryzewski called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda of the May 30, 2025, regular board meeting.

Motion: Anderson

Second: Scott

Vote: 8-0

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 17, 2025

Board Comments: None

Motion to approve the minutes as proposed.

Motion: Staley

Second: Demas

Vote: 8-0

4. SHPO STAFF REPORTS

a. SHPO Report – Ryan Schumaker and Martha MacFarlane-Faes

- i. Schumaker acknowledged recent realignment changes at parent agency MEDC, and that while the SHPO organizational structure is unchanged, it reports up through a different chain and through a different executive leader, Matt Casby. Mr. Casby introduced himself at Schumaker's invitation.
- ii. Schumaker acknowledged that the federal notice of funding opportunity for fiscal year 2025 applications to the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) continues to be delayed. We are ready to apply as soon as the notice is released. Some SHPO's have already had to lay off staff or make other changes, but MEDC has been very supportive and Michigan SHPO is not at that point. The federal budget for FY26 is very unclear for the HPF at this point. Board member Hobia added that Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) are in a similar position of uncertainty.
- iii. Schumaker discussed progress on SHPO's African American Civil Rights Program (AACR) National Park Service (NPS) grant to survey and nominate sites related to the African American Green Book for Negro Motorists. A consultant has been hired and work is getting started, with extensive field work and research expected this summer. A virtual public kickoff meeting will take place in June.
- iv. SHPO has been informed that the Underrepresented Communities Grant awarded from NPS to study the architectural works of Black architect Nathan Johnson is on hold pending an administrative review at the federal level. We presently have no grant agreement in place for this project.
- v. There have been many staffing changes at the National Park Service among those individuals we work with due to retirements and reductions in force. New NPS contacts have been identified for affected program areas.
- vi. Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program (MLAP) Grant awards were announced in March. More than \$106,000 will be given to Charlevoix South Pier Light and Gull Rock Light for rehabilitation projects.
- vii. In addition, we are moving forward with a plan to enable individuals to donate directly to the MLAP fund. At present the only revenue source for the program is the sale of Save Our Lights lighthouse license plates, a revenue stream that has been declining for several years. We are working through revising a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Treasury to enable this.
- viii. The Certified Local Government (CLG) FY2025 grants deadline was February 3. We anticipate making grant award announcements this summer. In addition, some unspent funds from a previous, unfunded CLG grant have been reallocated to a continuing education and training opportunity for CLG communities to apply for. Up to \$40,000 can be awarded between now and mid-summer.

- ix. The Governor's Awards for Historic Preservation were held on May 8 and we were honored to have Governor Whitmer in attendance and speak. It was well attended, and seven awards were presented.
- x. Nearly all SHPO staff attended this year's Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN) conference in Sault Ste. Marie, and several staff presented on panels discussing many topics.
- xi. Section 106 consultation for the Line 5 Pipeline tunnel project continued at a feverish pace, as the Army Corps of Engineers elected to complete their Section 106 obligations under the recently enacted energy emergency executive order. SHPO's nineteen page comments letter was submitted yesterday.
- xii. Established contacts with many federal agencies are changing or being left vacant as a result of federal retirements and attrition.
- xiii. Schumaker complimented SHPO staff broadly for their tenacity, resilience and staying the course while navigating many changes and unknowns.

Ferraro arrived 9:52

- xiv. MacFarlane-Faes continued the report. She noted that Scott Grammer, a former legal counsel for SHPO when SHPO was at MSHDA, recently passed away.
- xv. The statewide plan process is beginning for Michigan's next statewide historic preservation plan which will span the years 2027-2034. The public engagement phase will begin in June and continue through the summer and includes several components
 - 1. A brief electronic survey is presently open for the general public to share their views of historic preservation and potential goals and opportunities.
 - 2. A series of regional workshops will be held this summer in different parts of the state to engage with the public and hear their ideas. The first is scheduled for June 27 in Grand Rapids. Two virtual meetings are also being planned.
 - 3. A stakeholder meeting will be held in the fall where preservation practitioners and professionals will have an opportunity to share their insights and priorities from within the field.

SHPO has contracted with Khamai Strategies out of Grand Rapids to professionally facilitate the regional and virtual meetings, and stakeholder meeting, and will prepare a final report of conclusions and recommendations at the end. This report will inform much of the statewide plan that is created.
- xvi. With a fully staffed architect group, Federal and State tax credit reviews are now well within the normal range.
- xvii. Two pieces of legislation have been proposed to enhance the state historic tax credit program. The current tax credit cap is only \$5 million for all credits combined per year. This proposed legislation would increase the cap to \$100 million combined per year. We have been making a concerted effort to better market the credit to residential homeowners. One concern is that if the legislation is passed, additional staff would be needed to adequately handle the larger

volume of work, and the current proposed legislation does not require this. Interested people may review the language of HB4503 and HB4504 to see what specifically is proposed.

- xviii. MacFarlane-Faes continued by acknowledging staff efforts to share tax credit and CLG program knowledge with the public at various venues, and a planned trip to the Upper Peninsula to tour several historic sites and provide at least one tax credit training in the Keweenaw. SHPO staff members also attended a recent community meeting in Idlewild along with representatives from other state agencies to meet with local leaders to help discuss ideas for economic development and restoration initiatives.

b. Archaeology – Sarah Surface-Evans

- i. While some states are reporting a slowdown of Section 106 reviews, we are seeing an increase, along with a large number of expedited 7-day reviews under Executive Order 14156. In particular USDA-Rural Utilities Service and the Army Corps of Engineers are utilizing the emergency provisions under this EO.
- ii. Since the start of FY25, 161 new archaeological sites have been identified in more roughly 5000 acres of surveys conducted across the state. This is on pace to be as much or more acreage than last year.
- iii. SHPO is working with Wayne Lusardi of Michigan DNR to integrate underwater sites into the state site file. We are converting the old underwater numbering system to standard trinomials, which will result in 759 new trinomials being assigned.
- iv. We are currently working on a number of agreements in which archaeology is prominent, including Heritage Implementation Plans with Huron-Manistee National Forest and Hiawatha National Forest, and programmatic agreements with Consumers Energy, the Department of Energy, and relating to a Menominee Harbor Deepening project. All of these will streamline the review process going forward.
- v. Archaeology staff have participated in a number of outreach events over the past several months, including several college lectures with students. SHPO Archaeology had a display and information at a recent environmental event at the Impression 5 Science center in Lansing.
- vi. We were excited to recognize the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project with a Governor's Award this year, and note that this is the first instance where a Governor's Award has been given twice for the same project. In the first year of the awards (2003), the recently formed partnership to document the fort site was recognized. In 2025, the award looked back at more than 25 years of project partnership and success.
- vii. Surface-Evans concluded with the announcement that the Society for Historical Archaeology 2026 Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology will take place in Detroit on January 7-10, 2026. Call for

papers is open now and the deadline June 30th. This is the first time the conference has been held in the Great Lakes region in decades.

c. National Register Program – Todd Walsh

- i. Walsh highlighted that there have also been some staff changes and reductions within the National Register and National Landmarks offices at NPS; three fewer people are now employed in that office, but our NRHP reviewer has not changed as of this time.
- ii. NRHP staff are still working to update Bulletin 15, the Criteria bulletin, which is the go-to reference for making arguments for historic significance and justifying criteria used in NR nominations. There is no final timeline for release yet. NPS staff are also working with a consultant to complete a historic context on urban renewal, which will aid a great many nominations now coming forward from the mid 20th century time period.
- iii. Walsh also acknowledged that another state is working on a public housing context, and when complete that will be a useful tool and starting point for similar documentation or research in Michigan. Board Member Anderson inquired how long historic contexts of this large scope tend to be. Walsh responded that recent NHL theme studies are probably a helpful guide.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT & CORRESPONDENCE

Summary of Correspondence:

Letters of support were received for the C.W. Marsh Company Building, and each of the individual property owners for the group of Northfield Township nominations sent a letter of support for their respective property. Also, several commissioners from the Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission offered substantive comments of support for the Auburn Hills Historic District nomination.

Summary of Public Comment:

NOTE: Comments offered by the public are limited to 2 minutes per speaker.

Jeff Gordon spoke regarding his position on agenda item 8a. Cindy Linton spoke in support of agenda item 6e1. Anne Gentry representing the Alpena Downtown Development Authority spoke in support of agenda item 6d. Rachel Smolinski representing the City of Alpena spoke in support of agenda item 6d. Kristin Conger, a property owner in the proposed Alpena Commercial Historic District spoke asking for more information about the benefits and results of listing if the district is listed. Walsh indicated he would follow up directly.

6. NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATIONS

- a. Auburn Hills Historic District, Grand Rapids, Kent County**
Presented by Jennifer Metz

Board comments: Ferraro complimented the nomination and felt that the narrative did a compelling job of helping the reader feel that they were participating in controversial planning meetings and other events of the time. Demas complimented the nomination on how it presented the local story in the frame of the national context. Staley highlighted that it will be good to give this story more awareness and publicity. Ryzewski noted that this nomination lays the foundation for research and potential nominations to be undertaken for similar neighborhoods elsewhere in the state.

Motion to approve the nomination as presented.

Criteria and Level: A, Local

Motion: Demas

Second: Hobia

Vote: 9-0

b. C. W. Marsh Company Building, Muskegon, Muskegon County

Presented by Jennifer Metz

Board comments: Ferraro highlighted that this nomination is similar to another one recently heard before the board from Grand Rapids where the company made the fasteners for conveyor and line-drive belts, that we are seeing the significance of the manufactured equipment that made other manufacturing successful. Ryzewski noted that given the long standing production of the same types of goods in the building, it might be interesting to have a student catalog many of the original materials, equipment and objects that remain in the building, and those that remain in everyday use.

Motion to approve the nomination as presented.

Criteria and Level: A, Local

Motion: Anderson

Second: Scott

Vote: 9-0

c. Evart Downtown Historic District, Evart, Osceola County

Presented by Brian Rebain

Board comments: Ferraro inquired what is driving the nomination. Rebain responded that the City of Evart is leading the effort, in part for the recognition but also to provide access to tax credits when downtown building rehabilitation efforts take place. Walsh added that although Evart is a CLG community, they undertook this designation effort at their own expense without the aid of a CLG grant. Bollman noted the generally good integrity of the district despite a few losses and some materialistic changes over time. He continued that it looks like the nomination provides an opportunity to sensitively consider the history and historic design of the district when making changes going forward. Staley inquired about several instances where there are attached, contemporary signs affixed to many buildings. Several of these are noted in building descriptions. Does the inclusion of the notation of such signs infer that they cannot be changed or replaced in the future? Walsh responded that it depends on the way the sign is noted in the description – does it simply exist, or is it significant? Tax credit reviewers would likely

interpret it in a similar manner. Rebain added that a Tax Credit Part 1 would also discuss details such as this in greater detail to identify features which simply exist as opposed to those features which are truly significant. Walsh added that these references would be carefully reviewed before the nomination is submitted to NPS for consistency. Daley complimented the nomination on its extensive use of newspapers and other primary sources to discuss the significance of the town, from multiple sources. Rebain commented that the volume of material truly emphasized what a center of life and activity Evart was in its region.

Motion to approve the nomination as presented.

Criteria and Level: A & C, Local

Motion: Bollman

Second: Staley

Vote: 9-0

d. Alpena Central Historic District, Alpena, Alpena County

Presented by Cheri Szcodronski

Board comments: Daley complimented the historic context that was crafted in the narrative and agreed with Szcodronski about the quality of the historical and research materials available at the local library in Alpena. Staley noted a minor typo on page 8. Ryzewski noted that an important aspect of Alpena's development and history is its immediate connection to maritime culture and how intertwined the maritime and terrestrial history is in this region. She suggested adding a sentence to acknowledge that the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary is in such close proximity and tying that in with the discussion of social and transportation history. Szcodronski agreed. Hobia highlighted that this area at the mouth of the Thunder Bay River has really been a maritime center for much longer than Alpena's existence, and it might be good to enrich and enliven this narrative discussion.

Motion to approve the nomination as presented.

Criteria and Level: A & C, Local

Motion: Staley

Second: Scott

Vote: 9-0

e. Historic and Architectural Resources of Northfield Township Multiple Property Documentation Form, Northfield Township, Washtenaw County

Presented by Cheri Szcodronski

Board comments: Hobia acknowledged the need for better, more consistent contexts and sources for early Native American history in order to ensure this information is both included and accurate. She highlighted that in addition to the Three Fires Confederacy tribes, the Sauk, Miami and Wyandotte were present in this area to a greater or lesser extent. She continued that most tribal governments are stretched beyond capacity, but suggested it would be so helpful for tribal historians to be able to contribute to the historical and archaeological contexts for these regions to more accurately reflect the movement of tribal communities over time, but also how tribes interacted with

European settlement. Ryzewski added that past MPDFs have illustrated that there can be well-written, well-researched discussion of specific topics that then can then be cited elsewhere, and this sort of action is definitely needed for the discussion of tribal history and tribal perspective of this history. Szcodronski added that as a historian, it is difficult to tell these stories when the available sources don't agree with one another, and it's hard to know where to find more accurate information.

Motion to approve the Multiple Property Documentation Form as presented.

Motion: Scott

Second: Ferraro

Vote: 9-0

i. **Joshua G. and Nancy (Bly) Leland House**

Board comments: None.

Motion to approve the nomination as presented.

Criteria and Level: C, Local

Motion: Bollman

Second: Anderson

Vote: 9-0

ii. **Bessert-Ryan House**

Board comments: None.

Motion to approve the nomination as presented.

Criteria and Level: C, Local

Motion: Anderson

Second: Staley

Vote: 9-0

iii. **Zeeb Farm**

Board comments: Scott inquired about the high voltage transmission line easement and asked if any buildings or resources had been lost when those were built. Szcodronski shared that family recollection was that no buildings were lost, and that pigs and cows were grazed under the power lines once they were constructed. Scott also highlighted the potential value of future archaeological efforts due to the number of resources which had been lost over time, and how the nomination does a good job of conveying much helpful information should this one day be a future effort. Daley inquired about the transition in the narrative from a discussion of changes to agriculture over time to a discussion of the 1980s, and asked if there had been a change in the later generations of farm families in their attitudes about farming. Szcodronski responded that a short discussion of the later 20th century consolidation of farms and farming practices can be added to the MPDF to cover this.

Motion to approve the nomination as presented.

Criteria and Level: A & C, Local
Motion: Ferraro
Second: Daley
Vote: 9-0

iv. **Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**

Board comments: None.

Motion to approve the nomination as presented.
Criteria and Level: A & C, criteria consideration A, Local
Motion: Ferraro
Second: Staley
Vote: 9-0

v. **German Park Recreation Club**

Board comments: Demas complimented the nomination for how well it highlighted sport, recreation and leisure at such a local level, especially in light of American immigration history. He appreciated the nuanced narrative relating to the discussion of "anti-German sentiment." Daley inquired about if any academic texts were consulted in the discussion of popular sentiment toward Germans in the 1930s. Demas added that the popular discussion of sport in the 1930s was international in nature, including the two renowned fights between American Joe Louis and German Max Schmeling.

Motion to approve the nomination as presented.
Criteria and Level: A, Local
Motion: Demas
Second: Daley
Vote: 9-0

The board took a lunch break at 12:13 p.m. and reconvened at 12:45 p.m.

7. LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY COMMITTEE REPORTS

Presented by Haley Schriber

Ryzewski provided an overview of the role of the board in reviewing local historic district study committee reports.

a. **Beainger Building Local Historic District, Saginaw, Saginaw County**

Board comments: Daley asked if more citations were going to be added, as the document presently contains very few. He continued that the sources should not just be local in nature but should orient Saginaw in the context of lumbering within the state of Michigan and the lumber markets of much of the continent. Daley also added that some of the narrative language is overly flowery in a document that should really be documenting Beainger's accomplishments in a measured, fact-based discussion. He concluded by

noting that the image on page 7 contains a caption that is factually incorrect and should be fixed.

8. APPEALS

a. Paula Rozmiarek & Jeff Gordon v. Manistee Historic District Commission

Presented by Jon Stuckey

Ryzewski provided an overview of the board's role in considering appeals of historic district commission decisions.

Board comments: Bollman inquired if the commercial enterprise is actually open at present. Stuckey responded that he believed so. Bollman summarized that this seems akin to putting up scaffolding, then taking it down again before the repairs are completed, because the solution for repairing the building in Manistee had not been identified yet. Anderson continued that the construction purpose for which the barrier was erected is no longer needed, but the protection purpose continues but was not part of the original application. It appears to be a technical issue of whether the barriers were meant to be more permanent or temporary. Ferraro highlighted that the barrier was provided for "routine exposure," to things like snow and leaves, not a concise start and stop project like a road construction. Bollman noted that the means and methods aren't always cited specifically in documents of this type. Anderson – is this temporary protective site fencing, or is it a semi-permanent appurtenance that needed approval? Bollman noted that the barrier is still serving the function for which was installed, but was noted as temporary. Staley noted that 'temporary' typically has an end date, and no end date or circumstance was specified. Anderson noted that in some instances, there is scaffolding that has been installed that is meant to be temporary, and would come down when a redevelopment has been completed, and in that case it was approved by the historic district commission, because the timeline was undefined. Staley agreed. Bollman summarized that he wouldn't expect anything and protective materials would be included in the certificate of appropriateness would be included, so anything done with the goal to preserve the building, until it was done, would be appropriate. Demas asked if the Review Board could specify a date to remove the barriers since no date was specified in the certificated of appropriateness. Stuckey replied that this case could be remanded back to the Manistee commission to set an appropriate date for the barriers to be removed. Ferraro voiced support for this solution. Other board members agreed. Daley asked if the remand would come with an explanation of why it was being sent back for this purpose. Ferraro asked if board decisions go into effect immediately, or if they take effect at some time in the future. Stuckey responded that the documents are prepared immediately and transmitted back to all parties within a few business days.

Motion to adopt the Proposal for Decision that the appeal filed in the case of Paula Rozmiarek and Jeff Gordon v. Manistee Historic District Commission be upheld.

Motion: Anderson

Second: Ferraro

Vote: 9-0

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- a. Monday, September 22, 2025, and Friday, December 12, 2025.

Walsh reminded board members to create their accounts in the MiLogin system, which will allow future meeting materials to be transmitted to board members in a more secure online environment.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Staley

Second: Anderson

Vote: 9-0

Meeting adjourned at 1:27 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Nietering