

CITY OF MUSKEGON

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MEETING

February 3, 2026 @ 4:00 PM
MUSKEGON CITY HALL, ROOM 204
933 TERRACE STREET, MUSKEGON, MI 49440

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

S. Radtke called the meeting to order at 3:58 PM and roll was taken.

ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: K. Kochin, S. Radtke, D. Gregersen, J. Huss, G. Borgman, C. Davis

MEMBERS ABSENT:

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

STAFF PRESENT: J. Pesch, W. Webster

OTHERS PRESENT: D. Ruck, 1604 Peck

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of the minutes of the January 6, 2026 regular meeting.

Planning

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 6, 2026 regular meeting was made by G. Borgman, supported by K. Kochin, and approved S. Radtke, C. Davis, K. Kochin, and D. Gregersen voting aye, and G. Borgman and J. Huss abstaining.

OLD BUSINESS

A. 2025 CLG Annual Report Planning

This item was initially discussed at the January 6, 2026 meeting. J. Pesch explained that the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) requires that all Certified Local Government (CLG) communities submit an annual report to be

in good standing and remain eligible for grant funding and technical assistance activities. The board reviewed the previous year's annual report and J. Pesch provided a summary of comments received from Historic District Commissioners since the last meeting to serve as a starting point for further conversation.

What are Muskegon's top historic preservation goals for 2026?

1. Increase awareness of Muskegon's local historic districts within the community through presentations to Neighborhood Associations on historic districts and HDC procedures. Present or provide information on the same to area realtors. J. Pesch explained that only the McLaughlin and Nelson neighborhoods contained historic districts, but presentations could be given to other Neighborhood Associations, if desired. The HDC agreed that it was important to retain this as a goal, as such presentations had not taken place in 2025. J. Pesch stated that he would share draft presentation content as well as some success stories; once the presentation content was finalized, he would request to be included on the two neighborhoods' meeting calendars.
2. J. Pesch stated that a previous, unachieved goal was to apply to the SHPO Community Partnership Program to complete a survey of historic resources for one (or more) of Muskegon's existing historic districts, but that it was unclear if that program was still active. It was decided that if the program was inactive, other SHPO resources could be explored. Staff and the board reviewed the process of creating new local historic districts, changing the boundaries of the existing districts, or eliminating existing districts. J. Pesch noted that a historic preservation consultant would likely be hired to complete a historic resource survey due to staff time limitations, but that some of the work could likely be carried out by staff and willing Historic District Commissioners. The HDC asked about specific goals and deadlines, and was curious about how involved the Commission would need to be. J. Pesch shared that he would contact SHPO to gather additional information and share that at a future meeting.
3. Remain a resource for others to understand the history of our city and maintain relationships with other local organizations that share similar purposes. The board discussed creating helpful documents on common topics to provide owners with resources to complete improvements to their homes. J. Pesch and S. Radtke explained the resources that they had started creating for topics such as historic windows repair and maintenance and porches/porch railings.

What is one thing you would like the new CLG coordinator to understand about your community and local preservation activities/needs?

The HDC referenced the previous year's answer which focused on the range

of abilities and financial resources of property owners in the historic districts and the difficulties that can come along with upholding their local standards. There was an interest in how other communities dealt with similar struggles, and the previously suggested roundtable meetings were again discussed. J. Pesch stated that he had not heard any feedback about this topic from SHPO staff, but would include the goal again on the 2025 annual report. The board discussed the possibility of attending another city's HDC meeting and J. Pesch stated that he would review their schedules and try to reach out to the appropriate staff liaison prior to attending.

What accomplishment/achievement/event from 2025 is your HDC most proud of? Or is there a preservation success story from your community that you would like to highlight?

The board discussed the house at 448 W. Muskegon – which was once on the City's Dangerous Buildings list but had since started renovations – and 1095 3rd which was meeting both the goals of the HDC and helping to address the housing shortage.

Describe any problems, issues, or challenges (e.g., economic, political, operational) encountered in the local preservation program in 2025.

The HDC discussed the increased costs of building materials and labor making it more difficult for property owners to invest in higher quality work and/or historically appropriate materials. They noted that a very specific issue in recent years had been the lack of available, non-vinyl, alternate siding materials, as was the lack of local sources for historic wood window repair and replacement. All of this put pressure on property owners to consider less preferred replacement materials due to cost and availability of labor.

What are the most critical preservation issues/needs facing your community?

While less of an issue in the historic districts themselves, it was cited that vacant houses and buildings in the city frequently become too expensive for new owners to rehab and preserve. This was noted as an ongoing problem thanks to decades of disinvestment. As property owners were faced with the decision to renovate or demolish/build new, demolition was too often the outcome. The board acknowledged that the local historic districts only encompassed a small portion of the city, leaving a concerning lack of protections for many properties.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Case 2026-02: 1604 Peck Planning

The applicant was seeking approval to replace the paneling on the enclosed rear porch with cedar shake, replace the aluminum jalousie windows with custom-built period-appropriate windows, replace the metal posts with new porch columns, and update the trim to match the trim on the rest of the house. The components of the proposed porch design were shown in two renderings, and several scenarios were presented by the applicant and suggestions by the committee for the rear three-season porch.

D. Ruck explained that he was thinking that the final design would likely be a combination of the two renderings, but that it would definitely remain enclosed. He planned to replace the existing wrought iron columns with columns that more closely matched those used on the front porch and explained that the new back porch window mullions were not finalized. D. Ruck noted the various window designs used in the house and stated that he planned to build the replacement windows himself to be historically appropriate. J. Pesch stated that there were no known historic photos of the rear porch that predated installation of the jalousie windows. D. Gregersen stated that it would make sense that the proposed replacement windows on the back porch match the design of other windows on the house. D. Ruck explained that many interior features and some exterior windows - including leaded glass windows - had been removed at some point; he also considered creating replacement windows of that style.

S. Radtke stated that he felt the current design of the porch contained too much solid material around the door and that including sidelights and a transom above the door on the redesigned porch would allow the door to disappear more and bring it more in line with the original, unenclosed porch design. D. Ruck questioned whether that might make the back door compete with the front door which had sidelights and a transom. The HDC favored the open porch rendering, but D. Ruck stated that he was struggling with how to achieve that look while retaining the functionality of an enclosed porch. The board felt that there would be a way to meet in the middle and shared an example of the former front porch at 1378 5th Street in the Campus Historic District that could be used for reference. D. Ruck was concerned about the round columns and the cost of column capitals that matched those used on the front porch. S. Radtke stated that square columns could be appropriate for the rear porch, but D. Ruck noted that he would prefer to reuse mismatched columns from the front porch that could match on the rear porch.

J. Huss left at 5:15 PM.

S. Radke explained that the HDC would need more details to approve a new design for the rear porch. D. Ruck stated that he wanted to install cedar shakes where there was white car siding on the rear porch as a test to see what he

would like before he completed any more extensive work. The board agreed that this work could be approved on a temporary basis with the intent being that the final design of the rear porch would be submitted for review. G. Borgman stated that the HDC could require that the cedar shake be removed if the porch redesign was not completed.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to replace the car siding on the enclosed rear porch with cedar shakes on a temporary basis, with any further work pending approval of the final design for the rear porch was made by G. Borgman, supported by K. Kochin, and approved with S. Radtke, C. Davis, G. Borgman, D. Gregersen, and K. Kochin voting aye.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A. Discussion on HDC Motions Planning

J. Pesch reviewed the process of creating final motions for cases heard at meetings, adding that this topic was last reviewed in 2018, and only one current HDC member was on the board at that time. He stated that, moving forward, motions should be written with greater specificity in order for them to be legally enforceable, if enforcement of an HDC decision ever be necessary. The board reviewed a recent motion that could be interpreted in a number of different ways and J. Pesch explained that the suggested motions he included in the staff reports only had as much detail as was provided by the applicant; they could be too vague and require more detailed language crafted by the HDC during a meeting.

B. Froebel School National Register Nomination Form Review Planning

Staff was notified that Pinnacle Construction Group, involved with the pending renovation of Froebel School at 417 Jackson Avenue, is pursuing National Register of Historic Places designation for the school building. The nomination form was to be presented to the State Historic Preservation Review Board on March 6, 2026, and as a Certified Local Government, the HDC was tasked with reviewing the nomination form and providing any comments to the State Historic Preservation Office. The HDC had an opportunity to review the nomination form and did not have comments and was generally impressed with what was written. The board discussed the various design changes to Muskegon's school buildings through the years, and shared their excitement to see that Froebel would be appropriately renovated.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:11 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Pesch, Planner