

**CITY OF ABILENE
HERITAGE COMMISSION
AGENDA**

January 20, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.
Abilene Public Library
209 NW 4th St.
Abilene, KS 67410

Agenda Item
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call: ___ Duane Schrag, Chair ___ Mary Burtzloff ___ Andrew Pankratz ___ Nanc Scholl ___ Barry Arp
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of the Meeting Minutes – December 16, 2021
Business
5. Annual selection of Chair/Vice Chair
6. Grant project proposal for historic preservation assistance updates
7. Comments
8. Adjournment

**CITY OF ABILENE
HERITAGE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

**December 16, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.
Abilene Public Library
209 NW 4th St. Abilene, KS 67410**

Members Present: Duane Schrag (Chair), Andrew Pankratz, Mary Burtzloff, Nanc Scholl, Joanne Hamilton, Phil Hamilton

Members Absent: Barry Arp

Staff Present: Planning & Zoning Administrator Kari Zook

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Schrag.

Approval of Agenda

Burtzloff moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Scholl. Motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Approval of the Meeting Minutes – November 18, 2021

Pankratz moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Burtzloff. Motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Business

CLG annual report

Discussion was held regarding the annual report that is due December 31, 2021 to SHPO. All questions were discussed and answered. Staff will compile information and submit the report.

Grant project proposal updates

Discussion was held regarding the establishment of criteria for administering grant funds.

Administrative Review permit approvals:

- 301 N. Cedar St. – Right of Way permit

Comments

Phil and Joanne Hamilton's term will expire in January 2022. They have chosen not to be considered for reappointment so we will have two vacancies on the Heritage Commission.

Adjournment

P. Hamilton made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Scholl. Motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Minutes Approved,

Attest:

Duane Schrag, Chair

Kari Zook
Planning & Zoning Administrator

Heritage Preservation Grant Program – Draft, Dec. 16, 2021

Abilene is a remarkable city. It was one of countless settlements that sprang up in the Great Plains in the latter half of the 19th century as Europeans spread westward, but one of the relatively few that survived.

Census data for the past 140 years suggest the explosive growth that accompanied the emerging city produced a stable, vibrant community that is recognized as one of the most attractive places to live in the country.

Over the past 10 years the community has invested 10s of millions of dollars in essential infrastructure – hospitals, schools, streets, recreation. These provide services every community must have. But the elements of Abilene that are unique and irreplaceable -- the reminders of its citizens who played a role in world-changing events, the charming collection of lovely older homes on tree-lined streets, the brick-and-mortar downtown that sprang up in the city's core, the tangible elements that give Abilene its essential charm – have largely been left to fend for themselves.

Not entirely. Thanks to the leadership of several individuals and the city commission, Abilene established the Heritage Commission. City code spells out our mission. We are to “identify buildings, structures, sites, neighborhoods and areas that may have historical, cultural or architectural importance or value to the community.” We are also to “prepare and adopt a heritage conservation plan containing goals, objectives and policies to guide decision-makers in preserving the community's historic resources.”

To help fulfill its mission, the Heritage Commission is proposing that the city establish a program that provides annual grants to help preserve Abilene's historic resources. In July 2021 the Heritage Commission provided city commissioners with a brief outline of its vision for the program, which borrows a number of features from one currently used by Douglas County Natural and Cultural Heritage Taskforce. What follows is a more detailed description of the program the Heritage Commission would like to see.

The program would be funded annually by the city. Initially, \$50,000 would be made available annually. If the program is successful, we suggest the city increase funding appropriately.

The money would be awarded as matching grants – the owner would be required to assume half the project cost. The grant would be awarded only upon successful completion of the project.

Perhaps the most essential – and challenging – element of the program will be establishing a process for selecting projects. The Heritage Commission sees the program as a last resort for saving historically important structures that are in danger of being lost to disrepair. Before drafting selection guidelines, the commission would like to host three public meetings to get input from city residents as to their views on criteria for prioritizing projects.

Project selections would be presented as a recommendation to the city commission, which would make the final decision.

Assuming there are qualified applications, annual awards would be tiered so as to allow for one large project (up to 30% of the annual appropriation), two moderately large projects (up to 15% each), and the remainder going to smaller projects.

NOTE: Does the Heritage Commission want to set aside a portion of the money for emergency grants? If so, how would that be structured?