

Heritage Preservation Commission
September 8th, 2025 Meeting Minutes
Council Chambers – City Hall

Call to Order and Roll Call

President Jess McCullough called to order the meeting of the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) at 12:01 p.m. on Monday, September 8th, 2025.

Attendance:

Attending: Ken Buehler, Kathleen Cargill, John Hest, and Jess McCullough

Absent: Chris Adatte

Staff Present: Chris Lee and Sam Smith

Consideration of Minutes

Heritage Preservation Commission Meeting – July 14th, 2025 –

MOTION/Second: Approved by unanimous consent

VOTE: (4-0)

Consideration of Matters Regarding Commission Action

N/A

Other Business/Presentations

Chester Chalet Section 106 Consultation - Charlene Roise, Hess Roise Historical Consultants
Charlene Roise addressed the commissioners and gave a presentation of the project. She was joined by staff from the City Parks department and the Chester Bowl. She provided some history of the Chester Park area. The Chester Bowl Improvement Club (Club) was established in 1980 to support programming for the thousands of users enjoying Chester Park. Today, the Club manages and operates the Thom Storm Chalet and Outdoor Recreation Center, providing year-round programming, recreation, and environmental education opportunities for people of all ages. Outdoor and nature-based activities include ski/snowboard programs, summer and fall day camps with an environmental education focus, and community-based festivals and concerts. The Club promotes natural resource protection and healthy living, serves families from all backgrounds, offers a safe learning environment, helps teenagers gain leadership skills, and upholds their promise to parents to “return your child tired, happy, and dirty.”

The Thom Storm Chalet has been the heart of Chester Park – a 135-acre park with a restored urban trout stream - for over 50 years. Unfortunately, an Asset Report by the City of Duluth (City) shows the existing building is past its useful lifespan and cannot meet the needs of a modern nature-based recreation and education facility; of 46 assessed systems, 32 were beyond useful life and 14 were potentially critical, and 13 accessibility limitations were identified as requiring corrective action. The existing building limits the Club’s ability to serve the

community. Each year the Club must turn away dozens of families from their outdoor recreation and environmental education opportunities, which are critical for developing the next generation of stewards of our natural spaces. The proposed solution is to reconstruct the Chalet to improve accessibility, achieve modern sustainability standards, and better meet the community's nature-based recreation, education, and preservation needs. The Chalet will be new construction on the existing foundation, plus 415 square feet of new foundation to allow for an accessible elevator. Other accessibility improvements include parking, building egress, individual and multi-stall restrooms, and hallway widths. The building will be constructed to B3 standards to improve energy efficiency. Improvements to the surrounding site will allow for ten parking stalls, including accessible parking.

Roise is looking for commissioners' input and comments on the project as part of the findings that she must submit to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Dave Schaeffer addressed the commissioners. He informed them that his team has secured about 93% of their funding for the renovations and they are currently following the necessary steps required by SHPO. Work for this project will hopefully begin in 2026, but if they cannot make that timeline, they will aim to begin in 2027.

Commissioners: President McCullough voiced his support and appreciation for the project.

MOTION/Second: Buehler/Cargill approve the project with no concerns

VOTE: (4-0)

Chum Shelter Expansion Consultation – Kane Tewes, Architecture Advantage

Kane Tewes addressed the commissioners. He is an architect working on this project. City staff assisted CHUM staff in submitting documents to SHPO for this project. SHPO has reviewed their submission and directed project staff to come before the HPC for comments.

The project location is on the corner of 1st Ave W and 2nd St. CHUM is looking to double their housing capacity for their clientele by adding two stories on to their existing drop-in center, which will house a women's dorm. The existing building will be renovated into a men's dorm. These renovations will serve CHUM and the community's need for more shelter space and beds. In efforts to match the neighborhood aesthetic, they will be using a fiber-cement material with a brick design for the exterior of the building.

The bidding process is currently underway, and they are aiming to get bids this week with the goal of starting construction in October of this year.

Commissioners: Cargill expressed her support for the project. She pointed out several errors in the letter from SHPO, and she asked staff how to go about correcting SHPO's errors while simultaneously submitting commissioners' comments to not slow up the process for this project.

Staff: Lee responded that staff will work with SHPO to correct the errors in their letter, and the commissioners' comments will be incorporated as part of the findings that CHUM submits to SHPO.

Anita, a CHUM staff member, addressed the commissioners. She stated that their project has been delayed, and they were hoping to resolve this part of the process back in March. They have raised \$10 million so far, and they have little bit more to go in terms of funding. The existing building was originally built for 30 shelter guests. They currently have 80 beds, but people are still sleeping on the floor. This expansion project will help address years of wear and tear on the building as well as the massive community need for more shelter beds.

MOTION/Second: Buehler/Cargill approve the project with no concerns

VOTE: (4-0)

Communications

Chris Lee informed the commissioners that he will be attending the Preserve MN conference in New Ulm this week. He will share any updates and information from the conference with the commissioners at next month's HPC meeting.

Report of Final Disposition of Matters Previously Before the Commission

N/A

Reports of Officers, Staff and Committees

PC Liaison Update – Planning commission meets tomorrow, but there is not anything on the agenda relevant to the HPC.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

Respectfully,

Jenn Moses – Manager
Planning and Development Division