



**Minutes of the
Millcreek Historic Preservation Commission
August 14, 2025
6:00 p.m.
Regular Meeting**

The Historic Preservation Commission of Millcreek, Utah, met in a regular meeting on August 14, 2025, at City Hall, located at 1330 E. Chambers Avenue, Millcreek, UT 84106. The meeting was conducted electronically and live streamed via the City's website with an option for online public comment.

PRESENT:

Commissioners

Ryan Lufkin, Chair
Peter Brinton, Vice Chair
Kaye Donahoe
Tiffany Hunter Greene
Emily Johnson
Arie LeeFlang
Melissa Coy

City Staff

Sean Murray, Planner
Alex Wendt, Deputy City Recorder
Francis Lilly, Planning Director
Rita Lund, Communications Director

Attendees: Kirk Huffaker

MEETING – 6:00 p.m.

TIME COMMENCED – 6:04 p.m.

1. Approval of July 10, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Donahoe moved to approve the July 10, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Coy seconded the motion. Chair Lufkin asked for the vote. Commissioner Donahoe voted yes, Commissioner Coy voted yes, Commissioner Johnson voted yes, Commissioner LeeFlang voted yes, Commissioner Brinton voted yes, Commissioner Greene voted yes, Chair Lufkin voted yes. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Training on Historic Preservation Design Standards, Kirk Mr. Huffaker

Consultant Kirk Huffaker provided a presentation on design guidelines and their role in historic preservation. Drawing from recent training, he explained that design guidelines are rooted in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, which serve as the national framework for preservation practices. These guidelines are used to evaluate the appropriate treatment of buildings within their historic contexts and help ensure that the character of neighborhoods, districts, and other historic areas is preserved. Mr. Huffaker noted that communities often

distinguish between “guidelines,” which may be applied voluntarily, and “standards,” which carry regulatory authority. In either form, he emphasized, they serve as important tools for clarifying expectations, reducing ambiguity in design review, and supporting staff in making administrative decisions, with more complex cases directed to the Commission.

Mr. Huffaker highlighted the value of design guidelines not only as a means of preserving community character but also as an educational resource for property owners, architects, and contractors. By providing clear direction, guidelines reduce subjectivity in the review process and help the public understand what is expected in maintaining historic integrity. He described the different types of guidelines communities may adopt, ranging from broad neighborhood guidance to more detailed approaches that address specific property types or features such as porches. He also stressed the importance of keeping guidelines current, noting that preservation practices continue to evolve alongside the introduction of new materials. While traditional standards call for replacement in kind—for example, wood with wood—some modern substitute materials may be appropriate in limited circumstances, particularly on secondary facades. He emphasized that approvals alone are not sufficient; the rest of the city’s processes, including permitting, code compliance, and enforcement, must be aligned to ensure preservation standards are upheld. Without consistent follow-through, approved guidelines lose their effectiveness. To help reduce enforcement issues, Mr. Huffaker suggested proactive approaches such as annual workshops where the city can explain its design guidelines and their application. He noted that neighborhoods change as people move in and out, and regular education ensures that new property owners are introduced to the requirements and expectations of living in a historic district.

Mr. Huffaker stressed the importance of keeping design guidelines coordinated with other city codes, such as zoning and building codes, so that property owners receive consistent direction. He encouraged the Commission to pay attention to feedback from the community about whether guidelines are feasible in practice, pointing out that economic barriers or a shortage of skilled craftspeople can affect the ability of property owners to comply. Adjustments to guidelines or the creation of supportive programs can help address these challenges. Without enforcement, districts risk losing their historic integrity. If one property after another is allowed to ignore guidelines, the cumulative effect erodes the overall character of the district. Over time, this loss can diminish the number of contributing buildings and threaten the district’s status on the National Register of Historic Places. Chair Lufkin said the problem he has seen with enforcement is the lack of a good carrot or stick.

Mr. Huffaker explained that design guidelines function in conjunction with the city’s ordinance. He noted that any design review process must first be established through an ordinance, which outlines the specific requirements—such as twelve key elements—that apply to a particular geographic area, historic district, or individual landmark. The design guidelines then serve as a practical tool for interpreting and applying those ordinance requirements, providing clarity on how the standards are implemented in real situations. Mr. Huffaker emphasized that the ordinance provides the legal framework, while the guidelines guide day-to-day application and review.

Mr. Huffaker provided examples of enforceable preservation actions, highlighting cases from Salt Lake City. He pointed to the Fifth Ward building on Greater West, an individual local landmark that recently made news due to an illegal partial demolition. Salt Lake City’s

ordinance includes a provision that, if an illegal demolition is halted, the city can require the property owner to fully reconstruct the building to its original condition. Mr. Huffaker noted that this ordinance provision is relatively new—about two years old—and that the Fifth Ward case represents its first application. He emphasized that such measures communicate a strong commitment to preservation, signaling that the city will hold property owners accountable for maintaining historic integrity. Once the ordinance requirement is established, design guidelines then provide detailed direction for the reconstruction process, including specific considerations such as masonry work. They discussed specific examples of enforceable preservation measures, using cases from Salt Lake City to illustrate. He highlighted the Fifth Ward building on Greater West, an individual local landmark that recently received attention due to an illegal partial demolition. Under Salt Lake City's ordinance, if an illegal demolition is stopped, the city can require the property owner to fully reconstruct the building to its original condition. Mr. Huffaker noted that this provision is relatively new—approximately two years old—and the Fifth Ward case represents its first application. He emphasized that such ordinances convey a strong commitment to historic preservation, making it clear that the city will hold property owners accountable for maintaining the historic integrity of landmark buildings. Once the ordinance establishes the requirement, design guidelines provide the practical framework for reconstruction, including specific technical guidance such as masonry work. Commissioner LeeFlang asked if it is easy to take from other ordinances and design standards to use them in Millcreek without having to reinvent the process. Mr. Huffaker said it is very easy to take the parts of design standards from other cities that would work in Millcreek. Francis Lilly, Planning Director, asked if there is an ordinance out that Mr. Huffaker has seen that bans the demolition of historic structures. Mr. Huffaker said he has seen that. Mr. Huffaker said that the Supreme Court ruled in the 1970's that a Historic Preservation Commission can say no to a demolition and enforce it, but there must be an appeal process and usually that goes through the city council. Mr. Lilly said in Millcreek the appeal entity would probably be the land use hearing officer.

Mr. Huffaker continued his presentation by discussing how design review decisions are evaluated and enforced. He emphasized that the Commission must consider public input, follow the ordinance, and weigh factors such as the prevention of demolition when making determinations. He then provided examples illustrating situations where strict enforcement may not be necessary. On one end of the spectrum, he cited a split rail fence in Ann Arbor that was deemed inappropriate for its neighborhood, though he acknowledged that fences often present complex challenges in design review. Communities frequently controlled exterior paint in the 1960s and 1970s, contemporary preservation practice generally advises against regulating color because it is a personal, reversible choice and does not permanently impact historic integrity. Mr. Huffaker suggested that design guidelines should incorporate flexibility to allow for reversible work, emphasizing that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards support evaluating alterations based on whether they can be reversed without loss of character. He discussed solar panels as a modern example, noting that while some may initially view them as incompatible with historic buildings, they are largely reversible, have a finite lifespan, and typically do not detract from character-defining features such as rooflines. He explained that review should consider factors such as visibility from the street, impact on historic fabric, whether the work is subordinate to the building, if it creates a false sense of history, and overall effect on the district. By applying these principles, Mr. Huffaker indicated that certain contemporary interventions can be appropriate, maintaining both the building's historic integrity and the flexibility needed for modern use.

Mr. Huffaker then addressed the importance of clarity in design guidelines, providing examples from Denver to illustrate best practices. He highlighted guidance regarding metal roofs, noting that while there are relatively few historic metal roofs in areas like Mill Creek, communities with snowy climates such as Park City and Heber may have more. The guidelines clearly define appropriate treatments, including standing seams and the proper joining of metal panels, as well as matching roof benches and dormers to historic configurations. Conversely, the guidelines also specify features that are not appropriate, such as ridge vents that slightly raise the roofline or decorative end caps that were not historically present. Denver guidelines effectively categorize acceptable and unacceptable options for window replacement. Detailed guidance helps the public and staff understand the variety of construction choices and their compatibility with historic character, ensuring that design review decisions are both clear and consistent.

Mr. Huffaker discussed approaches for creating clarity in design guidelines, emphasizing the importance of specificity to reduce gray areas in interpretation. He explained that vague textual descriptions, such as those on the left of his example, can leave homeowners, staff, and the Commission with differing opinions on what is appropriate, often resulting in lengthy meetings to reach consensus. In contrast, guidelines that clearly define what is approved, prohibited, or required—illustrated on the right—provide concrete direction. Visual representations can also clarify procedural steps, timelines, and decision-making pathways, as demonstrated by a graphic from Los Angeles County showing zoning enforcement processes, which provides the public and staff with a clear roadmap for compliance and enforcement.

Mr. Huffaker then addressed the importance of public engagement in developing or revising design guidelines. He highlighted that stakeholders want to understand how guidelines will affect them and often offer valuable input. He described a robust example from the MacArthur Park neighborhood near downtown Little Rock, where the city undertook a comprehensive engagement effort. The process began with establishing a branded identity for the project and creating a dedicated website for materials, input, and updates. Early listening sessions targeted key stakeholders before broader public meetings were held. Social media campaigns and educational handouts, including QR codes linking to the project website, were used to reach the wider community. The city incorporated interactive and educational activities such as scavenger hunts to familiarize residents with architectural features, and developed a project viewer that allowed the public to track ongoing construction and permit activity in the neighborhood. The engagement effort culminated with public presentations and celebrations of the adoption of the revised design guidelines, illustrating how transparency, interaction, and clear communication can enhance both understanding and compliance in historic preservation efforts. Chair Lufkin asked how much of this effort is divided between the Commission and the City. Mr. Huffaker replied that between the Commission and the staff, that is a good group of people to determine what the goals of the Commission are.

Only four communities in Utah currently have design guidelines for historic preservation. Murray had them and got rid of their Historic Preservation Commission. Their focus was around State Street and they felt it was slowing things down and wanted to open the area up to development. Logan, Ogden, Park City, and Salt Lake City currently have design guidelines. Commissioner Greene asked how long these cities have had their guidelines. Mr. Huffaker replied they have had them since the 90's. Chair Lufkin asked if the guidelines are for specific

neighborhoods or citywide. Mr. Huffaker said that Logan has design standards for their entire historic district, which is a mix of commercial and residential. Design guidelines need to be very targeted. Mr. Lilly said that if Millcreek implemented these guidelines, if they were broadly applicable then the city would have to consider specialized staff to handle it, there is a staffing issue and monitoring issue. According to state law you cannot regulate design elements in single family homes except for neighborhoods that are older than 50 years.

Mr. Huffaker explained that design guidelines can apply to all building types, even split-level houses that are now reaching historic status. He noted that guidelines give communities a shared vision, whether broad or detailed. Using Pocatello as an example, he described how their recent update expanded from just three guidelines in the 1980s to a comprehensive set that starts with the value of preservation and narrows to specifics like masonry and windows. The goal, he said, is to use plain language, illustrations, and local examples so residents can better recognize and care for their community's architectural features. One challenge in Pocatello was clarifying the city's new ordinance and review process, since HPC rulings were often overturned by City Council. He stressed the importance of Council backing the commission it appointed as experts, and the new guidelines were approved with that in mind. He explained how the standards are structured: an introduction, review criteria drawn directly from the ordinance, clear standards of what is and isn't appropriate, and supporting illustrations. This way staff and the public can consistently apply the rules. Commissioner Leeftang asked if there was much public participation in the implementation of design standards in Pocatello. Mr. Huffaker said there was not much public participation. Commissioner Greene asked if design standards come up against modern safety standards. Mr. Huffaker it is only very rarely the case that the design standards come up against safety standards.

Mr. Huffaker discussed Park City's unique preservation practices, emphasizing that they operate differently than most other communities. He noted that while Main Street and Old Town maintain their charm through strict ordinances and design guidelines, there is ongoing debate about whether the town is beginning to lose its historic character. His recent work in Park City involved revising design guidelines to make them more user-friendly, relying heavily on graphics and examples to explain issues of mass, scale, and proportion—particularly as residents seek to expand small miners' cottages into much larger homes. He highlighted the challenge of accommodating these additions without overwhelming the original structures, stressing the importance of minimizing character loss. The guidelines also address details like historic doors, retaining walls, grade changes, and snow removal challenges unique to Park City's terrain. Finally, he explained the practice of "panelization," where buildings are disassembled into wall panels, moved off-site for new foundations, and then reassembled. While this method preserves exteriors, it often results in a loss of historic interiors, creating a distinctive preservation environment that Park City has refined over time.

3. Subcommittee Updates

Commissioner Greene said that she is in favor of developing design guidelines for Millcreek. She thinks there will have to be different design standards for the different areas of the city. Chair Lufkin said he would like to create a new subcommittee that deals with standards. Chair Lufkin would like to change the historic properties and markers committee and change it into the standards and regulations committee. Chair Lufkin thanked everyone for their work on outreach for the 4th of July. Commissioner Johnson wrote a small article for the City

newsletter regarding the Historic Preservation Workshop in October.

4. Staff Updates

Chair Lufkin and Vice Chair Brinton received an email regarding the sale of the John Neff house at 261 East Evergreen Avenue. There was an estate sale there and eventually the house was sold. The new owners have been telling people they are going to tear the house down. He considers it the anchor of the neighborhood and asked what the city can do. Mr. Lilly said that the city cannot prevent demolition however they can delay the demolition and do a survey of the building. Chair Lufkin said that if this home is demolished, he would consider it a failure of the Historic Preservation Commission. Commissioner Greene said that the way the code is written the city does not have the authority to stop it. Mr. Murray said that the rules come from the state that prevent the city from prohibiting demolition. Chair Lufkin asked if they have plans to subdivide the property. Mr. Lilly said no one has come to the city regarding their actual plans. Mr. Huffaker said that the city cannot prevent demolition, but this can be leveraged for the rallying car for what the Historic Preservation Commission does. You can say you never want this to happen again and that's why the Commission is taking x, y, and z steps. It is sad that this is how preservation works. Many times, you have to lose something great to prevent the loss of the next building. Mr. Lilly said that the city has more tools, like talking nicely to the current owners, or using persuasion to push people towards other options. One option is to ask for in exchange for keeping the house they could build some small lot single family homes around it. You would still lose some trees, and some people will not want the added density but if this is done thoughtfully it can save the main home. Chair Lufkin was worried about the owners clear cutting a lot of trees. Mr. Murray said that the city does have tree preservation standards. Developers can be rewarded for keeping healthy trees that are not invasive. Chair Lufkin and Commissioner Johnson expressed concern about losing a certain number of homes in the historic district to the point that there are not enough contributing homes. Mr. Huffaker said a survey would take about a half day. Mr. Lilly said he will talk with the new owners about ways to save the building. Mr. Lilly said that Sean has been very clear with every caller who called about the home about the historic district and the rules. Mr. Murray said that state law mandates how long cities may take on a building permit. Mr. Lilly explained that creativity is sometimes essential to preservation, whether through adaptive reuse or negotiated allowances like permitting small duplexes on a property in exchange for retaining the historic structure. Still, he cautioned that community sentiment often defines the limits of such compromises, as some may prefer demolition over flexibility. He stressed the importance of exploring all options, including rezoning and development agreements, which can serve as powerful tools to preserve a house while balancing development pressures. Commissioner Brinton asked what Mr. Huffaker knew about the home. Mr. Huffaker said he had taken a tour of the home some years ago. You can feel the age of the home it feels nice. Mr. Lilly said the Reid School has closed its doors and sold to Ivory Homes. They want to build 15 homes there. The school will be demolished sometime in the winter and the city will do a survey before it is demolished.

5. Adjourn

ADJOURNED: Commissioner Donahoe moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

Commissioner Greene seconded the motion. Chair Lufkin asked for the vote.

Commissioner Donahoe voted yes, Commissioner Greene voted yes, and Commissioner Leeftang voted yes, Commissioner Brinton voted yes, Commissioner Coy voted yes,

Commissioner Johnson voted yes, Chair Lufkin voted yes. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVED:  Date 9/11/25
~~Ryan Lufkin, Chair~~
Peter Brinton, Vice Chair


Attest: Alex Wendt, Deputy Recorder