

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Wednesday June 3rd, 2026, 6:00 pm

Providence City Office Building, 164 North Gateway Dr., Providence Ut

Call to Order: George Wootton.

Chair Roll Call of Commission Members: George Wootton, Brendan Lee, Wes Theurer & Karen Brooks.

Staff in Attendance: Community Development Director Skarlet Bankhead and City Recorder Ty Cameron

Pledge of Allegiance.

Comments from the public: Any member of the public who has a comment pertaining to the mission of the Historical Preservation Commission will have 3 minutes to make their comment.

- Chair Wootton opened the floor for public comment.
- A Providence resident, Joe Bates, who lives across from the Old Rock Church, addressed the Commission. He opened by commending the Commission for the quality and volume of work reflected in the prior year's minutes. He then turned to the subject of the courtesy presentation made the previous month by a developer proposing a building at the corner of Main and First North. He noted that a range of opinions had been expressed at that meeting — some positive, some not — and suggested that over the intervening thirty days, some of those views may have evolved.
- Mr. Bates expressed concern that individuals within the city administration had characterized the Commission's collective response as generally favorable toward the developer, when in his view the Commission had intended to remain neutral. He acknowledged that he did not know whether Commission members were aware of how their comments had been represented and stated that this kind of mischaracterization of the Commission's intentions was unhelpful, particularly given the ongoing tension between neighboring residents and the developer as reflected in Planning Commission minutes. He thanked the Commission for listening to his comment, and no further public comments were offered.
- Chair Wootton closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

➤ **Item No. 1 Approval of Minutes:** Approval of the minutes for May 6th, 2026. [\(MINUTES\)](#)

- Chair Wootton noted one correction to May 6, 2026, minutes: a reference to the city history book had read *Providence and our people*, which should instead read *Providence and her people*. No other corrections were identified by Commission members.

Motion to approve the minutes of May 6th, 2026. – Wes Thuerer. 2nd- Brendan Lee

Vote:

Yea- George Wootton, Brendan Lee, Wes Theurer & Karen Brooks.

Nay-

Abstained-

Motion passes, minutes approved.

- Prior to moving to the next agenda item, Chair Wootton took a brief moment to inform the Commission of an upcoming Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) conference scheduled for June 12, running from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, with possible tours at the conclusion. He and Commissioner Lee had already registered, and noted that registration remained open through Friday, with a fee of approximately \$25–\$30 to be reimbursed by the city. He highlighted several sessions of particular relevance to Providence, including presentations on historic districts, agro-tourism, historic preservation through interpretation and signage, and a session on establishing a local history museum.
- Chair Wootton shared that he had been in conversations with museum professionals in Logan who expressed interest in providing guidance on fundraising and project development and stated his intention to work toward the long-term goal of establishing a historic museum in Providence. He invited any Commission members or interested parties to register before the Friday deadline.

➤ **Item No. 2 Hungry for History Grant Continued Discussion:** The Historic Preservation Commission will continue their discussion and may take action on pursuing the William G Pomeroy Hungry for History Grant. [\(GRANT SITE\)](#)

- Commissioner Brendan Lee presented a structured overview of the William G. Pomeroy Foundation's grant programs, with a focus on the Hungry for History marker program as the most applicable to Providence's history.
- Commissioner Lee explained that the Pomeroy Foundation, based in upstate New York, operates several marker programs across the country. The two most relevant to Providence are the Hungry for History program, which commemorates local food traditions through cast aluminum roadside markers, and the Heritage program, which covers broader historical narratives. He noted that the Foundation's Folklore marker program is also active in the region, citing recent examples including a marker in Mendon commemorating their May Day celebration and the Old Ephraim sign in Montpelier, Idaho. The Foundation has a substantial national footprint, with significant concentrations of markers in Salt Lake City and Ogden.
- Commissioner Lee identified the Hungry for History program as the strongest candidate, centered on Providence's longstanding tradition of turkey and sauerkraut dinners. He walked through the grant's eligibility criteria: the dish must contain a minimum of two ingredients — which sauerkraut, as fermented cabbage with salt, satisfies — and must have at least fifty years of documented history, which Commission members agreed is well established. One nuance he highlighted is that a marker commemorating a food tradition cannot simultaneously advertise an ongoing city celebration; if the Commission wished to place one marker associated with the sauerkraut tradition and a separate one tied to the Sauerkraut Days festival location, those would need to be submitted as separate applications.
- Community Development Director Skarlet Bankhead noted some uncertainty as to whether the city's Sauerkraut Days celebration could meet the fifty-year continuous requirement, given a gap in the event's history. Commissioner Lee and Chair Wootton agreed that framing the application around sauerkraut as a cultural and culinary tradition in Providence — rather than the festival itself — was the more appropriate and defensible approach, with documentation tracing the tradition back to the 1800s.
- Commissioner Lee also addressed the physical specifications of the marker: 32 inches by 18 inches, cast aluminum, mounted on a seven-foot aluminum pole. The title line allows fifteen characters including spaces and punctuation, which the word *sauerkraut* alone nearly fills. The body text allows twenty-seven characters, and Commissioner Lee shared several draft text options developed in consultation with AI. He expressed a preference for language that

acknowledges the role sauerkraut dinners played in bridging the cultural divide between the community's two founding groups — the English and Scandinavian settlers, particularly Danish pioneers, who Commissioner Brooks noted were among the earliest to arrive, with Norwegians coming somewhat later.

- Commissioner Theurer raised a concern regarding one of the additional subject criteria on the Foundation's website, which states that the dish should have its origins in the local or regional community. He questioned whether sauerkraut, as a broadly European preparation, could meet this standard, since it was not invented in Providence. Commissioner Lee responded that he read this criterion as one of several optional qualifying options rather than a mandatory requirement, and that the examples he had reviewed supported that interpretation. The Commission agreed to verify this point with the Foundation before proceeding.
- Regarding primary source documentation, Commissioner Lee reported that he had reviewed *Providence and Her People* and identified relevant material, and had also accessed digitized newspaper archives through newspapers.com, finding articles from the Logan Herald dating from the 1920s through the 1960s and 70s, including photographs. He noted that USU holds a collection of oral histories conducted around 2006–2009 that may also contain relevant material. Chair Wootton indicated he had access to papers from Howard, a previous HPC chair that may serve as additional sources.
- Commissioner Lee reviewed the placement requirements for the marker: it must not be located on a high-speed roadway, must be accessible to visitors without intruding on private property unless a land use permission letter is obtained from the owner, must relate geographically to the subject of the marker, and must comply with state excavation guidelines. The specific placement location was deferred for discussion at a future meeting.
- In terms of timeline, Commissioner Lee noted that the letter of intent is due October 2, 2026, and the full application is due November 9, 2026. The Commission would expect to hear back approximately three months after the final deadline. He expressed optimism that a successful application could be timed to coincide with the following year's Sauerkraut Days celebration. Commissioner Lee indicated he was prepared to take the lead on drafting the letter of intent and compiling application materials, and invited others to assist with locating primary sources and securing any required land use permission letters. He also noted that another Commission member, Ken, had expressed interest in assisting with physical installation.
- The Commission reviewed several newspaper images, including a sketch by Ev Thorpe depicting a Providence First Ward Turkey and Sauerkraut Festival from approximately 1958, which Commissioner Brooks recognized. Commissioner Brooks added personal context, noting that her uncle served as the Krautmaster for the Providence First Ward and her father held the same role for the Second Ward — a friendly rivalry that, she noted with some humor, did not always have a unifying effect.
- The Commission also briefly discussed possibilities for future grant applications, including a potential marker related to an early Providence nursery, Edgewood Hall, which connected to Commissioner Brooks' family, which she noted was influential in the development of orchards and tree cultivation across Northern Utah.

137 ➤ **Item No. 3 Sauerkraut Days 2026 Continued Preparation Discussions:** The Historic Preservation
138 Commission will review, discuss and may take action on their assignments, roles and individual
139 responsibilities for this years Sauerkraut Days.
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- 141 • Chair Wootton opened the discussion by providing an overview of the budget context for the
142 Commission's Sauerkraut Days activities. City Manager Ryan has proposed a \$6,000 budget
143 allocation for the Historic Preservation Commission, with specific line items including
144 Commission shirts, a commemorative plaque, yard signs, and costs associated with the historic
145 tour vans for Sauerkraut Days. Additionally, the SHPO conference registration and a longer-term
146 initiative involving house plaques for historic homes were discussed as potential budget items.
- 147 • Regarding the tour vans, Chair Wootton reported that Nicole, who had been exploring the
148 possibility of obtaining donated vans for the tours, was unable to attend the meeting. She had
149 taken point on sourcing larger vehicles — ideally 15-passenger vans — with a rental cost
150 estimated between \$200 and \$275 per van. Chair Wootton indicated he would follow up with her
151 at the upcoming Sauerkraut Days committee meeting the following Monday and would report
152 back to the Commission.
- 153 • Commissioner Brooks raised two issues stemming from feedback received from last year's tour
154 participants. First, she noted that attendees had difficulty knowing where to go and how to
155 navigate the tour, suggesting that directional wayfinding signage was needed at key entry points
156 to the festival grounds. Director Bankhead recalled that similar signage had been used in prior
157 years — large posted maps indicating the locations of different festival activities — and
158 suggested the Sauerkraut Days committee likely had budget for this type of signage. Chair
159 Wootton committed to raising the matter with the committee at Monday's meeting. Second,
160 Commissioner Brooks suggested that the tours should be scheduled at specific, published times
161 rather than departing on an ad hoc basis, noting that participation had been noticeably lower in
162 the previous year, which she attributed in part to the lack of a clear schedule. Chair Wootton
163 acknowledged that defined departure times had been used in years prior and agreed this should
164 be reinstated.
- 165 • The Commission reviewed the tour route map from the prior year. Commissioner Theurer, who
166 served as a tour guide, noted that while he was generally satisfied with the route, it was difficult
167 to cover all points of interest within the available time. He offered to share the PowerPoint he
168 had prepared for his tour narration, which included talking points for various stops not captured
169 on the printed map — including Edgewood Hall, Chair Wootton's house, the home of Brian
170 Marble, and the historic scales near Chair Wootton's property. Commissioner Brooks proposed
171 adding a stop at or reference to her grandfather's home, noting that he was the first mayor of
172 Providence. Commissioner Theurer indicated this could easily be incorporated as an additional
173 talking point given the stop's proximity to other sites already on the route. The Commission
174 agreed to finalize the tour route and talking points at the July meeting, and Chair Wootton asked
175 Commission members to review the maps and come prepared with any proposed changes.
- 176 • The Commission also discussed the historic preservation display table that is set up during the
177 festival. Chair Wootton noted the table had been staffed throughout Friday evening and most of
178 Saturday in the prior year and asked members to consider how much time they could commit to
179 manning it. He encouraged members to think about what items might be displayed, noting that
180 sauerkraut-related materials including a historic recipe had been presented previously, and
181 suggested it would be desirable to include additional historic artifacts if possible.
- 182 • Chair Wootton raised the matter of an Ev Thorpe painting that had fallen during last year's
183 festival, breaking the glass. Skarlet Bankhead confirmed the painting was stored in the back

room at the city office building and offered to retrieve it before the end of the week so that Chair Wootton could bring it to Al's Trophy for repair. Director Bankhead indicated she would obtain a purchase order number from Tara as needed.

- Chair Wootton briefly introduced a longer-term idea — house plaques for historic homes — noting that he had asked City Manager Ryan to include a budget line for the initiative. He explained that years prior, residents had been given signs identifying the historic names of their homes and suggested reviving the program. He clarified that many homes of historic significance are not listed in the existing registry, and that the Commission would need to develop criteria for identifying and including them. He indicated this topic would be taken up after Sauerkraut Days.
- Chair Wootton also highlighted an upcoming city newsletter that features a home of particular historic significance: a property that has remained in the same family since its original construction — believed to be the only such home in Providence. He identified this as the home of Wes Bitter, the previous chair of the Historic Preservation Commission, who served for nine or ten years. Commissioner Brooks and Director Bankhead offered additional historical context, noting that among the earliest settlers of Providence were Hopkin Matthews, Ira Rice, and Joe Campbell, with the Bitter family arriving shortly thereafter.
- Chair Wootton reported that he had recently located Bob Parson, the author of the most recent edition of *Providence and Her People*, who had a long career in the special collections division of the USU library. He noted that Mr. Parson has been dealing with some health issues but plans to visit him to gather oral history and historical context. Chair Wootton expressed enthusiasm for Mr. Parson as a storytelling resource and potential ongoing contributor to the Commission's work.
- The Commission briefly revisited the matter of digitizing the second edition of *Providence and Her People*. Director Bankhead noted that while a digital copy of the first edition (1949) is available, and a scanned version of a later edition exists on FamilySearch, she has not yet posted the copy provided on disc to the city website due to an anticipated website redesign. She cautioned that significant content — including photographs and historic articles — had been lost during previous website migrations and committed to ensuring the digitized materials are preserved and properly posted once the new platform is in place.

➤ **Scheduling of the July Meeting**

- Chair Wootton noted that the regularly scheduled first Wednesday of July — July 1 — falls during a period when he will be traveling internationally. The Commission discussed alternative dates. Director Bankhead noted that July 8 was unavailable due to a Planning Commission meeting. After brief discussion, the Commission settled on Tuesday, July 7, 2026, as the date for the next meeting, contingent on building availability, which Director Bankhead confirmed was likely clear.

Motion to have July's meeting on Tuesday July 7th @ 6 pm. – Wes Theurer. 2nd – Karen Brooks.

Vote:

Yea- George Wootton, Brendan Lee, Wes Theurer & Karen Brooks.

Nay-

Abstained-

Motion passes. Next meeting set for Tuesday July 7th.

229 **Motion to adjourn the meeting. – Wes Theurer. 2nd- Karen Brooks.**

230 **Vote:**

231 **Yea- George Wootton, Brendan Lee, Wes Theurer & Karen Brooks.**

232 **Nay-**

233 **Abstained-**

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235 **Motion passes, meeting adjourned.**

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237 **Minutes approved by vote of Commission on 7th day of July 2026.**

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239 **I swear these minutes are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.**

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241 **Ty Cameron, City Recorder**

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