



PROVO MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Joint Meeting with Landmarks Commission Minutes

12:00 PM, Tuesday, March 27, 2018

Room 310, City Conference Room

351 West Center Street, Provo, UT 84601

Roll Call (0:00:00)

The following elected officials and members of the Landmarks Commission were present:

Council Chair Gary Winterton, conducting
Council Vice-chair David Harding
Council member David Knecht
Council member David Sewell
Council member George Handley
Cliff Strachan, Council Executive Director
Elizabeth VanDerwerken, Council Executive Assistant
Scott Campbell, Landmarks Commission Chair
Jeff Ringer, Landmarks Commission
Matthew Christensen, Landmarks Commission
Diane Christensen, Landmarks Commission, arrived 12:08 PM
Susan Fales, Landmarks Commission, arrived 12:15 PM
Gary McGinn, Community Development Director
Bill Peperone, Community Development Assistant Director
Josh Yost, Planner

Excused: Council members George Stewart, Kay Van Buren, and Mayor Michelle Kaufusi.

The prayer was given by Bill Peperone, Community Development Assistant Director.

Agenda

1. A review of the purpose and duties of the Landmarks Commission. (0:01:44)

Gary McGinn, Community Development Director, shared the purpose of the Landmarks Commission and Josh Yost, Planner, elaborated on the duties and role of the Commission. The Landmarks Commission was established in 1994 and Title 16 of Provo City Code gives the commission 11 duties, to which they strive to adhere and emulate in their projects working to identify, designate, and protect historic landmarks. In the last year or so, the Commission has been engaged with the community via social media, have assisted in application review, granted two certificate of appropriateness, and added two landmarks to the register.

2. A discussion of the Landmarks Commission initiatives. (0:04:18)

Historic Home Tour: This is an annual event put on by the Landmarks Commission, which includes two nights with tours of four to six homes and a concluding reception. In June 2018, they will hold the first tour in the Dixon Neighborhood.

Walking Tour App: This app lists details and photos of 20 historical sites in downtown Provo. The app is available in the App Store and Google Play for iOS and Android devices, and features a GPS-based tour

guidance, audio narration, and re-photography of each site. The Landmarks Commission received an award from the Utah chapter of the American Planning Association for app achievement. The app has been downloaded about 2600 times, and staff have noted an uptick when out-of-town conventions are located in the downtown area.

Outreach and social media: Marian Wardle, a former Landmarks Commission member who recently left on an ecclesiastical assignment, helped initiate the “This is Provo” videos which have been instrumental in the Commission’s social media outreach. The videos are on Facebook and the blog ‘This is Provo’ and the 17 videos have gathered over 40,000 views to date. Staff shared one of their most popular videos, which highlighted the William D. Alexander house, which was restored in beautiful condition and is now home to Encircle, a local family and youth resource center. Mr. Yost highlighted future structures to be featured in forthcoming videos.

Council members asked about various aspects of renovation of historic homes. Mr. Yost said that the William D. Alexander house was purchased by Holly Arden, Park City, who leases it to Encircle. Much of the physical renovation work was done by volunteers, along with private donations, concessions, and donations from contractors. Mr. Yost indicated that there are many kinds of incentives available from various preservation groups and many projects are done at market rate. Scott Campbell, Landmarks Commission Chair, explained that it is helpful for the City to work together with building owners who wish to preserve a landmark structure.

Preservation Awards: Mr. Yost highlighted the preservation awards which have been given out in the last several years. Of note was the award presented to Calli Hales. Diane Christensen, Landmarks Commission member, acknowledged the work donated by Council member Dave Knecht, NeighborWorks, Sherry Spencer, and former Council member Kim Santiago. Mr. Yost shared some projections of future awards to be presented in the coming months.

Certified Local Government (CLG) grant projects: In the last several years, the Landmarks Commission has completed approximately \$30,000 of projects using only \$1000 of City funds. Grants are an essential part of how the Commission can do what they do.

3. A discussion on Landmarks Priorities. ([0:25:35](#))

Incentives: Mr. Yost introduced various types of incentives which could better support the Landmarks Commission’s objectives and which would engage homeowners in the historic preservation process:

- City staff assistance in the design or research process and applying for grants/tax credits
- Changes to codes (such as international building code, to facilitate preservation of historic features that may not be up to code)
- Preservation incentives, including grant eligibility, recognition, or city financial incentives
- A property tax levy could be structured to provide a financial incentive for owners to list their property on the historic register

Surveys: Title 16 of the Provo City Code requires that the Commission perform a 10-year update ([PCC 16.02.020\(1\)](#)) to the survey of historical resources. Mr. Yost outlined newly eligible areas, which have passed the 50-years old mark and may include eligible properties: the Tree Streets and University Gardens. A number of those areas provide valuable context about development patterns of those areas. Designating official landmarks also contributes to a boost in neighborhood identity.

Mr. Campbell spoke about the value and asset that historic properties are to the City—this adds so much to Provo’s history and culture. Several Landmarks Commission members addressed the misconceptions of

many homeowners—many think their hands will be tied or that they will not be able to make changes to their home. The Commission members clarified that there were some restrictions and limitations, but there is still a degree of flexibility. More education about the issues involved with historical preservation is needed and will help limit misunderstanding. Mr. Campbell illustrated his home and others which had had projects completed by previous owners that were keeping with the historic character of the homes.

Council member George Handley expressed his interest in recognizing sites of Native American history in Provo. He wondered what options were available to recognize historical sites where there may not necessarily be physical evidence present. Additionally, he asked whether there was leeway to be able to acknowledge and celebrate historical events with greater visibility so there is a deeper sense of history in the community. Mr. Yost noted several areas which were important to Provo's history, although there may not be a structure present. Mr. Handley expressed a desire to have a coordinated effort involving local historians; if historical markers are placed by happenstance, they can also be erased by happenstance.

Susan Fales, Landmarks Commission member, explained that because Provo does not have a historical society (unusual for a city of its size), that the Landmarks Commission operates in a vacuum; the Commission has specific responsibilities and while its members have an interest in Provo's history, they have limited bandwidth. Mr. Yost noted that years ago Mayor Billings had commissioned a local historian, Robert Carter, to write books on the early history of the City. In the intervening time, there are other historic resources from those periods documenting the City's history, including: BYU Office of Public Archaeology, BYU Museum of People and Cultures, and others. The Landmarks Commission lacks the institutional capacity to do this. Many cities of Provo's size have a cultural resources manager who focuses on these kinds of initiatives and coordinates the efforts of various groups involved.

Council member David Knecht suggested that videos showing restoration of a historic home could help educate and illustrate the process and what it entails. "This Old House" is a great example.

4. A discussion on how the City Council can help the Landmarks Commission. ([0:51:35](#))

Adopt incentives & funding: Mr. McGinn indicated that the Commission could refine the incentive concepts and bring them to a future work session; perhaps an existing Council committee could review the proposal prior to presenting a concept to the full Council.

Mr. McGinn commended the Landmarks Commission and Josh Yost for doing a lot of great work on very little funding and resources. Mr. McGinn and the Commission members encouraged the Council to not forget about the Landmarks Commission—when residents feel a connection to the history and roots of this community, it contributes significantly to the quality of life in Provo and enhances the way people feel about their community. Council members shared comments on the Commission. Mr. McGinn said that collaboration is the easy part of their work; the implementation of these programs, however, has capital costs and requires staff time, which are often more challenging to allocate as needed.

Adjournment

Adjourned by unanimous consent.