

MINUTES

HISTORIC RECOURCES BOARD

City Commission Room, City Hall
1101 Poyntz Avenue

Monday, January 26, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT

Garric Baker, Chair
Jackie Spears
Aaron Dyck

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mike Hoover
Debora Madsen

STAFF PRESENT

Ben Chmiel, Senior Planner; Lance Wackerla, Planner I

1. MEETING OPENING

1.1 The chair called the special meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

1.2 Roll Call.

Chmiel called the roll and stated there was a quorum.

1.3 Non-Agenda Public Comments.

Mel Borst, 1918 Humboldt Street, said the Historic Resources Board should have been consulted for the platting and rezoning of the Acacia Fraternity since it was located within the Lee Elementary School Historic District. He said it was like the demolition of the Commerce Bank building, where the board was also not consulted. He asked about the adoption of the Historic Preservation Plan.

1.4 Prior Meeting Minutes. Action Required. Consider and approve the minutes of the November 17, 2025, meeting.

Spears moved to approve Item 1.4; Hoover seconded.

Motion passed 5–0.

Baker said the work session and general sections of the agenda would be swapped to allow the Union Pacific Depot Naming presentation to come first, in the interest of time for the presenter.

2. WORK SESSION

2.1 Union Pacific Depot Naming

Mike Matson, 3947 Hayovel Place, said the idea was to honor Roger Reitz with some sort of memorial, such as a plaque or marker at the Union Pacific Depot. He added that they had originally envisioned renaming the depot itself, but that it would have been a long and difficult process. He said the Park and Rec Advisory Board had unanimously supported the idea of the memorial.

Madsen asked if Dr. Reitz had helped with the restoration of the depot. Matson confirmed that he and his family had donated to the restoration fund.

Dyck clarified that the depot itself would not be renamed. Matson confirmed.

Public comment opened

Linda Glasgow, 2236 Snowbird Drive, said she had found an audio recording of the dedication for the rehabilitated depot. She said the mayor at the time had given remarks and noted the breakdown of the donations by party. She said Roger Reitz and his family had donated \$100,000 to the restoration effort. She said the Preservation Alliance had tried raising money and needed to hit \$150,000 in donations, so the donation by Roger and the Reitz family had been crucial. She stated her support for the memorial.

Mel Borst , 1918 Humboldt Street, said he supported the comments made by Matson and Glasgow. He said Joe Knopp of the Parks and Rec Advisory Board had suggested a marker on the site with a QR code for the history of the depot and to honor the Roger and the Reitz family. He added that the access to the site under the highway had been aided by the Reitz family. He said the meeting room in the depot needed additional acoustics work. He said a possible place to honor Roger Reitz would be on the transom glass by the front door.

Public comment closed

Chmiel asked how the board felt about the idea for a memorial. The board confirmed their unanimous support.

3. GENERAL

3.1 Foltz House Nomination

Chmiel gave a brief overview of the site.

Dyck asked when contributing features were determined for the nominations. Chmiel said when the State Historic Sites Review Board would review and accept the nomination.

Baker asked if the property was a rental property. Chmiel said he was not sure but that he was inclined to believe so based on ownership.

Madsen asked if the nomination was based on historic value and not on architectural value. Chmiel said the nomination was for both categories. Madsen asked for clarification since an earlier application had only evaluated the site on one of the categories. Chmiel said that application had been done for tax credits and not the nomination, but that if the board wanted to comment on the architectural value that they could.

Public comment opened

There were none.

Public comment closed

Dyck moved to support the nomination to the register of historic places; Spears seconded.

Motion passed 4–1 (Hoover disapproving).

3.2 Kansas Farm Bureau Headquarters Nomination

Chmiel gave a brief overview of the site.

Spears said she thought the building had been slated for demolition. Chmiel said it was not going to be demolished. Spears clarified that the building would be renovated on the inside for apartments and that the nomination was primarily based on the exterior of the building. Chmiel confirmed.

Baker reminded the Board that any interior remodels would be brought back before the board if tax credits were sought. Chmiel confirmed, granted a permit was required.

Dyck said Hoover had helped with the 1970s building addition. Hoover said he had worked on the building. He noted the material on the tower addition was not limestone but precast concrete. He asked if environs would matter for the building. Chmiel said that environs law was nullified in 2013. Hoover said he was concerned about the scope of the project impacting the adjacent neighborhood.

Dyck asked Hoover who the architect was for the building addition. Hoover said it was Bill and Patricia Eidson. He said they had worked on both City Hall and the library.

Madsen asked if the tower addition impacted the nomination. Chmiel said additions could affect nominations but that the tower addition was old enough to have historic significance, despite the nomination noting the period of significance as the 1940s.

Dyck said the two-story portion on the building seemed more significant to the nomination than the tower. Chmiel corrected himself and noted that the

nomination form stated the period of significance was from 1954 to 1973, so it would include the tower addition.

Public comment opened

Kathy Dzewaltowski, 100 S Delaware Avenue, said the State Site Review Board's website had good interior photos of the building. She added that the architect on the 1954 portion of the building was Cayton and Murray.

Mel Borst, 1918 Humboldt Street, said he had been in the neighborhood around the Unger complex to take photos. He asked if the new buildings on the site would be attached to the original building in any way. He said that city staff had indicated the requirement of a landscape buffer at the time of the rezoning case, but that the site was buffered by a six-foot wooden fence. He added that the neighborhood was interested in having sidewalks installed with the increased population that would be in the neighborhood.

Public comment closed

Dyck asked if the board needed to include any comments to SHPO about the architects' names or the material of the tower. Chmiel said the minutes of the meeting would be forwarded to the State.

Spears moved to support the nomination to the register of historic places; Madsen seconded.

Motion passed 4–1 (Hoover disapproving).

4. MINOR REVIEWS

4.1 121 S 4th Street Sign Permit

Wackerla gave the presentation.

There were no comments from the Board.

5. COMMENTS, UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

5.1 1531 Leavenworth Street (Rex Arms Building)

Chmiel said the building had been listed on the National Register.

5.2 Other Staff Updates

Chmiel said the City Commission would meet at their retreat in February and that the Historic Preservation Plan would be included in the retreat.

Wackerla noted that the name of the department would change from Community Development to Planning & Development.

5.3 Board Members

There were none.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

6.1 Opportunity for discussion of including future agenda items

There were none.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

Next meeting: Monday, February 23, 2026

Submitted by Lance Wackerla, Planner I