



**Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes
City Commission Chambers, City Hall**

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL:

Chair Mary Ewald Sayles called the meeting to order with a quorum at 6:04 p.m.

Present: Mary Ewald Sayles, Maryann Lawrence, Lorelie Doerr, Ashley Meier, Sarah Kohn.

Excused: Grace Sayles.

Absent: None

Others: Staff Liaison Adam Pruett, Community Development Planner and Terry Moulthane, Planning Manager.

PUBLIC COMMENT - NON-AGENDA ITEMS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Staff reported the previous meeting had not been recorded accidentally. Though the actual motions had been adequately noted, not all names and support were captured.

Motion made by A. Meier, seconded by S. Kohn to approve the meeting minutes with the following corrections for Wednesday, January 14, 2026.

1. Motion was made by L. Doerr for the first case heard.
2. Motion was made by G. Sayles to table 920 N. VanBuren Street, seconded by A. Meier, for Case HDC 25-34.
3. Motion was made by S. Kohn for 1515 Center Avenue, seconded by G. Sayles.

Motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. HDC 25-34 – 920 N. VanBuren - Rodriguez

Applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness authorizing work on three porches:

- I. Front porch facing N. VanBuren Street
- II. Rear porch on the east elevation
- III. Small porch on the north elevation adjacent to Fourth Street

Representative(s) Present: Michael Daly obo Helen Daly.

The applicant explained a previous commitment on his part, and Mrs. Daly, being ill, had not allowed them to be present at the previous meeting. Mrs. Daley is still unwell and unable to attend.

Clarification was made as to the location of each porch. Photos on page 21 of the staff report indicated the top photo as the front porch on VanBuren Street, with the bottom photo showing the rear porch and a side porch on 4th Street. Staff added that the drawings for the driveway porch (referred to as the rear porch) as seen on page 24, the side porch on page 25, and the front porch on

page 26 and 27, had been superseded by other drawings. The pages could not be shown on the projector screens due to technical difficulties.

Initially, the applicant wished to only pursue approval for the rear porch (east elevation/driveway side) due to lack of funds and safety concerns for his wife. Mr. Daly explained they would like to have a porch that's safe, right now. The 4th Street porch is not usable at all and the front porch on VanBuren Street is very dilapidated; so, they would like to proceed with the driveway porch (rear porch), which gets most of the use. He confirmed they had already started working on the porch. Staff stated the rear porch could be found on page 33.

The Commission advised approving all three porches as the application is valid for a year, and all porches on a corner lot are subject to the same historic standards, saving the applicant a step later. The applicant reluctantly agreed.

Porch Decking

Mr. Daly had proposed using 6-inch-wide boards for the porch flooring. However, the Commission historically approves boards between 3.5 and 4.5 inches wide. The Commission stated they do not dictate thickness, only width, and that building codes would govern safety aspects like thickness.

Mr. Daly expressed a preference for 5/4-inch thickness, as this is commonly available for porch flooring. He claimed that 4-inch wide, 5/4-inch-thick porch flooring was not readily available locally. He did not believe 1-inch wide would be strong enough or approved by the building officials.

There was discussion about whether 6-inch boards were historically accurate for the style of house. The Commission stated that 4-inch-wide boards of 1-inch thickness are commonly approved.

Mr. Daly argued whether building codes or historic preservation standards should take precedence. The Commission explained that their role is historical appropriateness, while the building department handles safety codes. A. Meier emphasized 1-inch boards would be plenty thick enough, but that Mr. Daley could have whatever thickness he desired assuming it wasn't too crazy like 2 inches thick. M. Ewald Sayles noted that the measurement of the proposed boards on pages 28 through 32 indicated 1-inch-thick boards.

A. Meier reiterated that only the board width is what they care about and their approvals are based on historic preservation. It then goes to the building official.

The applicant felt a 4-inch board was inferior and argued a 6-inch width wouldn't be discernible from the street and felt forced to rip larger boards at significant cost, but he ultimately agreed to use 4-inch-wide boards. He stated he would purchase 6-inch wide, 5/4-inch-thick boards and rip them down.

Railing Style

The applicant proposed "decorative plywood" railings instead of turned balustrades, claiming to have seen similar examples on the HDC website.

A. Meier clarified that the website's photo gallery shows existing homes from a study report, not necessarily historically approved modifications, as many changes occurred before historic oversight.

She stated that plywood railings are not historically appropriate for the Italianate style of the house, which typically featured no railings or very short ones with small turned spindles.

The Commission stated they have not traditionally approved plywood railings. They recommended using wooden spindles that meet safety codes for height and spacing, similar to what has been approved for other historic homes. A. Meier stated Mr. Daly would need to do the same full spindled system that would be required for every other house of that style.

Mr. Daly was perturbed. He stated he had a design in mind that he felt it would be more appealing and could show the Commission at the next meeting. M. Ewald Sayles was open to having Mr. Daly return. Mr. Daly stated he would like to but would really like to get approved on the deck that night.

Short discussion took place regarding the height of the railings. A. Meier reiterated her earlier explanation regarding what the HDC and building officials were each responsible for.

Staff pointed out that a stop work order had been given to the applicant because a permit had not been pulled before work began. Mr. Daly would have been told he needed HDC approval before commencing work if he had come into the office. Staff conducted an inspection at which time “young” James stated he may have to cut the boards after Staff remarked he hadn’t seen 6-inch boards used in the historic district before.

In response to staff inquiring if the porch was currently safe to use, Mr. Daly answered it did not have a handrail, and he had used ¾-inch plywood. Staff answered they wanted Mr. Daly to walk away with a decision that night but believed Mr. Daly would need to compromise.

Mr. Daly agreed to bear the cost and make the requested changes.

Motion made by A. Meier:

I move that the Historic District Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work described and depicted by the Work Review application for Case HDC 25-34 submitted by the applicant. The applicant has demonstrated the work will comply with the US Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation (1) through (6), (9) and (10), as well as Section 64-11(c) of the city's Historic Preservation District Regulations, with conditions that the balustrade system is made of wooden spindles and that the porch decking board widths be within 3.5 to 4.5 inches wide, with the proposed one-inch thickness.

Seconded by M. Lawrence. Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. HDC 26-03 – 400 Green Avenue – Ombry

Applicant is requesting a COA authorizing the replacement of 21 windows on upper and lower stories.

Representative(s) Present: Mike Ombry.

Mr. Ombry explained they had been planning on replacing the windows since before 2000 and were finally getting around to it.

In response to inquiries by the Commissioners, Mr. Ombry answered:

- The windows with a "9-over-1" pattern would be replicated with internal muntins (between the panes).
- All new windows would fit into existing openings, with no changes to opening sizes.
- Only first and second-floor windows would be replaced; basement windows were not included in the application.
- The applicant noted that the existing single-pane windows were drafty and some bottoms had rotted, justifying replacement over repair.

Motion made by :

I move that the Historic District Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work described and depicted by the Work Review application for Case HDC 26-03 submitted by the applicant. The applicant has demonstrated the work will comply with the US Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation (1) through (3), (6), (9), as well as Section 64-11(c) of the city's Historic Preservation District Regulations.

Seconded by S. Kohn. Motion passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Staff announced the CLG report was underway. He believed the submission deadline was March 4, 2026.

The Commission wondered if there had been any applications received for the HDC vacancy and if there were any renewals/expiring members coming up. M. Ewald Sayles recalled receiving previous HDC member information.

There were no applications received. A new HDC member information list will be emailed.

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by A. Meier, seconded by M. Lawrence.
Motion passed unanimously.

Prepared by: Lisa Griffiths, Planning & Zoning Administrative Assistant