

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

ACTION REQUESTED:

Receive the report regarding new business items raised at the February 26, 2026, Historic Preservation Commission meeting

DEPARTMENT: Transportation, Engineering and Development

SUBMITTED BY: Brad Iwicki, Assistant Planner

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW:

Submitted for Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) review.

BACKGROUND:

At the February 26, 2025, Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) meeting, members of the Commission raised several items for consideration under new business. Following a brief discussion on these items, the HPC requested that staff research the items below:

- Transferability of an Approved Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)
- Creation of a mission statement that reflects our role within the community.
- Creation of a procedure for conditional approvals so that we can make uniform, consistent and timely rulings.
- Start regular friendly communications with the community highlighting the HPC's process and role as a community partner. The avenue, topics, method of communication, and regularity could be discussed.
- Quarterly or annual report tracking building permit submittal and completed COA inspections

This report is being provided in response to the items raised under new business on February 26, 2026.

DISCUSSION:

Transferability of an Approved COA

An approved Certificate of Appropriateness is valid for a period of 3 years from the date of approval. Transfer of ownership does not impact the validity of the approved COA.

Creating a Mission Statement

Staff received communication from Commissioner Bufort following the February 26, 2026, meeting requesting new business to be added to the March HPC agenda to discuss the creation of a mission statement that reflects the HPC's role within the community. In response, staff offers the following:

- Per the Naperville Municipal Code ("Code"), the City of Naperville Boards and Commissions are led by their powers and duties outlined in Title 2 Boards and Commissions. The HPC powers and duties are outlined in Section 2-15-3 of the Code.

- There are no City of Naperville Boards or Commissions with an established mission statement.

Accordingly, staff does not recommend creating a mission statement.

Procedure for Conditional Approvals

At the February HPC meeting, discussion was also raised regarding the use of conditional approvals to ensure that uniform, consistent and timely rulings are made. In response to this, staff offers the following information.

Naperville Municipal Code Provisions

Section 6-11-8 (Certificates of Appropriateness Required): 4.4.7 (Decision Rendered) of the Naperville Municipal Code provides that “The Commission shall render a decision to grant or deny an application for a certificate of appropriateness at the meeting at which it considers an application *unless such deliberations are continued to a subsequent meeting for the purposes of obtaining additional information or in order to allow the applicant to submit revisions to the application.*

In accordance with this Code section, staff provides the following recommendations:

HPC Discussion of a COA

In all scenarios, the Commission should ask questions, state their concerns, and offer recommended changes *prior to making any motions on the COA request.* The HPC meetings offer an environment that is conducive to open discussion amongst the Commissioners, staff and the Petitioner. If the Commission does not find that they have the information necessary to make an informed decision, they should continue the case to a future HPC meeting. With the motion to continue, the HPC should specifically state the items that they need additional information on in order to make a decision at a future meeting.

If the Commission has all necessary information, they should move to make a motion. The Commission can discuss and gain consensus on recommended conditions or changes, as further described below, before making the official motion.

Motion: HPC Generally in Support

If a COA request is generally acceptable to the HPC, but *minor tweaks* are recommended to reach compliance with the HBDRM, the HPC can make a motion to approve the COA subject to certain conditions. The conditions should be as specific and clear as possible in order to ensure that both the Petitioner and staff clearly understand and can implement the expected changes. Staff will then ensure that the necessary changes have been made prior to a building permit being issued for the improvements. Minor tweaks may include recommended changes to window material or the divided lights of a proposed window.

Motion: HPC Recommending Significant Changes

If a COA request is generally acceptable to the HPC, but more *significant modifications* are recommended to reach compliance with the HBDRM, the HPC should specifically

state their recommended changes and request that the Petitioner return to a future meeting with amended plans for review by the HPC. Even though the additional review will add time to the project, it will also ensure that the HPC's recommended changes are executed in the correct manner. Significant modifications may include recommended changes to changes to building materials, window placement, new openings, roofline design, significant decorative elements, etc.

Motion: HPC Not in Support

If it is clear that there is no support for a COA proposal and that modifications cannot be made (or the Petitioner is not agreeable to further changes) to reach compliance with the HBDRM, the HPC should make a motion to deny the proposed COA. Examples of such scenario may include proposed design changes which are completely inconsistent with the home's architectural design, or a request to demolish a home that is currently in good structural condition and upkeep.

Petitioner Appeal

In all scenarios, if the Petitioner is not agreeable to the changes being recommended by the Commission, they may appeal the HPC's decision to the City Council for a final ruling as provided below:

Section 6-11-8: 4.6 (Appeals to City Council): The owner and/or applicant may appeal any denial of an application for a certificate of appropriateness as determined by the Historic Preservation Commission to the City Council in accordance with the following provisions:

4.6.1. A request for appeal must be filed with the Zoning Administrator within fourteen (14) days of the denial of the application.

4.6.2. The Zoning Administrator shall immediately notify the Commission of any appeal taken from the denial of an application for certificate of appropriateness.

4.6.3. The Commission shall forward a copy of its written findings of fact and its decision to the Zoning Administrator within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the notice of appeal. The Commission shall forward to the Zoning Administrator a copy of its minutes of the meeting at which it considered the application.

4.6.4. Within sixty (60) days of the filing of the request for appeal with the Zoning Administrator, the City Council shall consider the appeal.

4.6.5. Notice: The owner and/or applicant shall provide proper notice in accordance with Code provisions.

Staff Assistance

If the HPC is unclear as to how to proceed on a COA during a HPC meeting, they should ask staff for assistance as to next steps.

Regular Communications with Residents

Additionally, Commissioner Bufort expressed interest in initiating regular communications with residents and community members highlighting the HPC process and role as a community partner. If the HPC supports this idea, staff notes that these regular

communications will need to be administered by the HPC and that any in-person discussions will be required to be in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. Given limited staff resources, staff is unable to provide support to the HPC on these efforts.

Quarterly or Annual Report to Track Projects

The HPC moved to request staff consider a way to track progress of a COA following a decision by the HPC. The HPC shared interest in an annual or quarterly report that provides information about the current status of projects including when a COA was approved, whether a building permit has been applied for or submitted, and whether the COA inspection has been completed.

Staff finds that the duration and complexity of projects in the Historic District varies. Work authorized by a COA must be completed within three years of the issuance of the certificate with a potential two-year extension which may be granted by the Zoning Administrator. In addition, building permits are valid for specific time periods but can also be extended by the Chief Building Official. Given these timelines and other project variables, staff finds that it would be easier for the HPC to contact staff directly with any questions related to an improvement within the Historic District. This will allow staff to research and provide specific responses to the improvement in question.