



City of Appleton

100 North Appleton Street
Appleton, WI 54911-4799
www.appletonwi.gov

Meeting Minutes - Final Historic Preservation Commission

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

3:00 PM

Council Chambers, 6th Floor

1. Call meeting to order

Vice Chair Meissner called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll call of membership

Present: 6 - Meissner, Dougherty, Peterson, Gaerthofner, Helmbrecht and 1st Alternate Thorson

Others present:

Christine Williams, 1037 W. Oklahoma Street

Tom Flick, Deputy Director of Parks & Recreation

Tom Boldt

Jennifer Stephany, Appleton Downtown Inc. and Creative Downtown Appleton Inc.

4. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

[26-0330](#)

HPC Minutes from 7-16-24

Attachments: [HPC Minutes 7-16-24.pdf](#)

Peterson moved, seconded by Dougherty, that the Minutes be approved. Roll Call. Motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Meissner, Dougherty, Peterson, Gaerthofner, Helmbrecht and 1st Alternate Thorson

5. **Public Hearing/Appealances**

[26-0331](#)

Public Participation

Jennifer Stephany and Tom Boldt spoke on the proposed State historic marker text honoring Harry Houdini.

6. **Action Items**

[26-0333](#)

Elect Chair

Gaerthofner nominated himself for Chair. No other nominations were received. Gaerthofner was elected Chair by unanimous consent.

[26-0334](#)

Elect Vice Chair

Meissner nominated himself for Vice Chair. No other nominations were received. Meissner was elected as Vice Chair by unanimous consent.

[26-0335](#)

Set Meeting Date and Time

The members agreed to keep the meeting date and time as it currently stands at 3:00 p.m. on the Tuesday preceding the 2nd Council meeting of the month.

[26-0336](#)

Designate Contact Person

Director Kara Homan was designated as the contact person.

[26-0332](#)

Request to review and approve the proposed State historic marker text, or request revisions as needed, for the proposed State historic marker sign honoring Harry Houdini located in Houdini Plaza at 121 W. College Avenue (Tax Id #31-2-0065-00 and 31-2-0067-00) as described in the attached documents

Attachments: [StaffMemo_WIHistoricMarkerSign_Houdini_For3-17-26.pdf](#)
[Houdini Historical Marker in Houdini Plaza Proposal.pdf](#)
[Houdini Plaza Historical Marker Map.pdf](#)
[HoudiniHistoricalMarker_ModifiedProposedLanguage_Received3-16-26.pdf](#)

Amended to add the birth year and death year (1874 - 1926) on the top of the marker before the text starts, change the word "four" to numeric "4" in the 1st sentence of the 2nd paragraph, "... when he was 4 years old" and in the 3rd paragraph change the 2nd sentence to add "and his wife, Bess" so it reads, "In 1897, he and his wife, Bess performed at the Appleton Opera House.", subject to the Wisconsin Historical Society review process.

Gaerthofner moved, seconded by Meissner, to amend the motion to add the birth year and death year (1874 - 1926) on the top of the marker before the text starts, change the word "four" to numeric "4" in the 1st sentence of the 2nd paragraph, "... when he was 4 years old" and in the 3rd paragraph change the 2nd sentence to add "and his wife, Bess" so it reads, "In 1897, he and his wife, Bess performed at the Appleton Opera House.", subject to the Wisconsin Historical Society review process. Roll Call. Motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Meissner, Dougherty, Peterson, Gaerthofner, Helmbrecht and 1st Alternate Thorson

Modified proposed amendments to the historic marker text language dated March 16, 2026 were provided to the Commission and are attached.

Meissner moved, seconded by Dougherty, that the proposed modified State historic marker text language dated March 16, 2026 be recommended for approval as amended. Roll Call. Motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Meissner, Dougherty, Peterson, Gaerthofner, Helmbrecht and 1st Alternate Thorson

7. Information Items

8. Adjournment

Meissner moved, seconded by Dougherty, that the meeting be adjourned at 3:34 p.m. Roll Call. Motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Meissner, Dougherty, Peterson, Gaerthofner, Helmbrecht and 1st Alternate Thorson