

The Hammond Historic Preservation Commission held a meeting on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, in person and via [Zoom.us](https://zoom.us).

The meeting began at 5:32 p.m.

PRESENT

Amanda Aguilera (Z)
Kevin Clutter (IP)
Laurie Czulno (IP)
Janet Evans (IP)
Debbie McGough (IP)

ABSENT

Christopher Jones
Anne Taylor
Patrick Swibes

ALSO PRESENT

Tom Novak
Assistant City Planner

Shannon Morris-Smith
Recording Secretary

Ray Escamilla
I.T., Zoom

PRESENT- 5

ABSENT- 3

QUORUM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Evans called for a motion to table the minutes for October 1, 2024. Ms. Czulno so moved, seconded by Ms. McGough. Roll call vote. Amanda Aguilera/yes, Kevin Clutter/yes, Laurie Czulno/yes, Janet Evans/yes, Debbie McGough/yes. 5 "Ayes", 0 "Nays", 3 "Absent", 0 "Abstentions". Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion and Approval of the 2025 Goals and Projects

Mr. Novak lead a discussion on the Goals, Projects, and Committees. There was a discussion on digital and physical displays for 2025. Ms. Czulno stated the May physical display had not been finalized. The first digital project of 2025 called "Architectural Features" had been started on. The second digital project would possibly be about home design characteristics with descriptions. There has been a discussion on a third project related to church architecture and definitions.

Mr. Novak touched on the bike trail project, historic signs, and reaching out to Blake Swihart to come in to speak with the Commission. There was a discussion on the landmark designation list and the possibility of reaching out to the property owner at 20 Rimbach. Ms. McGough recommended that industrial buildings be considered for landmark designation (Ex: Firestone, 18th Street Brewery). Mr. Novak further encouraged the Commissioners to be prepared to finalize the Goals at the January 2025 meeting.

Ms. Czulno expressed a concern about the Project list, #4, and the technical ability of the Commissioners to produce the Bike Trail brochure. Ms. McGough recommended a revision of the brochure to go along the South Shore Line. A display at Harrison Park was also suggested as a future goal once the park has been renovated.

2025 Meeting Calendar

The 2025 Historic Preservation meeting calendar was reviewed and discussed. The Commissioners decided on July 8, 2025 and September 9, 2025. All other meeting dates on the first Tuesday of the month were accepted.

Vice-Chairperson Evans motioned for approval of the 2025 meeting calendar. Ms. Czulno so moved, seconded by Ms. McGough. Roll call vote. Amanda Aguilera/yes, Kevin Clutter/yes, Laurie Czulno/yes, Janet Evans/yes, Debbie McGough/yes. 5 "Ayes", 0 "Nays", 3 "Absent", 0 "Abstentions". Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Project Updates

Educational Assistance and Communications Committee

On-line display – Ms. Evans stated there were no new updates.

Website Visits- Mr. Novak reviewed the 3rd quarter report. Clark High School had the highest visits. Gavit was the second highest.

2025 Project/Little Red Schoolhouse – Ms. Aguilera shared an invitation to the Little Red Schoolhouse for their Santa Visit on Saturday, December 14, 2024, 10-5 p.m., and Sunday December 15, 2024, 12-5 p.m.

Special Projects Committee - There were no new projects to report.

Designation Committee – There were no new updates.

Design Review Committee – There were no new updates.

5935 Hohman Avenue - Montessori Schoolhouse – Mr. Novak stated the School Board approved the scope of work for the front patio. The work is not intended to begin until Spring 2025.

229 Ogden Street – Mr. Novak stated there were no new updates.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

There were none.

STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Novak wished everyone a Happy Holidays.

Mr. Novak extended an invitation to join one of the Hammond Historical Society committees. Meetings are held on the first Saturday of the month at the Hammond Public Library, on the first floor, in the Community Room.

LIAISON COMMENTS

There was none.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Novak explained that the time limit to speak was two-three minutes. Each speaker would need to sign in and state their name and address.

Grace Tafolla, 3380 Burr Street, Gary, IN

- Hammond only has 16% tree canopy
- Briar East Dunes has existed 4700 years old deserves the attention of a historic landmark
- Connects children directly to nature
- Read a portion of a letter from Emily Stork, DNR
- Provided a plant list for the Commission
- Ecosystem that houses animals, bugs, and habitat that is important to Hammond

Ms. McGough asked where the parcel was located. Mr. Novak stated behind Briar East Shopping Center area south of 169th Street.

Casey King, 632 Burton Court, Whiting, IN 46394

- the property predated anyone in the room. The age is estimated to be 4700 years old and documented by Kenneth Schoon, Professor Emeritus, Indiana University Northwest.
- Indigenous land
- Read a letter written by Joey Heines supporting the protection of Briar East Woods
- Submitted a trail map for Briar East Woods

There was a discussion between Ms. McGough and Mr. King regarding the disturbance of the habitat related to the proposed development at Briar East Woods. Mr. King deferred the conversation to Mr. Rosek.

Ken Rosek, 6750 Idaho Avenue, Hammond, IN 46323

- The City has a proposed project called Governor's Parkway Bridge to construct a road through the center of Briar Woods that would destroy the entire dune.
- Alternative location on Grand Avenue was presented to the City by the group. The Federal Railway Administration recommended a Grand Avenue solution.
- The location was a national historical site
- Read a portion and submitted a letter from Elizabeth McClosky, U. S. Department of Interior Fish and Wildlife.
- Reference age of the woods by Professor Kenneth Schoon
- The dunes at 169th Street were the last unprotected remnant of the High Tolleston Dunes

- Interior Department Biologist was shocked to find native untouched dunes
- Dunes are formed by wind. Swails are formed by water
- Borings test samples and other information available to share with the Commission
- 2000 years older than the dunes and swails at Gibson Woods

Andrea Senters, 6804 Idaho Avenue, Hammond, IN 46323

- Walks her dog along a trail that she found
- Her quality of life has been improved to go to the trails
- Provided cards to the Commission
- Lake for fishing, bird watching, and enjoying the nature
- Clean ups for Earth Day and one other day throughout the year
- Educational for children
- One tree produces oxygen for three people
- Wants the property to be made a historical site

T.J. Gaerty, 52 Locust Street, Hammond, IN 46320

- Interested in preserving Briar East Wood as a historical landmark
- The dunes in Gary/Portage were created by winds. Dunes were created all over by Lake Michigan receding
- Briar East Woods was the highest point in Hammond
- A part of Hammond's cultural heritage
- Two miles of trails in Briar East Woods
- Provided a map of the trails to the Commission

Terry Stegall, 8577 Kleinman Road, Highland, IN

- Grew up in Hammond along the Grand Calumet River
- 1994-2009 lived at Ridgewood Town Homes and used to walk the woods
- Dr. Schoon recommended a kiosk should be placed on Parrish Avenue to identify the trails to be easily accessed for bird watching, dog walking, or a personal walk. Trails made ADA accessible.
- Land south of 169th Street was a 4700 year of dune ridge that had land developed on a dune ridge in the 1970's.
- The trees were over 120 years. Every mature tree absorbs over 3,000 gallons of water a year, and takes in carbon monoxide and releases needed oxygen
- Ecological treasure for research and education
- Requested preservation of the area

Co-Chairperson Evans thanked everyone for their comments.

Mr. Rosek returned to podium to submit additional documents to the Commission to review. Mr. Rosek made further statements related to public safety issues that were promised and have been ignored. The bridge would do nothing for the children going to school. The bridge would be a two mile walk. Emergency vehicle would have a longer response time because the fastest route on Parrish would be closed.

Mr. Steagall commented that Hammond was leading the way in architecture in 1999-2000. A subdivision called Millenium Manor that had steel frame housing made a difference in homes. Every 2000 square foot home framed takes 40-50 trees. A subdivision would require a lot of trees lost where a steel framed home does not.

Mr. Novak stated that he was not sure what the Commission was able to do and the materials would be distributed to the other Commission members.

Mr. King stated there was a documentary on YouTube on the Hessville Dune Dusters Facebook page.

Co-Chairperson Evans closed the public hearing.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Czulno motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. McGough. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

APPROVED: 3-4-25


Patrick Swibes, Chairperson

ATTEST:


Shannon Morris-Smith, Secretary