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Pierre/Ft. Pierre Historic Preservation Commission

August 2025 Minutes

August 19, 2025 meeting at the Pierre City Hall, 2301 Patron Parkway, Pierre, SD 57501 Meeting called to Order by President Buscher at 12pm CSDT.

In Attendance

Commission Members: President Kelli Buscher; Donna Leslie, Treasurer; Robert Kean, Secretary; Alan Haarstad; Patti Duffy; Ted Spencer.

Guests: Jason Humphry, SD DOT

Scott Schweitzer, City of Pierre

24 Attendees signed a Guest List (retained by the Commission Secretary) Public

Comment Period:

By consensus, the Pierre/Ft. Pierre Historic Preservation Commission (Commission) agreed to take up at this point the first item of the August 19, 2025, published Agenda under Old Business; 1. North Euclid Avenue/ SD DOT Project.

President Buscher and Commission Members introduced themselves. President Buscher noted the constraints of the “noon” meeting and set out the amount of time for shared Public Comment from those attending followed by time for questions and discussion by Commission Members.

A broad ranging discussion followed covering perceptions, positions, experiences and expectations relating to the proposed rebuild of Elizabeth Street from Euclid to Grand Avenue.

Discussion areas included:

Scope of the Issue: Guest attendees explained how the proposed Elizabeth Street rebuild project will adversely impact the Pierre Hill Historic District including ambiance, safety, and property values. The interconnectivity between specific narrow physical changes and district wide impact was pointed out. Further discussion explained and clarified terms used in the discussion such as “contributing” and “non-contributing” factors. In addition, a requirement to consider alternative solutions to, in this case, changing Elizabeth Street was explored with suggestions.

Governing Statutes/Regulations: Discussion reviewed applicable South Dakota state laws dealing with historic preservation and how they have been applied in a court case in Sioux Falls. Court cases from other jurisdictions were referenced in the discussion and in a memorandum submitted to the Commission prior to the meeting.

Role of the Commission: Discussion reviewed the authorities of the Commission to clarify its role as an advisory body. In the Elizabeth Street discussion, the Commission has the authority to request a Case Report from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to review the situation and determine an impact if any. A SHPO determination would be relayed to the City of Pierre for a final decision on the continuation of the rebuild project.

History of the Project: Discussion reviewed the origins and parameters of the Euclid Street project since the initiation of efforts in 2020. The SD DOT is planning to include a left turning lane on Elizabeth Street, which would require widening the existing street. The SD DOT's planned changes would widen Elizabeth Street from the intersection with Euclid Avenue to within 85 feet of the intersection with Grand Avenue. SD DOT discussed its efforts to engage those impacted by the proposed rebuild. Discussion reviewed the nature of the federal/state funding/building relationship and overview of the state and federal historic preservation requirements and permissions. The South Dakota Department of Transportation (SD DOT) discussed the steps taken by their project managers to provide written notice and discuss changes with those impacted by the project. Copies of the letters and any responses to these efforts are on record with the SD DOT. SD DOT stated that renewed notice efforts were again undertaken prior to the beginning of the current construction. In response to SD DOT's proposed changes to Elizabeth Street, the City of Pierre wishes to realign the remaining 85 feet of Elizabeth Street from the end of SD DOT's project to the intersection of Grand Avenue. During the discussion, several home/property owners in the Pierre Hill Historic District and on Euclid Avenue indicated they did not get a notice or adequate notice regarding the intentions or extent of the project.

SHPO Determinations: Several members of the attending public questioned whether SHPO has had the opportunity to review the entire scope of the Elizabeth Street rebuild from Euclid Avenue, including the City's proposed realignment of Elizabeth Street to the intersection with Grand Avenue. SD DOT stated that SHPO was aware of this portion of the project and had provided their concurrence. The City of Pierre stated that SHPO had not yet been contacted regarding the project.

Commission Discussion: Commission Members shared their appreciation for the participation of those attending the meeting and the information presented prior to and at the meeting. They reviewed items discussed including historic standards and reiterated the advisory nature of the Commission's role in the request before the Commission. Members further noted the Commission can seek clarification to what extent SHPO has provided concurrence to the project and whether concurrence is still needed for any part of the rebuild.

At the end of the Public Comment Period, two items were requested to be put into the Commission's record of the meeting:

Mr. Frank Geaghan thanked those responsible for accelerating the traffic light cycle at Elizabeth and Euclid. A "quicker" light helps with the traffic flow and reduces congestion.

Sherri Wald asked that the original letter to the Commission setting out the group's concerns with the rebuild and containing a more complete list of signatures be made part of the record. A copy will be attached to the final minutes of the meeting.

The Public Comment Period concluded.

MOTION: President Buscher moved, Allan Haarstad seconded that, the following information be provided:

1. A confirmation from SHPO that SHPO's concurrence of the Euclid Ave Project included SD DOT's planned work on Elizabeth Avenue in the Historic District. If SHPO did not concur or they required any mitigation measures, please let the Commission know that as well.
2. SD DOT stated that their portion of the project on Elizabeth Avenue ends 85 feet before the center of Grand Avenue and there is no federal money that will be used on the stretch of Elizabeth Street between SD DOT's project and Grand Ave. However, due to the fact the Historic District is listed the National Register of Historic Places, the City may still need concurrence from SHPO for their portion of the Elizabeth Ave project. DOT did not include that work in its submittals to SHPO. Therefore, the Commission requested the City contact SHPO and discuss what, if any, concurrence is needed from SHPO for the City's portion of the project. If SHPO requires the City to obtain an effect determination for this portion of the work, the Commission requests that the City provide SHPO's concurrence or any mitigation measures that are required.

MOTION PASSED

The Commission returned to the regular Agenda.

Meeting working documents were referred to and reviewed including financial information and suggested Ft. Pierre Chouteau signs for Commission consideration

Commission Members Volunteer Hours were recorded.

Volunteer Hours: SHPO Grant Year: June 1, 2025 -July 21, 2025 = 73.5

Calendar Year: January 1, 2025 – July 21, 2025 = 274.75

Approval of Minutes

The July 21, 2025, Commission Minutes were reviewed and there being no further additions or corrections offered, Patti Duffy moved, Alan Haarstad seconded that the Pierre/Ft. Pierre Historic Preservation Commission (PFPHPC) July 21, 2025, Minutes be approved as presented. MOTION PASSED

Financial Planning Document Review

Commission Members reviewed the PFPHPC Financial Planning Document dated August 16, 2025, and further accompanying materials made available to the Commission prior to the meeting, including the 2025 budget expenditure information to date. The budget information reflected two motions taken at the July meeting: 1. the costs of sign repair at the Verendrye Monument being added to Budget Category #423; and 2. removing a

previously approved allocation in Budget Category #429 to assist with the costs of hosting Mr. Brad Tennant since all his costs were paid by the SD Humanities Council.

Funds the Pierre/Ft. Pierre Historic Preservation Commission (PFPHPC) receive from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) originate from the National Park Service (NPS). Whether any funds will be available from the NPS that could pass through to PFPHPC this fiscal year and what, if any, additional requirements and conditions will be imposed to receive those funds remains nebulous. Commission Members discussed the impact of limited funds and will discuss alternative funding sources at future meetings.

Old Business: North Euclid Avenue/SD DOT Project

Please see Public Comment Period above.

Ft. Pierre Chouteau Sign Update

Commission Member Kean shared three proposals prepared by Tara Berg of Wayfinder Design. The consensus of the Members present was that the sign with the black background and white directing arrow to the Chouteau site provided the best reading visibility at distance. Commission Members also agreed that the misspelling of Chouteau on the sign providing distances to it and other sites in the Pierre/Ft. Pierre communities should be corrected. Kean will ask for cost estimates for the design, fabrication and installation of the two signs and report back at the September meeting.

Verendrye/Ft. Pierre Chouteau Inspection August 18, 2025

Commission Member Kean reported the third and final inspection of the 2025 season was completed on August 18. The inspection completed the Commission's obligation in accordance with the current Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), City of Ft. Pierre, and the Pierre/Ft. Pierre Historic Preservation Commission. The two sites continued to be very well maintained throughout the inspection period and remain unique valuable assets in the Pierre/Ft. Pierre communities.

New Business: Open Meeting Law Update

Commission Members have received by email a copy of the Attorney's General's guide to South Dakota's Open Meeting Laws, including changes that went into effect July 1, 2025. The Commission's meeting processes have been reviewed to ensure the Commission's meeting time, location, agenda, and minutes are posted on the City of Pierre and Ft. Pierre website, and access to that information is also available via the Commission's website. In addition, a Public Comment Period has been added to the Commission's monthly meeting agenda. A question arose whether the Commission was required to conduct a formal annual review of the Open Meeting Laws since the Commission acts only in an advisory capacity. The question was referred to Pierre City Hall.

Volunteer Hours/Reporting Items

Commission Members discussed collecting and reporting Volunteer Hours considering the fact SHPO funding may not be available for a portion of this fiscal year and recording hours are not otherwise required. By consensus, Commission Members agreed to continue recording Volunteer Hours since doing so memorializes the Commission's activities and efforts and specifically demonstrates their valuable contribution to the Pierre/Ft. Pierre communities. Commission Member Donna Leslie has asked the Commission to provide suggestions at the next meeting regarding the reporting format and revising the category titles. She will provide the Commission with a list of current categories for review prior to that meeting.

Visiting Local Sites

Item continued to a future meeting.

Commission Website Update

Item continued to a future meeting.

Other Business:

No further business was offered to the Commission for consideration.

Meeting Adjourned

Meeting adjourned at 1:12 pm.

NEXT MEETING DATE: September 23, 2025 at 12pm noon at the Pierre City Hall, 2301 Patron Parkway,
Pierre, SD 57501.

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