



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION for Wash. Co. & City of Weiser

Wednesday, July 16th, 2025

Time: 5:00 PM

Location: Oregon Shortline Depot in Weiser, Idaho

County HP Commissioners: Tony Edmondson, Dennis Lance, Brenda

Aldrich, Thel Pearson, Alan Pickett

City HP Commissioners: Tony Edmondson, Dennis Lance, Lynda Lance, Josh Dawson, Cheri Clausen

Members of the public in attendance: Nina Hawkins, Varina Pickett Julie Chandler. Secretary

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tony Edmondson.

Minutes: The minutes from June 4th, 2025, needed to be approved at this meeting. Cheri moved to approve the minutes, and Alan moved to second. Motion carried. FYI...The Historic Preservation Commission Minutes are posted on the County Website. The question was asked if they were being posted on our WAPC Website. Not yet, but there is no reason why they can't be posted there.

Report Items:

Preservation Camp Training in Payette June 14th – Alan reported that it was very interesting. We got to see the Portia Club and the Museum. Cheri added that the speakers provided through the National Association of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) presented a lot. They were very proficient. One of the sessions was on the Secretary of Interior standards. It included how to set up a Certified Local Government and design review.

The second session presented by an attorney focused on the legal aspect of the laws pertaining to our Historical work. What you can and can't do. Alan then added that speaking of CLG's, they discussed ways to engage people to get them involved. Don't be confrontational but instead work with them. An example was given of the Sawtooth Area. They brought all the parties together and considered all their opinions on planning to create a National Park. They realized that the area would have lost its character if they had gone ahead with the original plan. Cheri said that in the second session with the lawyer, they had talked for a while about Historic Districts. It was suggested that we could consider an advisory Committee instead. It seemed like a good compromise.

Tony shared that our SHPO office had paid for membership to the National Organization up to this point which includes attendance at workshops like this one.

NAPC Membership Status: Tony shared that with the funding cuts, NAPC is unable to continue to furnish our membership in their organization. They are asking that local commissions pay for themselves. Small organizations would be \$75.00 per year. Medium organizations would cost \$150.00.

Weiser Middle School Gymnasium National Register Application Status: Our grant has been approved but put on hold for a bit. Funds were released a few weeks ago, so we're back online. They will be held until the fall to be sure the money is there.

Sunnyside School National Register Final Grant Report Status: We need to get this grant project finished by September.

Midvale Historic Preservation Commissioner Report: Alan shared that there is not a lot going on. He would like to get on the Midvale City Council Agenda in September and let them know who he is on this commission and what's going on. There are lots of historic buildings. Alan reported that at this time, he doesn't know if any of them are in imminent danger.

Alan added that right up where he lives, there is a spot by a bridge which the native Americans referred to as "People who fish under dead space along bank". There are supposed to be Native American graves on his property. There is a lot of history there.

ICRIS Update: Alan told the group that he has been looking into the ICRIS website. He has been trying to get registered. He finally hung up on the non-disclosure spiel and is trying to figure it out on his own. He has been on the site as a guest. There is a lot of information available. It is a big database for Historical Research. Tony suggested going over sites that have been surveyed. Hover over the google map and zero in on specific sites. Alan said he had mainly focused on sites in the Midvale area.

Cambridge Historic Preservation Commissioner Report: Thel said that they had to report to the Midvale Council when their surveying crossed into their territory. They were very good people to work with...very complimentary. They have been researching information on territories related to Native Americans and fishing rights. Practically all that Cambridge has concentrated on was more county related than city.

The city of Cambridge got the Hunters Inn Hotel approved to be condemned. Then it got fixed enough to pass inspection. Thel said that she heard that it may be sold. It was built in 1917 and was very important during the building of the Hells Canyon dams.

They are also working on identifying all of the grave sites in the area. Also working on a map showing specific grave sites. The town of Mineral is not legally County owned. It belongs to the Government, but they're still working on cataloging the area.

Tony added that he had just read on Facebook of a tract of buildings up in Council that have been condemned.

Weiser Historic Preservation Commissioner Report: Tony tried to contact John Walker about his parent's home. Hasn't been able to get ahold of him. He's heard that it may be offered to the fire department to burn for training and we'd like to get it surveyed, photographed if we can't talk them into preserving it.

He also has not yet been able to contact Seth or Patti Matthews about information on the Werneth building's new owner, if it has been sold. Josh offered to follow up on that and try to contact Matthews. Our purpose is to contact the new owners and make sure they know the historical significance of the building. There has also been a rumor that Janicek bought it. We could also just try to contact the new owner of the building. Alan volunteered to look at the county records to see if it's recorded there.

CLG 4 Year Evaluation Report: With the federal funding of our program, we are required to follow the rules and regulations of that agency. We receive the form every 4 years to review. Tony read through the requirements, and for the most part we are complying. It is an 18-page document.

Weiser Historic Preservation Plan Status: Cheri reported that they are working on a draft of the city plan. Cheri, Tony, Dennis, Lynda and Josh met. At the last meeting they did some editing. Sheri, from JUB Engineers, explained that SHPO has gone over what we've done and pointed out that the Goals & Objectives are the "meat and the potatoes" of the document. They are in the final stages and ready to finalize it. Hopefully, it will be completed by September. They need one more public meeting to wrap it up.

Other:

- Tony reported asking the Weiser mayor to prepare and submit a letter of support for Congressional funding of the 2026 SHPO budget. There is a chance that SHPO may not have funding to operate in 2026. We need to get letters sent to the government and show our support of SHPO and what their funding allows us to do to preserve our local history.
- The county has distributed their annual \$2500.00 support funding to WAPC. This year during our budget presentation, we learned that there has been no change in that amount since 2011. Every other department budget has received increases, so he requested they bring the museum and historical society budgets up to par with the rest.

Action Items:

Unity Bridge: Mitigation on the findings of adverse effect for the loss of the Unity Bridge is underway. The Army Corp of Engineers, LHTAC (the organization that guides the process) SHPO, and our local HPC have met. We do have a voice at the table. When there is a project going on, they want to see that we get our fair share. They used to do individual mitigation for each bridge but under the LILB program, the Federal Government provides a method to handle multiple projects at once if they are similar.

There is a timeline involved this time. The mitigation funding for Unity Bridge has been set at \$105,000.00.

Years ago, Tim Wightman, Lazy Bear Ranch, was interested in owning one of the sections of the bridge. He was curious if any of the mitigation monies could be used to move the section onto his property.

It seems to already be decided that \$50,000.00 would go to Tim Wightman to put the bridge section on his property. One of the criteria is that the public should have access to the bridge. It would be on private property.

If they continue forward with this plan, that will give us \$55,000.00. Cheri stated that she was surprised that the mitigation funds could go toward a private entity. It seems to be setting a precedent to use government money on private property, technically with no public access.

Tony asked each member to present their ideas for the use of the \$55,000.00. Josh suggested that the funding needed to be spread throughout the county. Cheri added that National Register status is important-signage and brochures put structures in the Citizen's eye.

Ideas included:

- County National Register nominations
- City of Weiser Historic District potential surveys for both Residential and Commercial
- Cambridge: update comprehension plan, work on Cambridge Museum, survey downtown Cambridge as the last survey is terribly outdated
- Several barns that could be added to the national register- Keller place, others around Weiser
- Old brick firehouse in Weiser – National Register survey
- Museum in the Streets sign project which had been approved for funding under the America 250 in Idaho program that was later defunded. We had started with such great gusto until the funding was pulled
- Keithly Hardware in Midvale (the present Merc) surveyed and maybe National Register nomination
- Old Midvale Grain Elevator (part has collapsed)
- Restore the windows in the Weiser Middle School Gymnasium (we think the original windows may still be there)
- Survey Salubria – about 19 original building still standing – check to see what TAG ladies already surveyed – develop criteria to research and survey – it is still a plotted town
- Survey downtown Cambridge
- Maddox Barn on Cove Road – still in pretty good shape
- Sally Collard Barn off Weiser River Road
- Old Schools – Jefferies on Weiser River Road, especially because of the proximity to the Unity Bridge
- Get the other part of the Unity Bridge to connect Mortimer's Island to the shore line to help extend the walking trail from the Weiser River Trail to the Snake River Bridge
- The old original Jail Cell in Midvale – been used to burn in – still have bars – single cell space

Tony said that he would get out wish list together and off to LHTAC and will keep us informed if he hears anything back.

Meeting adjourned at about 6:50 p.m.

Next meeting: **Wednesday**, August 6th, 2025, at the Washington County Court House. Watch your emails for the meeting reminder.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie Chandler, Secretary