



Historic Preservation Board Work Session Minutes

August 13, 2025 at 10:00 AM

City Hall Commission Chambers
401 S. Park Avenue

Present

John Skolfield, Kelsey Wolfe, Lee Rambeau, Kim Burst Wood, Margie Bridges, Rhett Delaney, Fay Pappas

Absent

None

Staff Present

Director of Planning and Zoning Allison McGillis, Planner I Corinna Lundgren,
Administrative Coordinator Mary Bush

1. Call to Order

Chairman Skolfield called the meeting to order at 9:22 a.m.

2. Discussion Item (s)

a.

- Discussion on the Use of New Materials for Contributing and Non-Contributing Historic Structures
 - Siding/Windows/Doors/Roof
- Revisions to the College Quarter Design Guidelines (including recent updates and Virginia Heights addition – attached)
- Update to the Historic Properties Inventory List (based on the 2013 survey – attached)
- Proposal for a Historic Preservation Awareness Photo Contest or Postcard Campaign (inspired by Sustainability example – attached)
- Review and Update of Public and Realtor-Facing Q&A Materials (see attached current version)

Mrs. McGillis began the discussion with an overview of the meeting topics. Several

Board members expressed that Winter Park is uniquely positioned to lead the way in preservation efforts, especially as the city becomes more recognized for its historic character. The conversation touched on balancing preservation with flexibility, ensuring the process doesn't alienate property owners but instead encourages participation through education, incentives, and support.

There was agreement that many residents remain fearful of what historic designation means, often perceiving it as a rigid, "you can't do anything" scenario. To counter that, the Board discussed offering better communication and real-world examples showing how adaptive preservation is possible. This includes highlighting successful renovations, offering before-and-after visuals of historic homes that were expanded or improved with city support, and leveraging tools like renderings — even mentioning using platforms like ChatGPT to provide conceptual imagery. Visual marketing and storytelling were seen as essential tools to shift public perception.

Another major topic was the concept of flexibility: specifically, that the historic preservation policy must recognize a spectrum of conditions. It was noted in the discussion that there must be a way to identify and manage three general categories of properties — those that are truly unsalvageable, those that are clearly worthy of full preservation, and the challenging in-between cases. This nuanced, middle-ground approach was emphasized as the most realistic and effective path forward. It allows the city to maintain credibility and community buy-in without turning into what many fear: a strict, HOA-style system.

There was also strong consensus around the need for incentives — particularly financial ones — to encourage historic registration and preservation. Ideas included tax exemptions, grants, and city-funded improvements, especially aimed at owners of modest mid-century homes. It was expressed that even modest tax savings could help teachers, nurses, and other long-term residents remain in the city while preserving its architectural diversity.

The discussions also touched on broader engagement strategies: working with the city's Sustainability department, hosting workshops or presentations with preservation economists like Donovan Rypkema, and expanding public understanding of how preservation aligns with sustainability. Casa Feliz was mentioned as a potential venue for outreach events.

Two action items were prioritized for moving forward: first, updating the standards regarding new building materials; second, updating the historic property inventory, with the possibility of bringing in a historic preservation consultant or architect to assist. The need for professional expertise — especially in identifying and advocating for mid-century and atomic-age architecture — was echoed multiple times, along with the possibility of allocating budget to hire that help.

Marketing and communication efforts will follow the more foundational updates. Still, several creative ideas were floated for outreach, including a historic home photo contest modeled on the Sustainability department's campaign, and a recurring "Did You Know?" column in the city's utility mailers. The Board expressed a desire to promote the city's broad architectural diversity, encourage appreciation for underrepresented styles, and support adaptive reuse — particularly of mid-century homes that are now increasing in popularity and value.

Discussion also ensued about Winter Park's authenticity and the balance it must strike between preservation and private property rights. While comparisons to HOAs were made, most agreed Winter Park's charm lies in its individuality and lack of strict uniformity. The goal isn't to restrict — it's to inspire and support thoughtful growth that keeps the city's architectural heritage alive. The meeting ended with follow-ups planned to structure the next steps around materials, inventory, incentives, and outreach.

3. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

ATTEST:

/s/ Mary Bush, Recording Secretary