



City of Independence Minutes

**Historic Preservation Commission Meeting
Monday, December 15, 2025**

1. **Call to Order.** Chair Flores called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm

2. **Roll Call.**

Present: Commissioner Miranda Garrison
Commissioner Rebecca Berry
Commissioner/Chair Jennifer Flores
Commissioner/Co Chair Liz Boisvert
Commissioner Catherine Underwood-Bush

Absent: Commissioner Willis Homann

City Staff Present: Fred Evander, City Planner
Myra Russell, City Recorder
Marilyn Morton, Council Liaison

3. **Minutes.**

3.1. **Regular Meeting 10/20/2025.**

Commissioner Boisvert noted a typo in the minutes pertaining to a date. City Recorder Russell will correct.

Action:

Commissioner Garrison moved to approve the minutes with corrections;
Commissioner Underwood-Bush seconded. Discussion: None
Roll call vote. Motion 5-0-0

Ayes: Miranda Garrison, Rebecca Berry, Jennifer Flores, Liz Boisvert, Catherine Underwood-Bush

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

4. **Visitors/Public Comment.** None.

5. **Staff Reports/Presentations - Other.**

5.1. **Continued Training about the Independence Historic District.**

The meeting focused on a presentation about the evolution of storefronts over time, highlighting how they have changed in response to technological advancements and functional needs. Planner Evander explained that early storefronts resembled residential windows due to limited glass manufacturing capabilities, but the introduction of cast iron and improved glass production led to more elaborate designs. The Commission discussed historical photos of the

downtown area noting the changes over time. They examined details like cast iron pillars and awnings, and speculated about the removal of some architectural features. The discussion also touched on the significance of large signs in the historical photos, suggesting they were advertising for customers coming from the river. The group noted that while lot patterns and street layouts remain largely unchanged, building features like awnings and windows change more frequently. Evander showed examples of how downtown buildings, particularly bars, often had designs that discouraged public viewing of activities inside, with signs and windows oriented more towards car traffic than pedestrians. They also discussed historical building modifications, including the use of false ceilings to reduce heating costs and the installation of drop ceilings to hide damage, emphasizing that these changes were made for practical reasons even if they might seem questionable in retrospect. The commissioners acknowledged improvements in downtown aesthetics over the years, attributing them to efforts like the Historic Preservation District and early downtown plans. The discussion concluded with a reflection on the importance of creating a walkable downtown that embraces history while adapting to changing consumer habits, suggesting a return to a more people-focused urban environment. The commissioners emphasized the value of maintaining architectural heritage, connecting to the past, and fostering community engagement. They noted that while there have been improvements, more work is needed to enhance the downtown area. The conversation also touched on the contrast between historic buildings and modern, technology-driven developments, highlighting the appreciation for craftsmanship and uniqueness in historic districts.

6. **Unfinished Business.** None.

7. **New Business.** None.

8. **Other Discussion/Information Items.**

- Video: How Buildings Learn-Stewart Brand. Shearing Layers. The Commissioners watched about 8 minutes of this video. It highlighted the value of historical photos and videos in documenting and understanding architectural evolution, using examples like the Boston Athenaeum and the Liberty Department Store to illustrate how buildings change at different rates.
- Chair Flores announced that it was Commissioner Berry's last HPC meeting and thanked her for her time serving on the Commission. Commissioner Berry turned in her resignation for December 31, 2025.

9. **Adjournment.** Chair Flores adjourned the meeting at 6:33 pm.

Minutes submitted by:
Myra Russell, City Recorder