



**Meeting of the Elk River
Heritage Preservation Commission
Held at the Elk River City Hall
Thursday, July 17, 2025**

Members Present: Chair Lance Lindberg, Commissioners Linda Campbell, Jayne Dietz, Zachary Griffiths, and Gavin Tuckey

Members Absent: None

Council Liaison: Councilmember J. Brian Calva

Staff Present: Community Development Director Zack Carlton, Park & Recreation Manager Jeff Shelby

Others Present: Sandy Meulners-Comstock, Mend Collaborative

1. Call Meeting to Order

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the meeting of the Elk River Heritage Preservation Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Lindberg.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Lindberg led the commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Consider Agenda

Moved by Commissioner Dietz and seconded by Commissioner Griffiths to approve the July 17, 2025, Heritage Preservation Commission agenda.

Motion carried 5-0.

4. Consider Minutes

Moved by Commissioner Campbell and seconded by Commissioner Griffiths to approve the May 15, 2025, Heritage Preservation Commission minutes.

Motion carried 5-0.

5.1 Historic Water Tower Park

Mr. Carlton stated a subcommittee has been working to kick off the project and start collecting official public feedback.

Sandy Meulners-Comstock, Mend Collaborative, gave a presentation on the project progress. She outlined design considerations including historic sensitivity, accessibility, landscaping and green space, sustainability, and generational stewardship. The water tower site is listed on the historic register.

Ms. Meulners-Comstock asked the Commission for feedback on the proposed vision statement and goals.

Working Vision Statement:

The water tower historic park or site is a welcoming community space that celebrates the iconic water tower, local heritage, and every day gathering. It is designed for all ages. It supports connection, play, events, and ecological systems while reflecting the spirit of the community.

Goals:

1. To ensure that Elk River's history is celebrated through storytelling, art, and interpretive design.
2. To make sure that this future park or site is a symbolic place for the community of Elk River and that it's also welcoming and inclusive and accessible for all ages and abilities to experience and enjoy.

Ms. Meulners-Comstock stated the Heritage Preservation Commission would be hosting a booth at Elk RiverFest on Saturday, July 26, 2025, as well as the Elk River Farmer's Market on July 31, 2025.

Mr. Carlton asked the Commission if they wanted to consider the water tower site as part of a series of locations along a historic walking tour of Elk River. The water tower site could be the start or end of the tour and could include different parts of Elk River's history at each stop. Additional stops could include Bailey Point, Houlton, or the Rivers Edge Commons.

Commissioner Campbell liked the idea that locations wouldn't be isolated but part of a system. She asked if there was a trail system to connect the historic locations. Mr. Carlton stated most of the sites would be connected with sidewalks, but the Commission could examine gaps in the pedestrian system as a future project.

Council Liaison Member Calva suggested a map or diagram on the kiosks to show "you are here".

Ms. Meulners-Comstock commented that the City of Delano has an example of a downtown area with medallions at certain locations where you can scan a QR code to learn more.

Commissioner Campbell suggested each stop include a brass rubbing. Ms. Meulners-Comstock suggested a passport.

Commissioner Griffiths added that, if a passport was of interest, the water tower may be a good starting point and could potentially stock passports.

Ms. Meulners-Comstock asked if the Commission wanted to tell a "broader story" at the water tower site or focus on the water tower site itself. Commissioner Calva liked the idea of the water tower including things that aren't specific to the trail or site such as old schoolhouses located in Elk River. Commissioner Campbell stated that the community may want input on how much history to tell. There is space at the water tower site to include more history.

Commissioner Campbell asked about the amount of historical content currently at Rivers Edge Commons park. Mr. Carlton stated that content is changeable.

Chair Lindberg stated that the water tower site could discuss the businesses downtown and where businesses moved after the fire.



Mr. Carlton asked if the Commission liked the idea of incorporating fire and water into the design. Ms. Meulners-Comstock commented that theme could be conveyed through art or plants.

Commissioner Campbell asked if the Elk River fire department may want to have input on the history of the fire or have historic items to display.

Commissioner Dietz added that there are historic hitching posts that could be installed on the site.

Ms. Meulners-Comstock reviewed the materials that would be brought to Elk RiverFest and the Farmer's Market which would ask residents their opinion on that they wanted to see at the site.

Commissioner Dietz asked if there would be some sort of fence or screening to protect neighboring properties from any lights installed at the water tower site.

Ms. Meulners-Comstock showed the Commission the website that was created for the project which includes an interactive map where people can share their concerns, ideas, or photos as well as take a survey. She stated, once the two engagement events are completed, she would create a summary of public feedback.

Mr. Carlton discussed the potential of a special meeting in September.

5.2 Farmer's Market Booth – July 31

Mr. Carlton stated the Commissioners could volunteer for a shift at Elk RiverFest or the Farmer's Market at the Heritage Preservation Commission booth.

5.3 Other Business

Mr. Carlton asked if any of the Commissioners would like to attend the Preserve Minnesota Conference in New Ulm on September 10-12, 2025. Commissioner Dietz was interested and Commissioner Campbell was potentially interested.

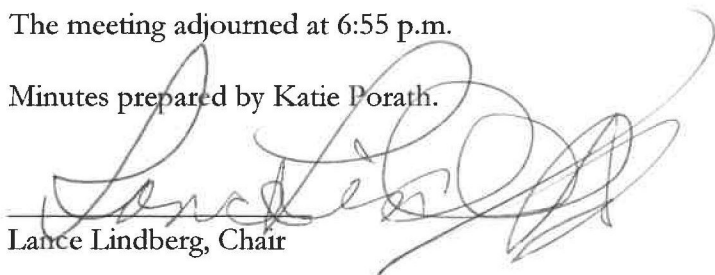
6. Adjournment

Moved by Commissioner Dietz and seconded by Commissioner Campbell to adjourn the meeting of the Heritage Preservation Commission.

Motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Katie Porath.


Lance Lindberg, Chair



Tina Allard, City Clerk