



# City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall  
400 La Crosse Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

## Meeting Minutes - Final

### Heritage Preservation Commission

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Thursday, March 26, 2026

6:00 PM

Council Chambers- City Hall 400 La Crosse St

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Members of the public may participate in the meeting in the following ways:  
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[pwd=bFhXeHBwdWR3YkhOcmpzWWYrTjRvQT09](https://cityoflacrosse-org.zoom.us/j/84101189486?pwd=bFhXeHBwdWR3YkhOcmpzWWYrTjRvQT09)

Meeting ID: 841 0118 9486  
Passcode: 810151

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Or you may attend in person at City Hall located at 400 La Crosse Street. Members of the public who would like to provide written comments on any agenda may do so by emailing [acklint@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:acklint@cityoflacrosse.org), using a drop box outside of City Hall or mailing the Department of Planning and Development, 400 La Crosse Street, La Crosse WI 54601. Questions, call 608-789-7512.

### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:03pm.

### Roll Call

**Present:** 7 - Laura Godden, Mackenzie Mindel, Natalie Heneghan, Eric Garland, Jim Gallagher, Ellie McLoone, John Reiman

### Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of the February 26, 2026 Meeting Minutes.

Laura Godden moved to approve the minutes. Ellie McLoone seconded. The motion passed 7-0.

### Agenda Items:

2. [26-0222](#) Nomination of Emerson Elementary School (Hillview Orthopedic School), located at 2001 Campbell Rd, to be designated as a Local Historic

Landmark.

Barbara Kooiman, representing the Preservation Alliance of La Crosse (PAL), stated that it was nominated as the first and only orthopedic school in La Crosse. It was also a part of the WPA/PWA New Deal initiative. Building may even meet the criteria to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Building is intact and the additions were done sympathetically. Mackenzie Mindel ask her to respond to the statement that the programs are not unique or first of its kind in La Crosse. Barbara stated that there were others but they lacked accessibility. Emerson was the first to be built that was 100% dedicated to children with disabilities. It showed progressive thinking of the School District at that time. Laura Godden asked if the "Baby Boom" aspects are still preserved in the building. Barbara stated that she thought they were and that the School District hired the same architects to design the 2nd floor, and while it does not have as many, still incorporated many of the New Deal era features. Laura Godden asked if she new if other schools in the State integrated both disabled and non-disabled kids. Barbara stated that she did not know.

Dr. Aaron Engel, La Crosse School District Superintendent, stated that he was opposed to the designation of Emerson Elementary. He stated that he did not feel that the nomination of the building meets the goals of the HPC as it does not display its original character and quality since the there have been additions and alterations that have removed all the significant and functional features. He also stated that he has concerns with the process for designation as there is no transparency to the public on what properties are considered historic. He also stated that designation may divert funds from special needs students to upkeep the building. Jim Gallgher asked if there were plans for the building for disabled students. Dr, Engel stated that there were not specific plans for the building at this time. Jim Gallagher asked why it would hurt disabled students. Dr. Engel stated that requirements to maintain a historic building would divert funding for students elsewhere.

John Reiman moved to accept the nomination as submitted. Jim Gallgher seconded.

John Reiman stated that the history of the school is important to La Crosse, especially its associated with Polio. The treatment of the most vulnerable, children, for Polio is important. The fact that the School District of La Crosse was at the vanguard of this effort is something to celebrate. The building was also part of the New Deal, a national historic effort. Served as a school for several generations. The marketability of the building is not an HPC issue. That is something for the Common Council to determine. He stated that he is in support of this nomination.

Ellie McLoone stated that there were only about 3 of 11 schools left like this. One is in La Crosse. She stated that she is worried that UWL will purchase it and make it a parking lot.

Natalie Heneghan stated that she did not feel that the nomination provided enough material to meet the criteria as the connections to the New Deal do not make it significant enough.

Laura Godden stated that WPA projects have changed the landscape of cities. Maybe that is not enough but the Polio treatment history does bring a lot of significance to La Crosse.

Eric Garland thanked PAL and thought the nomination was well written. He stated that he lives in the neighborhood and they held their Grandview-Emerson Neighborhood Association meetings in the library. He stated that they tour of the building reinforced his perspective on the quality of the building. He also stated that they would be ample time to work with developers if there is a need to convert the building to a new use.

Mackenzie Mindel stated that she struggled with this building. Its history with Polio is important to La Crosse's history, but it is hard to evaluate buildings associated with events or people as it is hard to interpret. She does not feel that it rises up to the ranks of designation. Will be voting no at this time.

Laura Godden stated that she interpreted that nominations making the case for association with events are important because it makes them look into its history more.

John Reiman stated that a building only needs to meet one of the criteria.

The motion passed 5-2. (Heneghan & Mindel voting no)

3. [25-1378](#)

Review and Discussion on Chapter 115 Heritage Preservation Commission related ordinances.

Staff stated that they would like to take final action on any potential amendments to the ordinances in Chapter 115 that relate to the Commission's responsibilities. This is related to the update of this chapter and any approved amendments would be incorporated into the rewrite. Staff provided recommendations for each section.

Height Exception for Accessory Structures (Carriage Houses)- 115-390(1)(d)(2)  
John Reiman moved to remove 115-390(1)(d)(2)(iii)(F) regarding value and amend the language in 115-390(1)(d)(2)(ii) to not require both a preliminary and final review of plans by the Commission. Jim Gallgher seconded. The motion passed 7-0.

Rescue Platforms- 115-390(1)(e)(2)(e)(3)  
Ellie McLoone moved to remove the Heritage Preservation Commission as the body that reviews applications for these. Eric Garland seconded. The motion passed 7-0.

Second Garage-115-390(1)(e)(2)(g)  
Ellie McLoone moved to amend 115-390(1)(e)(2)(g)(2) to not require both a preliminary and final review of plans by the Commission and to remove the language in 115-390(1)(e)(2)(g)(3)(i) regarding value. Eric Garland seconded. The motion passed 7-0.

Front Yard Additional parking- 115-395(b)  
Ellie McLoone moved to remove the Heritage Preservation Commission as the body that reviews plans for these. John Reiman seconded. The motion passed 7-0.

Awnings over public sidewalks- 115-402  
Eric Garland moved to amend the section to only require awnings on historic structures to be reviewed by the Heritage Preservation Commission. John

Reiman seconded. The motion passed 7-0.

**Private garages in C3-Community Business District- 115-409**

Jim Gallagher moved to remove 115-409(e) as plans would be reviewed by the Heritage Preservation Commission anyway. Ellie McCloone seconded. The motion passed 7-0.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37pm.

*Notice is further given that members of other governmental bodies may be present at the above scheduled meeting to gather information about a subject over which they have decision-making responsibility.*

### **NOTICE TO PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY**

*Requests from persons with a disability who need assistance to participate in this meeting should call the City Clerk's office at (608) 789-7510 or send an email to [ADAcityclerk@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:ADAcityclerk@cityoflacrosse.org), with as much advance notice as possible.*

Heritage Preservation Commission Members

CM Mackenzie Mindel, Laura Godden, Natalie Heneghan, Jim Gallagher, Ellie McLoone, John Reiman, Eric Garland