



Andy Schor
Mayor

LANSING HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Monday, December 8, 2025 - 5:30 p.m.
Neighborhood Empowerment Center
600 W Maple Street, Lansing, MI

MINUTES – *Approved 1/12/2026*

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Skillings called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.
 - a. Present: James Bell, Cassandra Nelson, Melissa Riba, Carol Skillings, Ashley Smith, Sam Troutman
 - b. Absent: Brigitte Booser
 - c. Staff: Andrew Fedewa, Stephen Bezold
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
Agenda approved by unanimous consent.
3. **COMMUNICATIONS** – None
4. **PUBLIC HEARINGS**
 - a. **HDC-1-2025, 200 W Ottawa St., Electronic Message Center Sign**

Mr. Bezold provided a description of the proposed changes, the applicant's supporting materials, and the City's design guidelines. The proposed sign would use existing brackets from the current sign so as to not damage the building and will not alter the overall façade of the church. The proposed sign is more horizontally oriented but is of a comparable size to the current sign, and it will be within the 20 square feet limit required by the Sign Ordinance. Staff recommended denial of the application based on the standards of the design guidelines advising against illuminated signs.

Susan Grettenberger, as the applicant on behalf of Central United Methodist Church (CUMC), presented the church's request for an electric message center (EMC) sign as a way to display information in real time. This would help the church as it works to advertise programming and services. Ms. Grettenberger stated that three other adjacent places of worship have EMC signs, but since those are not within a local district, they did not need HDC approval.

Ms. Nelson spoke in support of the application, noting that the sign will not require any alterations to the existing historic structure and could be changed or removed in the future.

Mr. Bell asked about the timing of on-screen announcements. Mr. Bezold responded that the applicant had provided materials that dictate the on-screen time and brightness. The sign ordinance requires messages to be static, without any animation, for at least eight seconds before changing.

Ms. Smith spoke in support of the proposed work and asked as a new member what the Commission's standards are with signs, especially illuminated or electronic. Commission

members spoke on the value of protecting historic integrity of the overall building while keeping an open mind to reasonable allowances for property owners to make changes they feel is necessary to support their business.

Ms. Grettenberger spoke on her and the church's long-standing support of the Historic District Commission and their consistent belief in maintaining the historic integrity of their church building. CUMC is the only historic church in Lansing to seek local historic designation.

Ms. Skillings spoke in support of the application.

Ms. Nelson spoke on her time with HDC when the Central United Methodist Church was originally nominated as a local district. She stated the church aimed to protect the property from redevelopment opportunities and their support for historic preservation in Lansing.

Ms. Troutman made a motion, seconded by Ms. Nelson, to approve HDC-1-2025, 200 W Ottawa St., Electronic Message Center Sign.

On a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

5. DISCUSSION/ACTION

- a. Minutes for Approval – November 10, 2025. Ms. Riba made a correction to a misspelling of her name. Ms. Nelson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bell to approve the minutes as amended.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

7. STAFF AND COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Fedewa stated that the Selina Máté is scheduled to be sworn in as a commission member at tonight's City Council meeting.

Mr. Fedewa asked the commission if they supported amending the Design Guidelines to include language specific to Electronic Message Center signs. Commission members supported reviewing a draft amendment.

Mr. Fedewa stated that six structures in the Cherry Hill neighborhood adjacent to the historic district were recently rehabilitated. Mr. Fedewa spoke on the support for bringing housing units back online in the city but the benefits of the historic District Commission's review process. Each building's historic integrity was either damaged or removed during rehabilitation.

8. PRESENTATIONS – None

9. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. HDC review of draft St. Lawrence Hospital Complex Historic District request

Ms. Troutman recommended numerous changes to the proposed draft letter for a study committee request for the St. Lawrence Hospital Campus.

Mr. Fedewa spoke on the nomination process and stated staff supported the optional public

meeting with U of M Health-Sparrow and interested neighbors before sending the study committee request to City Council, since precedent has been for the property owner to nominate their own property.

Mr. Bell spoke in support of a Historic District Study Committee and how the findings will be worthwhile even if the property is not ultimately listed as a local district.

Ms. Troutman spoke on the value of gauging public support for listing the property on the local historic register.

Ms. Nelson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Riba to nominate Ms. Troutman as an Ad Hoc Committee member to draft the resolution setting a public meeting on the nomination of the St. Lawrence Hospital Campus Historic District with city staff. On a voice vote the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

b. Annual SHPO – Certified Local Government Grant

Mr. Fedewa mentioned that city staff will be meeting with the Mayor about the CLG grant opportunity and will update the commission at the January meeting.

10. PENDING ITEMS – None

11. ADJOURNMENT – 6:35 p.m.