



CITY OF BUFFALO, MINNESOTA

HERITAGE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA

Meeting: Monday, January 12, 2026

Place: Buffalo City Center

Time: 5:00 p.m.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**
- 3. OPEN FORUM**
- 4. AGENDA ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS**
- 5. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 8TH MEETING MINUTES**
- 6. COUNCIL REVIEW**
- 7. VETERANS PARK UPDATE**
- 8. CENTURY HOMES PROGRAM**
- 9. HPAB ANNUAL REPORT**
- 10. OTHER**
- 11. ADJOURN**

HERITAGE PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

Monday, December 8, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Heritage Preservation Advisory Board (hereinafter HPAB) regular meeting was called to order at 5:02 PM by Chair, Sue Mattson, in the Council Chambers of the City Center at 212 Central Avenue, Buffalo, MN. Present were Members Laura Chapin, Shala Holm, Sue Mattson, Kit Breshears, and Council Liaison Erin Walsh. Also in attendance was David Kelly, Community Planning Director.

2. OPEN FORUM - No members of the public came forward.

3. AGENDA ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

There were no agenda additions or deletions. However, Chair Mattson requested to revisit two previously discussed topics under "Other" - heritage business plaques and naming of neighborhoods. Community Development Director David Kelly agreed to include these under item nine.

Vice-Chair Holm asked about a homeowner's letter regarding donations, which Director Kelly confirmed could be discussed under "Other" as well.

4. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 10 MEETING MINUTES

Chair Mattson noted that after the previous meeting, she realized that she and Member Holm should have abstained from voting on the website item since they both sit on the Buffalo Historical Society board. The minutes therefore incorrectly showed that the motion passed unanimously.

Council Liaison Walsh identified two additional corrections that were needed:

- The spelling of "Mattson" in item number two needed two t's; and
- In item seven, "Buffalo Butterfly Memorial Gardens" should be changed to "Buffalo Memorial Butterfly Gardens" to avoid implying that butterflies were being memorialized

A discussion followed about the proper name for the Veterans Park garden space, with agreement to address the official name at the next meeting.

Member Holm moved to accept the minutes with the noted changes.

Member Breshears seconded.

The vote was 5-0. The motion passed unanimously.

5. COUNCIL REVIEW

Director Kelly reported on recent City Council activities:

- Kit Breshears' seat on the HPAB expires at the end of 2025, but noted as the only applicant for the seat he will likely be reappointed pending Council Member Walsh's recommendation
- The 2026 final tax and budget public hearing was held
- A new HR Manager, Carly Gernbacher, was hired to replace our outgoing manager, Carmen Merrill.
- Construction agreements were signed for the TH 25 North Project, which includes a roundabout at Catlin Street (near Buffalo Hospital and the Covenant Church). Council Liaison Walsh noted that the roundabout will not be completed when the new Buffalo Area Community Center is set to open

From the November 17th Council meeting, Director Kelly noted:

- A tax increment financing (TIF) resolution was approved for Eighth Street Apartments, a 42-unit affordable housing project
- A wage compensation study was reviewed
- Agreements with police unions were approved
- A conditional use permit (CUP) was granted for retail cannabis at 1008 Commercial Drive. It is the City's second and final retail cannabis license under current population limits
- The City will apply for a grant to extend Griffing Park Road which will help alleviate traffic on Pulaski Road
- Council Liaison Walsh added that the City approved funds to obtain legal counsel regarding a potential PFAS lawsuit settlement
- Chair Mattson asked about the status of the former smoke shop property near the new affordable housing development. Director Kelly explained that while a CUP for a drive-through had been extended, there were no current updates on development plans for the site
- Director Kelly confirmed that donations for the Century Home plaques would be tax-deductible, similar to the City's flower donation program

6. VETERANS PARK UPDATE

Chair Mattson presented a timeline for the Veteran's Park garden space:

- The grasses have been trimmed down for the season
- Spring plans include moving the grasses, repairing the curved walkway, and choosing pollinator flowers
- End of May/early June will involve cleanup and pruning by potentially the high school landscaping class or master gardeners
- Soliciting grants and local donations will continue
- Summer plans include starting up the existing fountains and having KJ Branding create a durable historical display for the concrete table
- Prior to any digging, utilities need to be marked

Director Kelly noted that the 1st Ave NE street project is planned in that area next year to replace utilities, which might affect some of the existing utilities but likely not the electrical outlet.

The Board discussed name options for the garden, including "Buffalo Butterfly and Memorial Garden," "Buffalo Butterfly Memorial Garden," and "Buffalo Memorial Butterfly Garden." Chair Mattson noted that funding opportunities center around butterflies, which would attract visitors. Liaison Walsh suggested "Heritage Garden" or "History Garden" with butterflies as the method of showcasing the space. Member Breshears recommended leading with butterflies since that establishes the uniqueness of the space.

The Board decided to consider conducting a community naming contest, similar to what was done for City parking lots. Director Kelly clarified that it should be called a "garden" rather than a "park" to avoid confusion with Parks Department oversight. The Board agreed to place naming on the agenda for the next meeting.

7. CENTURY HOMES APPLICATIONS

The Board reviewed six Century Homes applications:

209 3rd Street NW

Director Kelly presented the application for 209 3rd Street NW, built in 1909. Vice-Chair Holm shared historical information about Mr. Grant, the original owner, who helped build the first courthouse, became a grain dealer and auctioneer, and later served as sheriff. His residence was described as "one of the prettiest in the City" with "a picturesque view of Buffalo Lake."

*Vice-Chair Holm moved to accept 209 3rd Street NW into the Century Homes program. Member Breshears seconded.
The vote was 5-0. The motion passed unanimously.*

305 3rd Street NW

This application was for Kit Breshears' home built in 1889. Member Breshears recused himself from voting but explained that the home was purchased during COVID, limiting the historical information available. The board discussed whether historical documentation should be required, with Director Kelly noting that county tax records could verify age when other documentation is unavailable.

*Council Liaison Walsh moved to accept 305 3rd Street NW into the Century Homes program. Member Mattson seconded.
The vote was 5-0. The motion passed unanimously.*

502 4th Avenue NW

This home, built in 1910, was likely built by Swan Brent, who constructed approximately 25 four-square style homes in Buffalo. Council Liaison Walsh noted that Brent also built buildings in downtown Buffalo.

*Member Breshears moved to approve 502 4th Avenue NW for the Century Homes Program. Chair Mattson seconded.
The vote was 5-0. The motion passed unanimously.*

506 4th Avenue NW

The home at 506 4th Avenue NW was built in 1904. The applicants, Larry and Bunny Howard, have owned it since 1992. Council Liaison Walsh shared that the second owners had run a veterinary clinic from the house and mentioned Betty Held, a former neighbor, who was a polio survivor and founder of the *Opening Doors* program.

*Liaison Walsh moved to approve 506 4th Avenue NW to the Century Home Program. Member Breshears seconded.
The vote was 5-0. The motion passed unanimously.*

507 4th Avenue NW

This home was built in 1910. Council Liaison Walsh mentioned she had previously lived in the house when it was a duplex, requiring residents to go outside to access the upstairs. Walsh added that significant renovations have been done over the years.

*Member Holm moved to accept 507 4th Avenue NW into the Century Homes Program. Member Breshears seconded.
The vote was 5-0. The motion passed unanimously.*

508 4th Avenue NW

Built in 1910, this home's owners provided significant historical information, including a list of all homeowners back to the 1930s and details of additions. Chair Mattson noted that the owner, Mark, had done woodwork and cabinetry matching the original mahogany throughout the home when adding on to it.

*Member Mattson moved to accept 508 4th Avenue NW into the Century Homes Program. Member Breshears seconded.
The vote was 5-0. The motion passed unanimously.*

Director Kelly stated that these applications would be presented to City Council for approval at the January 19th meeting. The Board discussed timing for certificates and plaques, agreeing to approve homes in January and present certificates and plaques during Historic Preservation Month in May. The Board also discussed how to handle future applications that might come in between the twice-yearly recognition periods. Liaison Walsh suggested sending congratulatory "Happy 100th Birthday" cards to homes that just became eligible as a way to promote the program.

8. DOWNTOWN FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM APPLICATION

- 22 Division Street E, Forget-Me-Not Cafe

Director Kelly presented this application. The applicant requested \$6,000 in matching funds to replace failing windows. The project would also include door replacement, with the total project costing approximately \$25,000.

The Board discussed window style preferences, noting that historically, downtown buildings had full pane windows rather than divided panes. Multiple HPAB members commented that other downtown buildings maintained the full-pane style that was historically appropriate.

*Member Breshears moved to recommend that the HRA approve the 22 Division Street E application, with comments and recommendations favoring full-pane windows. Member Holm seconded.
The vote was 5-0. The motion passed unanimously.*

Chair Mattson noted that the Buffalo Hotel had recently been painted in a historically appropriate cream color, which was a positive development for downtown historical preservation.

9. OTHER

Due to time constraints, the Board agreed to move the previously mentioned topics (heritage business plaques and naming of neighborhoods) to next month's agenda.

10. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 6:44 PM.

Chair

Secretary

DRAFT



HPAB AGENDA REPORT

ITEM #7

MEETING DATE: January 12th, 2026
PREPARED BY: Community Development Director David Kelly
PRESENTED BY: Chair Mattson
AGENDA ITEM: Future of Existing Veterans Memorial Park

BACKGROUND SUMMARY:

Chair Mattson has been working on plans for the future of the existing Veterans Memorial Park at 2nd Street NE and 2nd Avenue S and will provide an update. Mattson has continued to explore a name for the garden that is proposed and has provided several suggestions for HPAB's consideration.

RECOMMENDATION:

None- staff is seeking discussion on ideas for the future of the existing Veterans Memorial Park.

Attachments:

- Summary of Project
- Overview of Naming Process
- Name Proposal

Date: January 3, 2026
To: HPAB membership, David Kelly, Taylor Gronau
From: Sue M, Chair
RE: BRAINSTORMING TO NAME THE NEW GARDEN

At our December 2025 meeting we discussed choosing a name for the site that will be transitioning from the city Park's Department to HPAB, currently known as Veteran's Memorial Park. In the end we opted to have this revisited at the January 2026 meeting with members coming with ideas. It was suggested that if we, as HPAB, cannot come up with a name we can agree on, then we would open the naming up to the citizens of Buffalo.

To start the process, I have attached a summary of the project to date called Rebranding of Tower Hill..... That summary is open for commentary, additions, corrections. I have also attached a document that membership have from previous meetings which was intended to do a side-by-side comparison of the transformation of Veteran's Park. On that document I had tentatively used the name **Buffalo Memorial and Butterfly Gardens**. The reasoning was, in part:,

- to use the word *Garden* instead of *Park*, as it will no longer be a city park.
- Pulling *Memorial* from the current name.
- *Butterfly*....because that is what it will become with the plantings that will attract pollinators, will be showy from spring till frost, will provide a place of solitude and study for the school children and neighbors already using it; because promoting the return Butterfly such as Monarchs to the city of Buffalo has historic implications, because having a Butterfly garden not only is a tourist draw to the city, it also comes with opportunities for funding. Whether the Heritage part of the garden is what draws visitors, or the Butterfly part of the garden that draws visitors, or the peace and solitude of the name garden that draws visitors....or the combinations, I think it is a win/win if we can incorporate all in the name.
- *Buffalo*: David thought that including the name Buffalo is also important.

Other thoughts that I recall from the HPAB membership:

- Does Butterfly need to be in there?
- What about Native American's represented? (on a whim I looked into the Dakota name for butterfly as I was curious. I don't think that will be a helpful part of a name, but perhaps helpful in some signage to explain the importance in native culture....) Native heritage will have a good space on the cement table.
- Be clear that it is not a butterfly memorial.
- The name should clearly identify what it is
- _____
- _____
- _____

With that, and considering the information in the attachments, I will offer the following.

1. Buffalo Memorial and Butterfly Gardens.
2. Buffalo Heritage and Butterfly Gardens
3. Heritage and Butterfly Gardens of Buffalo
4. Memorial and Butterfly Gardens of Buffalo

I apologize for not being more creative, but will continue to work on it.



Sue

Rebranding of Tower Hill/Hospital Hill/Veteran's Park

A work in process by
Buffalo Heritage Preservation Advisory Board
January 2026

To Recap: The focus site is currently known as **Veteran's Memorial Park** since 2004 and sits as the tallest site in the city of Buffalo, Mn. Historically it began as **Taylor's Union Cemetery** until the cemetery was moved 1895 to what is now called Lakeview Cemetery. Over time the site is also referred to as **Tower Hill**, where the city's first water tower was built in 1819 (the Tin Man water tower), and as **Hospital Hill**, where the first city owned hospital was built, The building still stands to serve as a Board and Lodge, When the Tin Man water tower was taken down, the Buffalo Legion spearheaded a campaign to establish the present Veteran's Memorial Park on that site, dedicating the site as follows _ "*... a memorial to our founders and to those who have served our city, state, and country.*"

In the year 2025, the Buffalo City Council adopted a progressive plan to move the Veteran's Memorial to the newly restructured lakeshore walk/drive in the downtown area of Buffalo Lake, citing increased visibility of such a memorial, and also citing citizen dissatisfaction with the looks of the natural prairie planting at the current site. In conjunction with this plan the Parks Department announced the intended dismantling of the existing Veteran's Park, to include removal of the fountains, removing the concrete table, removing the memorial pavers, moving the flag pole to the ball fields, and returning the vegetation to grass that could be mowed.

The Heritage Preservation Advisory Board (HPAB) took exception to the dismantling of the existing park based upon the historical significance of that piece of land to the city, the dedication of that piece of land to the citizens of Buffalo, and HPAB expressed interest in having that site come under the governing and control of HPAB. HPAB initial draft proposals included renaming the site as a garden, retaining the pavers to preserve them, retaining the fountains, replacing the native grasses with flowers known to attract pollinators, using the concrete table as a surface upon which to display Buffalo History and Heritage, and encourage citizen participation in this garden.

By the end of 2025 HPAB had worked to secure the approval of the Parks Department, the city Economic Development Department, the blessings of the Buffalo American Legion, the support of the Buffalo Chamber of Commerce Director, and the interest of a variety of others. As we move forward into 2026 HPAB is advised that the downtown location for the Memorial has yet to be funded and remains in a planning stage. That being said, there is no reason to delay addressing the plants in the current landscape, changing them out for more pleasing plants nor is there a reason to delay publicly promoting the plan for rebranding the site. In other words, "Inquiring minds want to know" and have wanted to know for some time as to what is to become of that site.

It is time to now rebrand this site with a new name; one that is mindful of the mission of HPAB, one that is sustainable in years to come, one that enhances our city, and one that is true to being _ "*a memorial to our founders and to those who have served our city, state, and country.*"

PROPOSAL: TRANSFORMATION OF CURRENT VETS PARK

- Vet's Park is being relocated
- The Parks Department wants out
- The Natural grass has been an issue
- What to do with the pavers
- Fountains? FLAG?
- Curved ramp needs repair
- Who will maintain?
- Who will pay costs?
- Who will promote?
- Who benefits?
- The concrete table?
- Current site has historical value
- HPAB wants in
- Replace it with showy flowers
- HPAB : the pavers to stay / Legion agrees.
- Fountains stay/Flag goes to Ball Fields
- Lee Ryan said city will repair
- Contacts with Master gardeners, etc.
- Fundraising/donations? Minimal
- HPAB, Chamber, per Sue Olmscheid
- School children /neighbors / City/citizens
- Table is repurposed with History. KJ Branding

BUFFALO BUTTERFLY AND MEMORIAL GARDENS



HPAB AGENDA REPORT

ITEM #8

MEETING DATE: January 12th, 2026
PREPARED BY: Community Development Director David Kelly
PRESENTED BY: Community Development Director David Kelly
AGENDA ITEM: Century Homes Program

BACKGROUND SUMMARY:

In an effort to kickstart the Century Home Program for 2026, several ideas have been proposed for HPAB's consideration. These include the following:

- A birthday card for homes that have recently reached the century mark
- A letter to be sent to homeowners with homes that have recently reached the century mark
- A letter to homeowners that are a part of the program regarding a potential plaque for recognition

RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

Attachments:

- Draft of birthday card
- Draft of letter to homeowners
- Draft of letter to homeowners currently in the program re: bronze plaque

Drafts of possible 'Happy Birthday—to Your Home'-type greeting cards

Front of Card



Inside of Card

Happy Birthday to your 100-year-old home!

Recognize the age, history, and legacy of your home
by submitting it to the City of Buffalo's
Century Homes program.

Follow the enclosed instructions on
completing and submitting an application today!

Inside of Card Message Drafts

#1 Option (Arial font)

Congratulations on owning a 100-year-old home!
Your home is now eligible to join the City of Buffalo's
Century Homes program. This is a program that
recognizes the age, history, and legacy of your home.

Complete and submit an application for the Heritage
Preservation Advisory Board's review.

#2 Option (Georgia font)

Happy Birthday to your 100-year-old home!

Recognize the age, history, and legacy of your home
by submitting it to the City of Buffalo's
Century Homes program.

Follow the enclosed instructions on
completing and submitting an application today!

Congratulations, Your Home is 100 years old!

Your home has been officially recognized by the Buffalo Heritage Advisory Board as a Century Home. To celebrate your home's legacy, the Heritage Preservation Advisory Board is pleased to offer you a timeless bronze plaque, featuring the year your home was built, to be proudly displayed at the outside entrance of your home.

Plaque Cost Options:

Please fill out the form below to order your plaque:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Year your Home was built (this will appear on the plaque): _____

Donation Option:

☐ I would like to make a fully tax-deductible donation of \$200.00 to cover the cost of the plaque.

☐ I would like to make a tax-deductible donation of \$100.00 to cover 50% of the cost of the plaque.

The Buffalo Heritage Advisory Board

looks forward to helping you honor your home's history!

Congratulations, Century Homeowner!

Your home has been officially recognized by the Buffalo Heritage Advisory Board as a Century Home. To celebrate your home's legacy, the Heritage Preservation Advisory Board is pleased to offer you a timeless bronze plaque, featuring the year your home was built, to be proudly displayed at the outside entrance of your home.

Plaque Cost Options:

Please fill out the form below to order your plaque:

Name: _

Address: _

Year your Home was built (this will appear on the plaque):

Payment Option:

☐ I will cover the full cost (\$200.00)

☐ I will cover 50% of the cost (\$100.00)

We look forward to helping you honor your home's history!

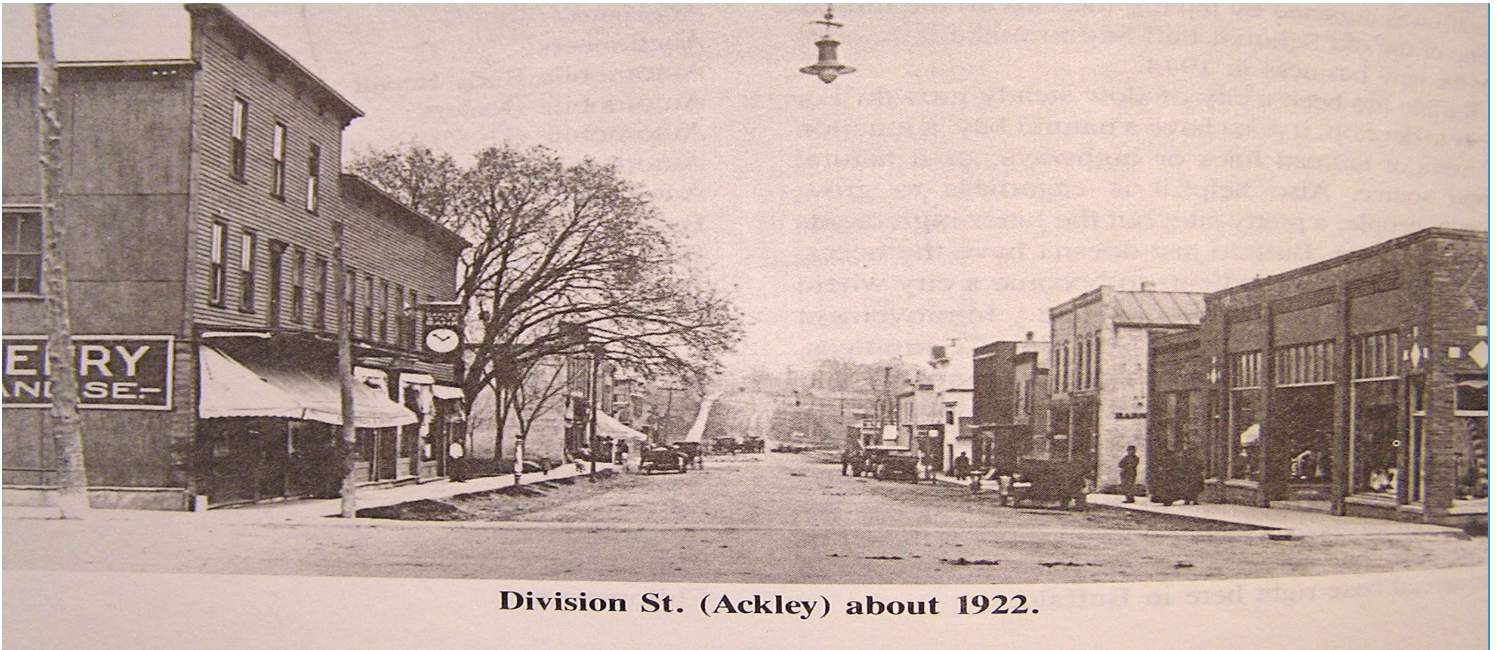
https://www.realtor.com/realestateandhomes-detail/808-Montrose-Bld_Buffalo_MN_55313_M81064-44242

This blue one was moved from the area across the street to the south from Parkside, I believe.

https://www.compass.com/homedetails/806-Montrose-Bld-Buffalo-MN-55313/DGFF0_pid/

This one was the St. John's Lutheran Church Parsonage and sat to the east of St. John's Lutheran before it was moved to leave space for more building and parking. . You see the first house right next door to it. Both houses were moved on the same day to their current spot. The blue house was owned and restored by a young family (McCarty or McCarthy) and the old parsonage was purchased and restored by one set of parents to the family in the blue house. That older couple was named Mulcare, or something similar.

Preserving Buffalo...



Division St. (Ackley) about 1922.

DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES APPROVED

The National Parks Service's Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings are widely used and effective, but since they are broad to suit various contexts, communities should thoughtfully adapt them to fit local needs. (Reference: page 95, National Heritage Preservation Guidelines)

MAYOR PROCLAIMS MAY HERITAGE PRESERVATION MONTH

Established by the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1973, this month-long observance highlights the cultural, social, and economic benefits of preserving history.

CENTURY HOMES RECOGNITION

In 2025, ten remarkable homes—each over a century old—were honored by being admitted into the Century Homes Recognition Program

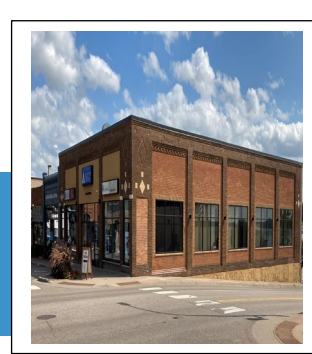


Chair Sue Mattson
Vice Chair Shala Holm
Secretary Laura Chapin
Member Kit Breshears
Planning Commission &
Council Liaison
Erin Walsh

Downtown Design Guidelines

These guidelines aim to preserve the authentic character of our historic buildings while using them as inspiring examples for the design of future commercial and residential development in the downtown and surrounding areas.

What gives these buildings their timeless appeal?



True to their era, they are constructed of brick, with upper facades that range from simple designs to more ornate cornices. Their evenly spaced, medium to large window openings are often accented with decorative window hoods. Traditional storefronts feature large display windows, transom windows, and recessed entries, all contributing to the inviting and historic character of downtown. These architectural details should serve as inspiration for new residential and commercial buildings, ensuring they complement and preserve the character of our community.

By thoughtfully integrating preservation with modern needs, these guidelines will ensure that future development respects our architectural heritage while fostering a vibrant and sustainable downtown for generations to come.

HPAB PROVIDES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TWO DOWNTOWN FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS: BUFFALO CHIROPRACTIC CLINIC AND FORGET ME NOT CAFÉ



Buffalo Chiropractic Clinic: Recommend increasing the amount of transparent glass on storefronts to enhance visibility and openness (work in progress)

Forget Me Not Café ; Recommend maintaining the recess entry. Maintain the amount of transparent glass on the store front to include the appearance of a transom window.

Work in progress.

Heritage Preservation Month Highlights

The Buffalo Heritage Preservation Advisory Board hosted a series of events throughout May to engage residents in celebrating our 1st Heritage Preservation Month

Century Homes Recognition

Three Buffalo homeowners with century-old homes were honored at the City Council meeting, recognizing their commitment to preserving the original character of their homes, contributing to the unique charm and character of their neighborhood. Award Certificates created by HPAB member Laura Chapin.

Buffalo Lake Scenic Overlook Clean-up

Partnership between HPAB, the Buffalo Historical Society, Girl Scout Troop 17649 and Wright County Soil and Water - Helping to preserve the natural and historical beauty of the WPA Wall and surrounding area.

Walking Tour of Historic Downtown

In partnership with the Buffalo Historical Society, this guided tour show cased the city's unique charm and character while highlighting historic buildings that still stand today along with a few captivating stories, providing insight into the city's past.

Residents and visitors were encouraged to participate in all of these events and celebrate Buffalo's heritage.



Other News:

Buffalo Historical Society Receives Grant from HPAB

The Buffalo Historical Society (BHS) received a proposal from Flying Orange to develop a website that will be used in conjunction with the HPAB to promote Buffalo's heritage and serve as a central location for Buffalo's history. This Website Development is supported with a grant from the Buffalo Heritage Advisory Board. Website launch is planned for early March.

Century Homes Bronze Plaques

Preservation Advisory Board is pleased to offer a timeless bronze plaque, featuring the year your home was built, to be proudly displayed at the outside entrance of your home.

Veterans Park Relocation

Discussion has begun on the relocation of Veterans Park and HPAB expressed an interest in taking over the old site due to its historical significance. HPAB's initial draft proposal headed by Sue Mattson, includes renaming the site as a garden, retaining the pavers to preserve them, retaining the fountain, replacing the native grasses with flowers known to attract pollinators, and using the concrete table as a surface upon which to display Buffalo History and Heritage and to encourage citizen participation in the garden.

Coming Soon....

New Heritage Site

A local neighborhood unites to submit an application for their neighborhood to be officially recognized as a Heritage Preservation Site.

Buffalo Lake Scenic Overlook improvements coming this spring.

Improvements are planned for the Buffalo Lake Scenic Overlook, also known as the WPA Wall, this spring. In May, HAPB will collaborate with the Buffalo Lake Association and Wright County Soil and Water to select and install appropriate plantings that will help soften the appearance of the riprap along the shoreline beneath the Historic Wall.