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Transcript of Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Date: December 16, 2025

Case: City of Geneva Community Development

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CITY OF GENEVA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING
GENEVA, ILLINOIS
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2025
7:00 p.m.

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Transcript of Historic Preservation Commission Meeting
Conducted on December 16, 2025

1 Historic Preservation Commission Meeting held

2 at:

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5 109 James Street

6 Geneva, Illinois 60134

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9 Pursuant to agreement, before Lawrence Wallace,

10 Notary Public in and for the State of Illinois.

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A P P E A R A N C E S

ON BEHALF OF THE OTHER, CITY OF GENEVA COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT:

Ronald Sandack, Esquire
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COMMISSIONERS:

Paul Zellmer, Chairman
Jewel Jensen
Lisa McManus
Kevin Phillips
Mike Riebe
George Salomon
Andrew Tobler

STAFF LIAISON:

Emily Stood, City Preservation Planner
Jessie Malkosky, Assistant Planner

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Proceedings began at 7:00 p.m.)

MR. ZELLMER: I'd like to call this meeting to order of the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission for Tuesday, December 16, 2025. We'll start with a roll call.

MS. MALKOSKY: Paul Zellmer?

MR. ZELLMER: Aye.

MS. MALKOSKY: Tobler?

MR. TOBLER: Here.

MS. MALKOSKY: Jensen?

MS. JENSEN: Here.

MS. MALKOSKY: McManus?

MS. MCMANUS: Here.

MS. MALKOSKY: Phillips?

MR. PHILLIPS: Here.

MS. MALKOSKY: Riebe.

MR. RIEBE: Here.

MR. SALOMON: Here.

MR. ZELLMER: We have everyone here.

That's good. Next on our agenda is approval for meeting minutes for November 18, 2025. Can I get a motion to approve, unless anyone's got any revisions to the meeting minutes of November 18th.

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1 MR. SALOMON: Motion to approve as
2 presented.

3 MS. JENSEN: Second.

4 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. Call the roll one more
5 time.

6 MS. MALKOSKY: Zellmer?

7 MR. ZELLMER: Abstain.

8 MS. MALKOSKY: Tobler?

9 MR. TOBLER: Aye.

10 MS. MALKOSKY: Jensen?

11 MS. JENSEN: Aye.

12 MS. MALKOSKY: McManus?

13 MS. MCMANUS: Aye.

14 MS. MALKOSKY: Phillips?

15 MR. PHILLIPS: Aye.

16 MS. MALKOSKY: Riebe?

17 MR. RIEBE: Aye.

18 MS. MALKOSKY: Salomon?

19 MR. SALOMON: Aye.

20 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. Motion passes. Great.

21 Next on our agenda is the review of building permit
22 application for 521 South State Street -- I'm sorry, South
23 Street, 2025 -- Case No. 2025-115. Take it away, Emily.

24 MS. STOOD: All right. We'll make this

1 quick because I think many of you are here for another
2 case. We're looking at this property right here, south of
3 the historic district. We have some history of the
4 property. It was inhabited for a very long time by the
5 Snyder family. We know it from at least 1900 to 1974.

6 Currently, the permit we're looking to
7 change is a permit that was previously approved earlier
8 this year, I think, and has gone through one change. So
9 we're focusing on that 2025 approval for the addition,
10 which you can see under construction in this current image
11 of 521 South Street.

12 And this is the site. That addition is on
13 that corner there, which is outlined in green. The
14 original proposal -- or the currently approved proposal is
15 as such. The addition proposed is a window right there on
16 the facade of the addition. All materials of the window
17 will match the materials of the windows which are already
18 being added on the addition, which have been previously
19 approved. Does the applicant want to come up?

20 MR. RAE: Hello, I'm John Rae with John Rae
21 Construction. We're currently building this. We've been
22 here a couple times. The reason we were looking to do
23 this is the window that was removed when we added the
24 balcony the last time, we wanted to use that window on the

1 side elevation. So instead of just moving forward,
2 obviously, we have to come through the committee and get
3 the approvals.

4 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. So just more light in
5 that space then, basically?

6 MR. RAE: Yeah.

7 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. And it's this -- is it
8 a reused window then?

9 MR. RAE: It's actually the window that was
10 originally ordered to replace the bedroom window when the
11 roof went on. When the roof came off and the balcony got
12 changed, we had an extra window. So instead of just
13 disposing it, we found a good spot for it.

14 MR. ZELLMER: Okay.

15 MR. RAE: It matches everything that's on
16 the addition, though, and it complements windows that are
17 existing.

18 MR. ZELLMER: Anything from the Commission
19 on the issues with this? I --

20 MR. PHILLIPS: I have no questions.

21 MS. JENSEN: No, no questions.

22 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: No questions.

23 MR. ZELLMER: None?

24 MS. MALKOSKY: No.

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1 MR. ZELLMER: Well, I don't see any issues
2 with it, and I don't think anyone in the Commission does,
3 either. So if I can get a motion to approve.

4 MS. JENSEN: Motion to approve the permit
5 as applied for 521 West South Street.

6 MS. MCMANUS: I'll second then.

7 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. Would you call the
8 roll?

9 MS. MALKOSKY: Zellmer?

10 MR. ZELLMER: Aye.

11 MS. MALKOSKY: Tobler?

12 MR. TOBLER: Aye.

13 MS. MALKOSKY: Jensen?

14 MS. JENSEN: Aye.

15 MS. MALKOSKY: McManus?

16 MS. MCMANUS: Aye.

17 MS. MALKOSKY: Phillips?

18 MR. PHILLIPS: Aye.

19 MS. MALKOSKY: Riebe?

20 MR. RIEBE: Aye.

21 MS. MALKOSKY: Salomon?

22 MR. SALOMON: Aye.

23 MR. ZELLMER: Great. Thank you. Motion
24 passes. Thank you so much for coming in.

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1 MR. RAE: Thank you.

2 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. Next on our agenda is
3 the public hearing for 4 East State Street. Being a
4 public hearing, we have some housekeeping to do. The
5 hearing for the proposed demolition of a historic landmark
6 property at 4 East State Street. At this time, the
7 commissioner, who must recuse himself of herself and state
8 that intention, provide a simple declaration unless anyone
9 -- does anyone need to recuse themselves?

10 If not, we will move on. Can I get a
11 motion to open the public hearing?

12 MS. MCMANUS: I'll move to open the public
13 hearing for 4 East State Street.

14 MR. PHILLIPS: Second.

15 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. Call the roll.

16 MS. MALKOSKY: Zellmer?

17 MR. ZELLMER: Aye.

18 MS. MALKOSKY: Tobler?

19 MR. TOBLER: Aye.

20 MS. MALKOSKY: Jensen?

21 MS. JENSEN: Aye.

22 MS. MALKOSKY: McManus?

23 MS. MCMANUS: Aye.

24 MS. MALKOSKY: Phillips?

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1 MR. PHILLIPS: Aye.

2 MS. MALKOSKY: Riebe?

3 MR. RIEBE: Aye.

4 MS. MALKOSKY: Salomon?

5 MR. SALOMON: Aye.

6 MR. ZELLMER: Motion passes. Okay. It is
7 the Historic Preservation Commission's responsibility to
8 conduct the public hearing for Case No. 2025-114, as
9 proposed for demolition of an historic landmark property
10 at 4 East State Street. In order to receive testimony in
11 favor, amendment against the proposal, the procedure --
12 we'll follow the following procedure.

13 First, the preservation planner will
14 describe the written items, reports, and plans into the
15 record. Second, the applicant will present testimony
16 supporting the basis for the demolition or dedesignation
17 request. Third, the Historic Preservation Commission
18 members will have an opportunity to question the
19 applicant. Fourth, the Historic Preservation Commission
20 will then receive citizen testimony for -- in favor of or
21 against the proposed demolition and the proposed
22 dedesignation.

23 Citizens attending in person will be
24 recognized ahead of citizens joining remotely. Questions

1 about the proposed boundary amendment request -- okay.
2 That -- I'm sorry, that -- questions about the -- the
3 actual petition may be directed to the petitioner or the
4 petitioner's witness.

5 However, as chairman, I will recognize the
6 speakers to remain in order. Questions about the Historic
7 Preservation Commission process itself may be directed to
8 me, to the preservation planner, Emily Stood, or our
9 seated attorney, Mr. Ron Sandack, or the committee
10 director, David DeGroot.

11 Those in attendance should refrain from
12 audible gestures to support or disapprove the testimony
13 given by the applicant or any other person testifying.
14 Disruptions of the hearing process will not be tolerated.
15 And finally, the applicant may provide a conclusion at the
16 end of the testimony presented.

17 Once all the testimony is introduced into
18 the record, the public hearings will be closed. However,
19 in lieu of closing public hearings, the Commission may
20 request a continuance of the public hearing to a date
21 certain for the purposes of gathering additional
22 information, for consideration of the testimony presented
23 this evening, and a subsequent meeting to which a public
24 hearing may be duly continued tonight or within 25

1 calendar days of the close of the public hearings.

2 The Historic Preservation will make a
3 motion based on finding a crack consistent with
4 appropriate standards identified within the City of Geneva
5 Code. Once an affirmative motion has been made for either
6 request and seconded, the determination of the applicant's
7 request will be decided by a simple majority of those
8 Commissioners present at the time of the vote of the
9 motion.

10 The Commission's determination of the
11 demolition request is final, except the motion to deny the
12 applicant's demolition request may be appealed to the City
13 Council by the applicant. If the Commission's
14 determination is appealed by the applicant, the City
15 Council may uphold, amend, or reverse the Commission's
16 determination.

17 Subsequent to the Commission's
18 determination of the demolition request concludes, the
19 Commission -- it will take -- will make a recommendation
20 regarding the dedesignation of 4 East State Street as a
21 historic landmark. The recommendation will be forwarded
22 to the City Council and may be upheld, amended, or
23 reversed -- reverse the Commission's determination
24 regarding dedesignation.

1 Let's talk about the testimony procedure.
2 In order to give testimony, let's print your name and
3 provide your signature in the spaces provided at the
4 registration sheet located at the City Council as you
5 enter. By signing the registration sheet, you agree to
6 understand that everything you say will be considered
7 sworn testimony and that you affirm to tell the truth, the
8 whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

9 When giving testimony, please come forward
10 to the lectern. Speak clearly and slowly and loudly so
11 the HPC members, the audience, and the recording service
12 can hear you, beginning by stating your name. If you
13 speak multiple times, please state your name each time you
14 enter the record.

15 Please be concise when presenting your
16 testimony. If your point has already been made, it is not
17 necessary that those points be repeated by the speaker or
18 the speakers who may testify. Each of these points is
19 recorded and will be considered as Historic Preservation
20 Commission development recommendation.

21 You may provide your testimony in written
22 form, but such written testimony must be presented for the
23 preservation prior -- prior to closing or this hearing.
24 After the process is completed and everyone wishing to

1 present testimony has spoken, the Commission will decide
2 whether they have heard adequate testimony in order to
3 reach a recommendation.

4 If the Commission determines that it has
5 heard adequate testimony, the public hearing will be
6 closed. However, if the Commission determines that the
7 additional testimony or information is necessary to make a
8 determination, then the public hearing will be continued
9 within the procedures established by the audience.

10 After the public hearing is closed, the
11 Preservation Commission will refrain from receiving any
12 additional testimony either for or against the petition.
13 Testimony presented before the Commission forms the
14 official record of the public hearing for Case No.
15 2025-114.

16 The Commission will deliberate the on
17 presented testimony in regard to the applicant's
18 demolition request, make appropriate motions and vote yay
19 or nay to approve to the following items. Approve the
20 demolition request as presented: Approve the demolition
21 request with amendments and/or stipulations; table the
22 request to a date certain for the purpose of identifying
23 additional information unavailable to public hearing that
24 is warranted and necessary for the purpose of making a

1 finding of fact; table the request to a date certain for
2 purpose of providing time to fully evaluate the new
3 evidence presented at the public hearing; or table the
4 request to a date certain to solicit expert testimony to
5 evaluate the information provided either as part -- either
6 as part or of the demolition application or at the public
7 hearings.

8 At this time, I will administer the oath to
9 those who have signed the registration form. Anyone
10 wishing to give sworn testimony, ask questions, or
11 cross-examine anyone giving sworn testimony, please stand
12 and raise your right hand and answer I do to affirm your
13 intent. So if you would, stand up if you plan on
14 speaking.

15 Do you affirm that the testimony you're
16 about to make is full truth and to the best of your
17 knowledge, correct? If yes, respond I do.

18 (Witnesses sworn.)

19 MR. ZELLMER: You may be seated. Okay.
20 Emily, you're going to provide an introductory detail
21 about tonight's public hearing case.

22 MS. STOOD: All right. Thank you.

23 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you.

24 MS. STOOD: Much of what I'm about to

1 describe is available in further detail in these packets,
2 which I see many of you saw and grabbed. They're also
3 available online.

4 So the applicant has requested demolition
5 of the designated historic landmark property at 4 East
6 State Street. The site is generally known as the Mill
7 Race Inn property, but the property also is identified by
8 a number of significant occupants of the structure over
9 time. This includes the Alexander Brothers Blacksmith
10 Shop, the Rystrum Heritage Shop, C.E. Man Wagon
11 Manufacturing and Blacksmithing, the C.E. Man Cooperage,
12 the Excelsior/Carlson Laundry, the Kirk Building, the John
13 Updy Carriage Painting Shop, the Anderson and Colbert
14 Blacksmith and Wagon Shop, and the Mill Racing Restaurant.

15 In December 2017, David A. Patzelt,
16 representative for the Shodeen Family Foundation, applied
17 for a demolition permit of the limestone structure that
18 had been erected as the Alexander Brothers Blacksmith Shop
19 between 1840 and 1847.

20 In response, Geneva resident Fred Sneake
21 submitted a nomination for historic landmark designation
22 of 4 East State Street, Geneva, Illinois. Following a
23 public hearing and a recommendation by the Historic
24 Preservation Commission on March 20, 2018, the city

1 council designated the 4 East State Street property as a
2 historic landmark on May 7th, 2018, per ordinance 2018-09.

3 In 2019 to 2020, a charrette process was
4 undergone, which ultimately was not successful between the
5 City of Geneva and the Shodeen Family Foundation. In
6 2022, a boundary amendment to the NAFTA landmark was
7 approved. Between 2023 and -- 2022 and 2023 a demolition
8 request was made and was ultimately denied. The property
9 owner was cited in 2023 for violations of the Property
10 Maintenance Code. Those citations were upheld in court.

11 And now we are at our current demolition
12 request for 2025. The applicant is requesting a
13 demolition of the historic landmark located at 4 East
14 State Street, with an application focused on Standard 4 of
15 the state Standards for Demolition review described in
16 City Code Section 10-6-10(b).

17 Standard 4 argues that the retention of a
18 building structure, object, improvement, or site is not in
19 the best interest of the majority of the community. This
20 application, again, is available to view on the City of
21 Geneva website.

22 The HPC is not being asked to re-examine
23 the significance of the designated property which includes
24 the circa 1846 limestone blacksmith shop. Significance

1 was determined by HPC and City Council action in 2018.
2 The HPC is not being asked to re-examine the
3 appropriateness of the boundaries of the historic landmark
4 that were modified by HPC and City Council action in 2022.

5 The application under review is solely for
6 demolition of the historic structure. There is no
7 additional development proposed in this application. As
8 such, the HPC is not being asked to examine any work at
9 the site beyond the demolition described in this
10 application.

11 We've had a few public comments submitted
12 to the record. Those have been distributed to the
13 Commission, who have read them since the most recent post
14 was made online today. This includes one from Scott
15 McMurray, titled Please Save Blacksmith Shop, and one from
16 Tom and Jean Horonsi, titled Blacksmith Shop Demolition,
17 and one from Scott -- oh, that's the same one -- so only
18 two.

19 Our examination today is looking at the
20 demolition project proposal. The HPC shall consider the
21 application and testimony from the petitioner in
22 combination with testimony from interested parties in
23 regard to the proposed demolition of the property
24 addressed at 4 East State Street, Geneva.

1 MR. ZELLMER: Very good. Thank you. Thank
2 you very much. First, we'll have the petitioner come up
3 and present his case.

4 MR. PATZELT: Good evening. Excuse me.
5 Good evening. For the record, my name is David Patzelt,
6 P-A-T-Z-E-L-T, 77 North First Street, Geneva, Illinois
7 60134. I'm before you, as Emily has described, once
8 again, this being the third time. Unfortunately, I'm not
9 bringing any much better news than the last two times I
10 was here before you.

11 The only difference this time, as Emily has
12 described, is that based on some of the comments that we
13 have seen the public speak before the city council, as
14 well as general public coming before us, and whether it's
15 email traffic or telephone calls, asking for something to
16 be done, for the structure to be taken down.

17 So based on those requests, we have gone
18 through the process of submitting the demolition
19 application under the auspices that it's not in the best
20 interest of the community at large to maintain the
21 structure.

22 There are a couple things that I would just
23 like to reiterate. Our application is rather lengthy. I
24 won't go through all of the details that are contained in

1 that application. There's a lot of factual data, numbers,
2 et cetera, that are required by the ordinance that we
3 submit. We have submitted those. I'm sure that you've
4 read those in detail. Many of those items you've seen
5 previously, we've discussed and debated those as well. So
6 again, I won't go through all of those.

7 We know that in initial hearings on this
8 building that some residents had spoke out that were in
9 favor of saving the structure and they had specifically
10 requested more time, time to try to find something that
11 could be done with the structure.

12 How long is that time? I would suggest
13 that whatever amount of time, that time has passed, it's
14 been long enough. There's been several different
15 attempts, whether it's to find a buyer, to move the
16 structure, to find somebody that is interested in
17 renovating the structure or being -- using it for some
18 specific use. But in essence, that time has passed and we
19 have not found -- and nobody has come forward. So I
20 suggest that the time has come that we need to make some
21 further decisions on it.

22 We also know that from the data that I have
23 submitted that the cost to repair, renovate, restore the
24 structure is in excess of what the structure is actually

1 worth or valued. So in essence, it's not cost effective
2 to restore it or repair the structure.

3 So lastly, I'll say that the city
4 themselves, whether it's councils or various commissions
5 that have been put forward, as Emily had indicated, has
6 had several different workshops, sessions, planning,
7 whether it's the master plan -- the downtown master plan
8 at public hearings, there is the charrette process that
9 the site went through. There was documents -- planning
10 documents that the City has identifying this as an
11 opportunity site. But at all of those hearings and all of
12 those reports identify this site as a potential -- and I'd
13 say significant redevelopment site within the city.

14 However, with this historic structure
15 there, it has served as one of its obstacles for any
16 potential redevelopment to occur on that site. Prior to
17 any redevelopment, we really need to find what is the
18 future of that structure. And I would hope that this
19 evening you would give it serious consideration, whether
20 it's the time or whether it's the cost, just what is in
21 the best interest of the community at large that it,
22 perhaps, is time to say that we need to move on.

23 So with that I'll conclude that concludes
24 my comments. I'm trying to stay brief. I think everybody

1 knows the issue that's before all of us, but I am
2 available for any questions or comments from anyone.
3 Thank you.

4 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you. If anyone from
5 the Commission would like to have any questions for
6 Mr. Patzelt, if you could. And I would also just state
7 that commissioners and the public, that we really want to
8 -- the application has noted the Standard No. 4, which is
9 the retention of the building structure and object
10 improvement or site and is not in the best interest of the
11 majority of the community. So we want to kind of focus on
12 that with this hearing.

13 So with that, Jewel, do you have a
14 question?

15 MS. JENSEN: I do have a question, and it
16 is in reference to our Standard 4. But in order to get to
17 that conclusion, I need to have some clarifications on a
18 few things from you, David.

19 MR. PATZELT: Sure.

20 MS. JENSEN: And a couple of my
21 clarification questions are from your application,
22 specifically on Page 5, Item 6, where you address that the
23 City of Geneva taxpayers paid for a failed charrette
24 process.

1 So as I understand it, that charrette
2 process was in the amount of about \$273,000 in total. And
3 you were reimbursed for half of that because the charrette
4 was not approved for the one development option that you
5 had available. That was turned down by the City and the
6 citizens; is that correct?

7 MR. PATZELT: Correct. And --

8 MS. JENSEN: Okay. Okay. That's fine.
9 And also on Page 5, Item No. 8, the taxpayers paid
10 thousands in fees on additional demo request of about
11 \$15,000. You had included that?

12 MR. PATZELT: Yes.

13 MS. JENSEN: Okay. And on Page 8, Item
14 No. 14, there was no positive impacts that have been
15 accomplished in the eight years. And you came up with a
16 total of \$288,000 that have been spent by the city
17 taxpayers.

18 And I would like to argue that no positive
19 impacts or accomplishments have been made because the
20 owner has not submitted any development plans for
21 approval, nor have they taken care of protecting this
22 structure from the elements or agree to work with a study
23 group that is then offered to them to explore and evaluate
24 the potential ideas of the historic structure.

1 Not only that, but you've been charged a
2 fine, a code violation of well over \$300,000. And as of
3 to date, has that fine been paid?

4 MR. PATZELT: It has not been.

5 MS. JENSEN: Okay. So my question is --
6 I'm leading -- all of this is helping me with
7 clarification for our standard. So to date, this amount
8 has not been paid. So if the request is approved and they
9 are allowed to demo this property, would they still be
10 responsible for paying this code violation of over
11 \$300,000? That's one question.

12 MR. ZELLMER: I think the city attorney
13 would like to jump in on that.

14 MR. SANDACK: So for purposes of the fine,
15 that is something for the city council to determine what
16 enforcement, if any, the council wishes to proceed with.
17 Your charge today is, frankly, with respect to the code
18 provision before you. The fine and what the council
19 does --

20 MS. JENSEN: Is -- okay.

21 MR. SANDACK: -- for whatever the council
22 does.

23 MS. JENSEN: Okay. So my next question is:
24 If they're approved the demolition and they submit a

1 development plan and it's approved and they are allotted
2 TIF monies, could the fine be deducted from the TIF money?

3 MR. SANDACK: I'm going to say the same
4 answer. Okay. That is outside the scope of today's
5 proceeding. Good questions --

6 MS. JENSEN: Okay.

7 MR. SANDACK: -- very valid, but beyond the
8 scope of today's proceedings.

9 MS. JENSEN: Okay. That's just helping me
10 understand how we are going to come to a conclusion
11 regarding the standard for -- that you proposed for your
12 demolition request. Thank you, David.

13 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. Any other questions
14 for the Commission?

15 MR. PHILLIPS: I have a question. I just
16 want to make clear that nothing has changed since 2023, in
17 August, when this Commission denied demolition with the
18 exception of -- I'm assuming additional letters that are
19 in favor of demolition being submitted to the Commission.
20 Is that -- is that a correct statement?

21 MR. PATZELT: I would suggest that when you
22 say change, I admit that there's maybe no change.
23 However, again, I'll go back to one of my comments that
24 there was a request for, just give us more time, that

1 there has been more time given and there has -- nothing
2 has come forward, so there is no change. It was our prior
3 argument or discussion that we didn't think that there was
4 any opportunity or anyone out there seeking an opportunity
5 at that site.

6 So, sure, that's no change, but I think
7 there is some value in the time that has passed, and that
8 time that has passed has given that time for somebody to
9 step forward.

10 MR. PHILLIPS: Did that request for more
11 time come from the Commission?

12 MR. PATZELT: It did not. It was comment
13 from --

14 MR. PHILLIPS: So that really is, in my
15 mind, irrelevant to anything that's different from our
16 decision back in August of 2023. And I guess, you know,
17 my feeling on that is since that time, Shodeen has done
18 nothing except drag the city into hearings, in courts, and
19 question the -- the HPC's decision. And in the meantime,
20 has allowed that building to deteriorate such to the point
21 where now maybe many people in the community view it as an
22 eyesore. And that's really the basis of your petition
23 here for us today.

24 So in my mind, you're asking us to approve

1 a demolition that basically is based on an eyesore that
2 you've created, and I don't feel that's something I
3 could --

4 MR. PATZELT: I understand your feeling,
5 but I completely disagree with you that we -- that the
6 time has created an eyesore. I don't think -- if you look
7 at the photographs that were before you, if you looked at
8 the dates, I don't think much has changed from
9 deterioration on the structure. There have been requests
10 to remove the roof. That roof is a burned-out structure,
11 and there's been complete denial. You can't do anything
12 with that roof. Regardless, if you were going to add
13 something onto it, you were going to do something with the
14 structure, that roof should have been --

15 MR. PHILLIPS: So you've been asked to put
16 a tarp on that roof, and you've refused.

17 MR. PATZELT: Correct. Because
18 structurally the tarp won't hold anything. If I put a
19 tarp on that roof, and all of a sudden it fills with snow
20 and water, and what happens to the burned-out structure?
21 The structure collapses.

22 MR. PHILLIPS: It's still standing, sir.
23 It's -- I think that's -- I don't want to get into an
24 argument about that, but --

1 MR. ZELLMER: I don't think we need to get
2 into an argument about that.

3 MS. MCMANUS: I think this is just --

4 MR. ZELLMER: I think we want to --

5 MS. MCMANUS: -- a question.

6 MR. ZELLMER: We want to -- we want to keep
7 this focused on the application and what they're asking.
8 And that really goes to more of the upkeep of the project,
9 which does have some validity because it is -- you know,
10 that -- have you created the issue?

11 MR. PHILLIPS: That essentially is my
12 point, and I --

13 MR. ZELLMER: I think that -- that it is a
14 point that can't be taken, so...

15 MS. MCMANUS: So is Shodeen looking to sell
16 the property? Is that what you're saying that you were
17 looking for buyers or looking for --

18 MR. PATZELT: We've long advertised the
19 selling of the structure.

20 MS. MCMANUS: The structure, not the
21 property?

22 MR. PATZELT: That's correct.

23 MS. MCMANUS: So you're looking to just get
24 rid of it any way you can?

1 MR. PATZELT: We're trying to find a home
2 for that structure, yes.

3 MS. MCMANUS: It feels like maybe during
4 the time since the last time we rejected the demo plan
5 that maybe instead of all this legal effort that maybe we
6 could have submitted something and worked on a development
7 that included it. I feel like some of the money lost is
8 happening as it occurs today just because of all this
9 inaction. It's got to be costing Shodeen some money, just
10 sitting on a property.

11 MR. PATZELT: Sure. Absolutely. Yeah. It
12 changes the return on investment of that property.

13 MS. MCMANUS: Yeah.

14 MR. PATZELT: However, when you don't know
15 what you can do with that structure --

16 MS. MCMANUS: But we haven't seen anything.
17 No one's seen anything --

18 (Indiscernible due to crosstalk.)

19 MR. PATZELT: And we can't plan to do
20 anything with the property, with the structure, as it
21 stands there. So how do you prepare a redevelopment plan
22 when you don't --

23 MS. MCMANUS: You work around it.

24 MR. PATZELT: Well, you may, but that's --

1 that's not our experience.

2 MS. MCMANUS: All right.

3 MR. SALOMON: Question. When did -- when
4 did Shodeen purchase the property?

5 MR. PATZELT: I don't have that --

6 MS. MCMANUS: Isn't it in 2013?

7 MR. PHILLIPS: 2013 or '14 is my
8 recollection.

9 MR. SALOMON: Okay. So, I mean, I guess,
10 you know, I'm looking at this. Is that -- you know, if I
11 remember correctly from previous issues regarding this, is
12 that I believe it was in the agreement of the property
13 purchased that this historic structure was going to be
14 preserved. Is that not correct?

15 MR. PATZELT: That's not my understanding.
16 I don't recall that at all in the contract.

17 MR. SALOMON: Okay. I believe there was
18 something in there. Talking about the mill rate about
19 that piece of property.

20 MS. MCMANUS: I think it was also a pledge
21 by ownership, too.

22 MR. SALOMON: Yeah, I think --

23 MR. PATZELT: I don't think there was
24 anything saying --

1 MS. MCMANUS: It was more of a verbal
2 pledge --

3 MR. PATZELT: Right.

4 MS. MCMANUS: -- by the owners.

5 MR. PATZELT: Not a requirement.

6 MR. SALOMON: So now the original structure
7 was incorporated in the Mill Race Inn. So they figured
8 out a way to utilize the blacksmith shop, and I believe it
9 was like their bar area, you know, downstairs, going
10 there.

11 MS. MCMANUS: Yeah.

12 MR. SALOMON: So they were obviously able
13 to figure out a use for that structure in their plans, but
14 Shodeen is not capable of doing that?

15 MR. PATZELT: You're incorrect. I think
16 you're confusing a different part of the structure was the
17 bar area. The -- the actual -- I'm going to say 60
18 percent of the stone remnant structure is a slab on grade.
19 So there is no basement. There's a northerly portion of
20 the -- of this structure that does have a basement. That
21 basement has a very low ceiling and was part of an
22 electrical --

23 MR. SALOMON: But it was incorporated --

24 MS. MCMANUS: It was in the dining -- it

1 was in the dining area upstairs, yeah.

2 MR. SALOMON: So it was incorporated in the
3 building. Okay. Maybe it's not the bar, whatever. So
4 they figured out way back then that they were able to do
5 that. And you guys are unable to do that, you know, here
6 20 years, you know, later, after it was first built.

7 MR. PATZELT: Correct. Nor is anyone else
8 able to do that.

9 MR. SALOMON: Well, nobody else tore --

10 MR. PATZELT: And nobody else has come
11 forward.

12 MR. SALOMON: Well, nobody else tore that
13 old building down to expose it to the elements except for
14 you guys.

15 MS. MCMANUS: No.

16 MR. PATZELT: Correct. And perhaps we made
17 a mistake by tearing that down. And we said that, not
18 knowing where this full structure was at, we were going to
19 peel back the onion -- like the cloves in an onion -- peel
20 it back to see what structure we could find.

21 And that's that structure that you have
22 there today is what was -- what exists or what remains.
23 And only portions of that structure were really
24 incorporated into the dining room of the --

1 MR. SALOMON: But it was incorporated. A
2 way was figured out.

3 MR. PATZELT: Sure. Yep. Do you have some
4 suggestions of how you'd like to --

5 MR. SALOMON: Well, I don't -- I'm not an
6 architect or an engineer. I'm asking questions.

7 MR. ZELLMER: I think that's beyond what
8 we're trying to get to here, too.

9 MR. PATZELT: Correct.

10 MR. ZELLMER: I think we want to look at --
11 again, going back to what the application is asking, so...

12 MR. SALOMON: Well, I -- I also feel that
13 -- and I think Kevin, you know, touched on it, too, is
14 that, you know, this has been exposed, it's been
15 slow-goed. Okay. I feel it comes in -- it's almost up to
16 the nature of demolition by neglect. You guys are hoping
17 that something's going to blow that wall down and then,
18 you know, your case is closed.

19 But, you know, I have a question regarding
20 the -- the last hearing where it said that the facility is
21 supposed to made weather-tight by 9/30/25. Was that done?

22 MR. PATZELT: I think you have the -- the
23 answer relative to the fine. Do you know?

24 MR. SALOMON: Well, there were other

1 things, you know, as far as different violations along the
2 way that probably added to it. So the thing is, is
3 that --

4 MR. PATZELT: No. I believe there's only
5 -- my understanding is there's only one violation and that
6 was making the building weather-tight.

7 MR. SALOMON: And that was not done.

8 MR. PATZELT: Right.

9 MR. SALOMON: And so is -- you know, and
10 whether there was a gentlemen's agreement about preserving
11 the facility or that type of a thing, so is this a common
12 practice to ignore?

13 MR. PATZELT: I did not make that
14 gentlemen's agreement.

15 MR. SALOMON: I'm not saying that.

16 MR. PATZELT: I've not heard that. Is that
17 common? I'm not familiar with having a gentlemen's
18 agreement with the City and going against those, so...

19 MR. SALOMON: But regarding making it
20 weather-tight, that was ignored. Is that a common
21 practice?

22 MR. PATZELT: I mean, all of our remaining
23 structures that I know of are all weather-tight.

24 MR. SALOMON: That wasn't what I was

1 saying. Okay. But I understand --

2 MR. PATZELT: Well, you're asking if it's a
3 common practice. I can tell you that out of the other
4 million square feet of buildings that we own, they're all
5 weather-tight.

6 MR. SALOMON: But in this particular case,
7 you ignored the legal --

8 MR. PATZELT: I thought you were asking me
9 if that was common or not. If I compare the
10 million-square-foot buildings to the --

11 MR. SALOMON: Okay. All right, David. If
12 you want to go that way, that's fine. Okay.

13 MR. PATZELT: Okay.

14 MS. MCMANUS: Well, common among historic
15 structures that we're looking to preserve.

16 MR. PATZELT: Absolutely not. We have
17 several historic structures within our portfolio, and
18 those are all weather-tight.

19 MS. MCMANUS: Well, I'm sure, because
20 they're completed projects. This is an incomplete
21 project.

22 MR. PATZELT: We do not have any other
23 historic structures that are incomplete.

24 MS. MCMANUS: Great. I think that, just in

1 general, we've been working with Shodeen this whole time,
2 you know, and we -- whether it was the charrette process,
3 and even -- I've been on this commission long enough to
4 know that, you know, it -- we had shrunk down it. It was
5 the entire property originally. This was a much larger
6 tract of land.

7 Knowing that it was tying Shodeen's hands
8 to present something that was utilizing the entire
9 property, we tightened it up. We made it so it was, you
10 know, 10 feet on the -- I think it was 10 feet in all
11 directions, just so it was just that that had to be
12 preserved. Just so that it could show -- Shodeen could
13 throw something out there and not -- and have a little bit
14 more design freedom, you know.

15 And I think that that was one of the things
16 that we've been doing this whole time is just trying to
17 work with Shodeen, but I feel like there's been roadblocks
18 in recent years where now we're -- there's no interest in
19 even presenting anything of any value. It's just like a
20 standoff, like a tug of war where there's no one wins.

21 We've got a hole in the ground in a
22 historic property. We've got a historic property that,
23 through years of neglect, is looking worse and worse by
24 the day. And it does look worse. I mean, there's a lot

1 of things that look different about it. I was looking at
2 it just the other day and thinking there's more areas of
3 -- yeah, the roof itself is just kind of this thing that's
4 sort of randomly protecting this real structure, which is
5 the masonry part of it, right? I mean, that's really the
6 only thing that's still there that has value that -- you
7 know, the wooden structure that's -- the roof of it is
8 just merely, you know, just something that's deteriorated
9 already. We can see that. The tarps are flying.

10 You know, it's just not a property right
11 now that's in good shape. And the reality is that we need
12 -- we would -- rather than have these conversations about
13 taking the building down for years, we could have just
14 presented something -- presented something a long time
15 ago. Shodeen could be making money on this property now,
16 but yet here we are entertaining another demo request for
17 something that -- I mean, we just need it -- we would love
18 to see something presented to us so that we could approve
19 it, and they put something on that property -- and
20 including that building.

21 MR. PATZELT: We'd love to bring a develop
22 -- a redevelopment proposal before you, but we need to
23 know what is going to be done with the structure. If the
24 structure needs to remain, we won't have a redevelopment

1 plan that we can prepare.

2 I -- I accept your -- your statement about
3 tying our hands by having the entire property landmarked.
4 And yes, we did come before you to have that reduced
5 because we believed that it was erroneously -- the entire
6 parcel was landmarked, and that was not the intent of what
7 should have been done.

8 So, yeah, that tied our hands. Why did you
9 need to tie our hands on the entire site? Why did -- if
10 you were going to landmark something, why didn't you just
11 landmark the structure? But you didn't.

12 (Indiscernible due to crosstalk.)

13 MS. MCMANUS: So you came to us and we
14 agreed, and we worked with you. We're willing to work
15 with you guys.

16 MR. PATZELT: I appreciate that you're
17 willing to work with us. I agree -- I've been with the
18 organization 31 years, and I've been before the HPC many,
19 many times, everything from the dots in place to down at
20 our office building. And there has always been a level of
21 cooperation between the Historic Preservation Commission
22 and the Shodeen Organization.

23 MS. MCMANUS: Sure.

24 MR. PATZELT: I think we've been able to

1 show, when there is historic structures that have value
2 and that can be reused, we do go above and beyond to try
3 to incorporate those historic structures into whatever
4 development plan we have.

5 Unfortunately, I think this is a project
6 where we're at opposite ends of the spectrum, that we see
7 no value and no right way out of this by reusing that
8 structure. I believe that the charrette process --

9 MR. ZELLMER: I think that we need to --

10 MR. PATZELT: -- was producing --

11 (Indiscernible due to crosstalk.)

12 MR. ZELLMER: I think we need to get --

13 MR. PATZELT: It was totally on course that
14 that structure could not be saved. I suggest there should
15 be some way of taking portions of that structure, and if
16 you -- maybe it's not the right --

17 MR. SANDACK: Mr. Patzelt, I think we're
18 going beyond where we were --

19 MR. ZELLMER: Let me just kind of wrap up.
20 I mean, I think we -- I think you're reiterating a lot of
21 things that we've already heard before and we understand
22 that. So we want to try to get back to what the
23 application is asking for and how you -- what -- what new
24 evidence you're presenting. And I don't think you're

1 presenting evidence right now. So let's just keep it
2 focused on what the application is and try to keep it.
3 And the commissioners will keep their questions to that
4 level, too. So -- okay.

5 MS. JENSEN: I just had one more question
6 that's relevant. Just a question for you, David. The
7 last time the current property owner -- right now, the
8 current property owner's name is Mill Race Land Company,
9 LLC; is that correct?

10 MR. PATZELT: Correct.

11 MS. JENSEN: But in the last times we've
12 met, it was the Shodeen Family Foundation --

13 MR. PATZELT: Correct.

14 MS. JENSEN: -- right. But it's the same
15 people, just different names?

16 MR. PATZELT: No, it's been sold.

17 MS. JENSEN: All right. So the new people
18 are the Mill Rice Land Company, LLC?

19 MR. PATZELT: That's correct.

20 MS. JENSEN: Okay. Thank you.

21 MR. PHILLIPS: And so is it no longer a
22 charitable foundation?

23 MR. PATZELT: Correct. It is no longer
24 owned by a charitable foundation.

1 MR. PHILLIPS: So it potentially could
2 be -- it could qualify for financial support from the --
3 from the state or the federal government in terms of
4 preservation?

5 MR. ZELLMER: Go ahead.

6 MR. PHILLIPS: I mean, I know that's not
7 germane to, you know, Standard No. 6, but just to clarify,
8 following up No. 4 --

9 MS. JENSEN: Number 4.

10 MR. PATZELT: Yeah, it's -- I don't know
11 that answer.

12 MR. PHILLIPS: I think that would be
13 something that they could evaluate and look at.

14 MR. PATZELT: Yes.

15 MR. RIEBE: As the new commissioner, I just
16 have a quick question. I want you to clarify something
17 you said. Nice to meet you.

18 Lisa was asking about plans to incorporate
19 the existing structure in whatever national corporation
20 wants to do with the land, and you had said that we won't
21 -- what I want to clarify is here that you will not be
22 bringing any plans with the existing structure.

23 So what I took away from that is that so
24 long as that structure is there, the property will sit as

1 is, and there'll be nothing brought for us to review with
2 the structure in standing; is that correct?

3 MR. PATZELT: That is correct, and there
4 are some reasons for that. Specifically, structural
5 engineers have looked at that structure, both the city
6 structural engineer through the charrette process and a
7 third-party structural engineer, and have both determined
8 that the walls and the footings underneath the walls are
9 not capable of sustaining or carrying any additional load.
10 So no additional load could be placed on those walls;
11 meaning that you can't put an addition on it, et cetera.

12 So the structure needs to be taken down in
13 order to build something in or on that space, that piece
14 of land.

15 MR. ZELLMER: I don't know whether that's
16 germane to this conversation, but the point is, is that --
17 I guess your point is, is that you're not going to do
18 anything with this. If this is denied, it -- it will not
19 go forward. Nothing will come forward?

20 MR. PATZELT: That's correct.

21 MR. ZELLMER: Yeah. That --

22 MS. JENSEN: And this will be your third --
23 this is your third request for a demo. And the courts
24 system has already denied two different instances that

1 you've applied for, right?

2 MR. PATZELT: Correct.

3 MS. JENSEN: Okay.

4 MR. ZELLMER: Okay.

5 MS. JENSEN: All right.

6 MR. ZELLMER: Any other questions from the
7 Commission? If there's no other questions from the
8 Commission, we're going to move on to questions -- or for
9 the received citizen test testimony, unless you want to
10 make a final --

11 MR. PATZELT: I only have one last comment.
12 I couldn't hear what the commissioner said after I --
13 after I answered her question, she made a comment. I
14 couldn't hear what you had said.

15 MS. JENSEN: So what about our legal
16 system? Is that --

17 MR. ZELLMER: I don't think -- I don't
18 think it's -- I don't think it's germane to this.

19 MR. PATZELT: Okay. Thank you.

20 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you. Okay. I will
21 call people's names, and if you can come up and then state
22 your name again, and then give your testimony. So first
23 on the list is Bill Cook.

24 MR. COOK: I'll pass.

1 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. Second on the list is
2 Alan Leahig.

3 MR. LEAHIG: Good evening. My name is Alan
4 Leahig. I live at 211 Garfield Street, which is in Ward
5 1, where the blacksmith shop is located. My purpose here
6 this evening is to speak against demolition of the
7 blacksmith shop.

8 It seems to me that in the first two
9 petitions that were brought to you for demolition, the
10 main arguments were economic and financial, that it would
11 be a hardship or infeasible to repurpose the building.
12 And this time, in this third iteration, the request is
13 based more on public opinion and people wanting to get rid
14 of an eyesore. And that seems to be the thrust of it.

15 And that suggestion by the petitioner is
16 that there's been some kind of a seat change and that more
17 and more people want to be done with it and just abolish
18 it and get rid of it. My suggestion to you is that what
19 the petitioner is bringing is a false economy here or a
20 false choice. That you have two choices here. Either
21 you're going to keep this eyesore or you demolish it.
22 It's one or the other, and it sort of overlooks a third
23 option. And that would be that there would be an effort
24 to restore or redevelop or to repurpose the building. And

1 I think that would be one that would be much more
2 favorably received by many in the community than the other
3 two options that have been presented to us.

4 Returning it so that it becomes now an
5 asset again to the community, which it was for the first
6 of nearly two centuries that it's been there. It was a
7 great asset to the community for the various businesses
8 that were in there. And I think people would like to see
9 it return to that. So if public opinion is the thrust of
10 what we're being asked to look at here, that'd be Item 4,
11 you know, what the community wants its best use of the
12 property.

13 One of the things that was suggested -- in
14 fact, it was suggested by me at this lectern the last time
15 around, was that there be a study group of citizens,
16 probably representatives of individual stakeholder groups,
17 community organizations, that could come together and
18 study this about what the possibilities are beyond what
19 the applicant has done. And then to evaluate those, look
20 at the finances and so forth, all the aspects of it, and
21 then bring those to the applicant. And here are our one,
22 two, three or four best ideas of what could be done with
23 property.

24 In fact, that study group could even

1 involve the applicant as part of the study group. So that
2 was presented here. I had volunteered to organize that.
3 In fact, I would love to do that. In fact, I even met
4 with the applicant afterwards in his offices and presented
5 this suggestion that there be such a study group and they
6 could be part of it.

7 And in fact, it might be to the applicant's
8 advantage because if no one could come up with all these
9 brains in the community, any great ideas, then that would
10 fortify the applicant's case that, yes, we brought all
11 these people together from the community, and yet they
12 couldn't come up with anything that was workable. So it
13 would be advantageous there.

14 But I would think that the study group
15 could, if you have some smart people, and we have a lot of
16 smart people in this town --

17 MR. ZELLMER: If you could -- I think the
18 idea of a study group is just what we need to hear. If
19 you could keep to the --

20 MR. LEAHIG: Sure. Sure. Okay. It seems
21 to me that the applicant, over the course of these many
22 years, has brought forward one possibility and that -- for
23 adaptive use, and that it be converted into offices. And
24 then it was like a straw man because it was set up then,

1 well, but that's not feasible. And they had some experts
2 come in to tell us why that isn't feasible. So they -- to
3 me, that would mean that the applicant is not in
4 compliance with Code 10-6-10, which states in one
5 sentence, very clearly, that demolition -- this is for a
6 landmark -- should be considered only after all
7 redevelopment options for the building structure or other
8 improvement site have been exhausted.

9 So I would maintain that presentation of
10 one adaptive use that had become offices would not be in
11 compliance with the ordinance because it's far from
12 exhausting the possibilities. And it'd be good to have
13 the study group come up with some others that the
14 applicant could consider and it can evaluate.

15 It seemed that the 20 letters or so that
16 were submitted with the application for people who favored
17 demolition, if you read through them, and all were said,
18 it's to get rid of something ugly. And I don't think
19 something ugly has to be there because if you could
20 redevelop it, you could restore it, repurpose it, that
21 you'd have something that would be very useful and
22 attractive on that corner at 4 East State Street.

23 I think that the general public would be
24 very favorable if they were to give some options that

1 would address the immense historic value, educational
2 value, the commercial value, recreational value, perhaps
3 even tourism value, the potential of that property. Thank
4 you.

5 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you. Okay. I think
6 it's -- maybe I'm going to have to ask my -- Zora. Okay.
7 If you could state your name.

8 MS. SLAPAK: Zora Slapak, and I don't know
9 who this gentleman is, but whatever he said, I agree with
10 him. I don't know who he is or what he said, but I agree.
11 But one thing I want to ask you. I moved here several
12 years ago and I love Geneva. I came from Naperville, and
13 when I see that, it is a big eyesore. And I don't know
14 why the demolition is denied three times.

15 I think -- I don't know, did -- I don't
16 know if Mr. Shodeen is his name. Did he know that he
17 bought that historical shop there or not?

18 MR. ZELLMER: I think that that's been --
19 that's been gone over on previous portions, and I think
20 that's been taken up. So, yeah, that's been talked about.
21 So whether it's -- I think we heard what you've said, that
22 you think it's an eyesore. And I think that that -- what
23 -- basically, we're trying to go beyond what that is and
24 just say whether this is in the best interest of the

1 majority of the community and not relitigate the point of
2 making it a landmark. So...

3 MS. SLAPAK: Well, I prefer that you take
4 it down and make the Geneva beautiful, what I moved here
5 for.

6 MR. ZELLMER: Okay.

7 MS. SLAPAK: Thank you.

8 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you. Okay. Next is
9 Dave Armbrust.

10 MR. ARMBRUST: My name is Dave Armbrust.
11 2320 North Route 23 in Marengo, Illinois. My wife and I
12 have been in preservation for 45 years, currently working
13 on the Wayne Train Depot and been involved with
14 blacksmithing. I spoke a year and a half ago at this same
15 Commission.

16 To answer this gentleman's question
17 earlier, the Chicago Tribune on April 3rd, 2014, there's a
18 quote: We are committed to preserving the historical --
19 from the Shodeen family that read: We are committed to
20 preserving the historical integrity of the site by
21 incorporating the blacksmith shop portion into the
22 planning process. Today, those four stone walls are 181
23 years old.

24 The Geneva Municipal Code, which you're all

1 speaking about, 10-6-10(b), has four points to it. The
2 first point --

3 MR. ZELLMER: We actually are only
4 concerned about the fourth point because --

5 MR. ARMBRUST: I'm getting right to that
6 point.

7 MR. ZELLMER: Very good.

8 MR. ARMBRUST: Because Point One only
9 speaks to fielding being used. Point Two, we're not
10 talking about a park or civic undertaking. Point Three,
11 which is, in part, directly related to the applicant's
12 comment. That site of 1.4 acres, more or less, equates to
13 roughly 61,000 square feet. The building itself is 1500
14 square feet.

15 If you add -- this lady talked about the
16 10-foot surround -- about that -- I believe it to be 20.
17 So that would make the building 70 by 90 or 6300 square
18 feet, or one-tenth the size of the whole property, which
19 they're suggesting they can't do anything with.

20 It's interesting that the Chairman,
21 Mr. Zellmer, pointed out Point Four, which is my -- it
22 speaks to the significance, speaks to the retention of the
23 structure not being in the best interest of the majority
24 of the community. The limestone structure represents the

1 original STEM learning center. I put together five pages
2 of STEM, what a blacksmith shop does, a STEM education, a
3 blacksmith's education. It's a visually -- it is visually
4 a structural place of pause in a world so stimulated that
5 there seems no time to reflect and link our past to the
6 present, to slow down and offer a sense of continuity to
7 relevant life one generation to another.

8 The metaphor of the Alexander Brothers
9 Blacksmith Shop here in Geneva, is its inherently
10 unifying, authentic representation of our national
11 character -- a community and its people who are
12 hard-working, making right choices, and realizing what is
13 of value.

14 Lastly, every city's makeup is its
15 literature, its memory. I'd be happy to participate in
16 recreating that STEM center that the city could operate
17 potentially for six months out of the year. Thank you
18 very much.

19 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you. Okay. The next
20 person on our list is Herb Nachreiner.

21 MR. NACHREINER: My name is Herb
22 Nachreiner. I live at 8 North 688 Bittersweet Lane in
23 Elgin, Elgin School -- St. Charles School District. I've
24 been on the board of directors for 30 years for our

1 community, and I've got a lot of retrospect on the good,
2 bad, and the ugly.

3 I was encouraged to come here tonight after
4 I shared some of my dialogue with other members of the
5 community there. And they said, Herb, go over there and
6 find out what's going on. Well, that's why I'm here.

7 Anyhow, I came here almost 40 years ago
8 from Edina, Illinois. I used to come out here on weekends
9 with my wife and dine in the various restaurants that they
10 had in the community, and we put it on our bucket list to
11 end up here, which we accomplished. My son, youngest son,
12 held his wedding reception across the street from this
13 blacksmith shop. That blacksmith shop then, 25 years ago,
14 was a piece of junk, and it's even worse today.

15 Now let me tell you what I envision. Every
16 time I invite one of my friends out here to have dinner
17 with us at one of these restaurants, they invariably ask
18 me: When are they going to get rid of that piece of junk
19 next to the river?

20 Okay. Understand this. That dwelling is
21 at the gateway to this business district. Proud business
22 people working to make a living, and you never get a
23 second chance at a first impression when you're coming
24 down that hill and spot that thing sitting there.

1 I can't even believe that a week ago I read
2 about this in the paper again. Yeah, I'm an old-fashioned
3 guy that likes to read the paper with a cup of coffee in
4 the morning, and I still like chrome on cars.

5 But I'm going to tell you something. I've
6 got a whole bunch of relatives in Wisconsin, in probably
7 30 different communities. There's almost 300 of us up
8 there. And invariably, when we go up to visit them,
9 there's a part of those old towns that has to be
10 demolished; round barns, old houses, stuff like that. You
11 know the position they take now, it's happened in the last
12 10 years, remove it, save your money and move on.

13 And invariably when that happens, the whole
14 community takes on a different atmosphere about the
15 future. This isn't horse and buggy around here anymore.
16 We don't need a blacksmith shop that's falling into the
17 ground. It's a disgrace to have people view that when
18 they come down the hill into this community. And I know a
19 lot of people here. After being here for 40 years, I know
20 the merchants come and gone, some still here, some not. I
21 still love it here. My children went to school there.
22 They moved on. They're up in Wisconsin now with my
23 relatives, but I still love it here and so does my wife.
24 We've got everything we want here.

1 But I gotta tell you guys, move on. We're
2 beating a dead horse with this building. My uncle was in
3 the construction trades for 35 years. He owned DuPage
4 Construction Company. He built half of Oakbrook,
5 Elmhurst, towns all around, commercial and residential,
6 and I knew a lot about construction. You don't build a
7 house with a bent two-by-four and this is nothing but junk
8 you're looking at.

9 And I can promise you this, I can promise
10 you this. Anybody that defends that dwelling right now,
11 if it was in their neighborhood, they'd be circulating a
12 petition to remove it. It doesn't belong there. I have
13 trouble in my own neighborhood with some guy that's
14 neglecting the shed in his backyard that filled up with
15 opossums, skunks, and whatever.

16 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. I think we've heard
17 your --

18 MR. NACHREINER: I hope that something
19 positive comes out of this, and you know the direction
20 that I'm pushing for.

21 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you.

22 MR. NACHREINER: Thank you for your time.

23 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you. Okay. Next on
24 our list is Sue Roche.

1 MS. ROCHE: No. That's me. Pass.

2 MR. ZELLMER: Oh, okay. And then Matt
3 Henry.

4 MR. HENRY: No, thank you.

5 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. Al Watts.

6 MR. WATTS: Al Watts, Preservation Partners
7 of the Fox Valley. Our office is at 8 Indiana Street in
8 St. Charles, Illinois. For those of you who may not be
9 familiar with our organization, we're a nonprofit. We
10 operate four historic sites that are owned by the Forest
11 Preserve District, and we educate the community on the
12 preservation of local history and architecture.

13 So for eight years now, this community has
14 wrestled with what to do with this 1840s blacksmith shop
15 at 4 East State Street, and I'm sure we can probably all
16 agree that a resolution has been frustratingly elusive.

17 Preservation and reuse of this building is
18 aligned with the purpose of Geneva's Historic Preservation
19 Ordinance, which is, quote, to promote the educational,
20 cultural and economic welfare of the public of the city
21 and strengthen the economy of the city. Geneva's brand is
22 built around this purpose of preserving history, and
23 historic places have made Geneva a unique place to live
24 and work.

1 Of course, not every building can or should
2 be saved. The owner of this building argues that the
3 majority of the community wants the building demolished,
4 which is, of course, one of the four criteria. Now, many
5 in the community, as we've already heard, are vocally in
6 favor of demolition. Many, we're also hearing, are
7 vocally opposed to demolition.

8 We agree with the applicant on one thing,
9 definitely, which is that the majority of the community
10 wants this site redeveloped. The real question is whether
11 or not the majority of the community prefers the
12 blacksmith shop to be part of that redevelopment. That
13 does not seem to be clear.

14 So we have done, as we always do, an
15 analysis of this demolition application. And what we
16 looked at was the possible negative consequences that
17 demolition of the blacksmith shop could have on that goal
18 that the majority of the community wants, which is
19 redevelopment.

20 So we reason that if demolition did not
21 increase the likelihood of redevelopment in the future,
22 then this demolition application would not likely be
23 supported by a majority of the community. In other words,
24 there seemed no reason to demolish it if demolishing it

1 doesn't actually solve the problem we're all trying to
2 solve.

3 So the first thing we looked at was what is
4 the viability of the site's redevelopment in a reasonable
5 time period. Is there a reason that a vacant lot for a
6 decade, for example -- and I'm just throwing a number out
7 there -- would not really accomplish the majority's
8 interest in seeing the site redeveloped.

9 Unfortunately, promised redevelopment is
10 less realized than many might believe. One study, 2024 of
11 the Historic Districts in San Antonio, Texas by Place
12 Economics is one example, found that, quote, of all
13 parcels with a primary structure and demolition between
14 the years 2010 and 2023, 62.6 percent have either remained
15 vacant or become a parking lot.

16 I don't think either of these are options
17 that the majority of the community wants, and we don't
18 know the answer to this question. And so we have a few
19 questions that we think would be helpful to know the
20 answers to, and I'll just read them to you really quickly.
21 If the applicant wants to reply to them later, that'd be
22 great.

23 We think it would be helpful for the public
24 to know when to expect a redevelopment proposal. We think

1 it would be helpful for the public to know what the owners
2 learned from federal and state agencies about the
3 challenges that could impact the redevelopment, because
4 this property -- most of it is within the 100-year
5 floodplain, some of it in the five-year floodplain. We
6 assume that there's some -- some things that they'll have
7 to deal with that, but it'd be helpful to know. It would
8 also be helpful to know what the other challenges that
9 they foresee, such as federal or state permits, financial
10 assistance from the City, et cetera, so that they can move
11 a redevelopment forward.

12 The second negative consequence that we
13 considered was the impact on the community that could be
14 caused by this structure that will not be demolished.
15 According to the demolition application, the nonhistorical
16 concrete foundation of the former Mill Race Inn
17 Restaurant, which is directly west of the blacksmith shop
18 -- and, frankly, is almost always filled with stagnant
19 kind of nasty water -- also the wooden pavilion as part of
20 the Mill Race Inn Restaurant that's near the south end of
21 the property, those are not included in this demolition
22 application.

23 So we wonder that if the blacksmith shop,
24 according to the applicant, stands in the way of

1 redevelopment goals, then it would seem that other
2 deteriorating structures would likewise stand in the way
3 of redevelopment goals. A prominent parcel in the city
4 would not necessarily be better off or closer to
5 redevelopment with the blacksmith shop demolished while
6 other deteriorating structures remain.

7 So an answer to whether or not these
8 nonhistorical structures are planned to be demolished and
9 when they may be planned to be demolished, I think would
10 be helpful for the majority of the community to understand
11 if and when redevelopment will occur as a result of
12 demolition of the blacksmith shop.

13 The final thing is the fine, which Jewel
14 Jensen mentioned. And all I want to bring up about that,
15 that I believe is relevant, is that enforcement of a
16 city's building code is often an effective tool for
17 automating the maintenance of any structure in the city
18 limits.

19 In fact, it is an extremely effective tool
20 for historic preservation. As an example, the 1904
21 Heinzkop Glass Factory in St. Charles was cited for
22 building code violations and eventually sold and
23 redeveloped, and now is a beautiful apartment complex on
24 the East Side of St. Charles.

1 If the owner -- so there's the problem of
2 both the property owner paying all the fines, in which
3 case it could create an economic hardship that would make
4 it difficult to move forward to redevelopment. And also
5 the problem of not paying any of the fines, which would
6 potentially undermine the City's efforts for enforcing its
7 property and maintenance codes. And also it would, I
8 think, possibly undermine the ability to encourage more
9 historic preservation. So we think it would be helpful if
10 the owner was able to address how they plan to deal with
11 those fines, as far as how it would affect any
12 redevelopment.

13 If the HPC were to deny this demolition
14 application, there is an opportunity for the former
15 blacksmith shop to be part of a large redevelopment at a
16 minimal cost to the property owner. Collaboration between
17 the public and the owner, with that goal in mind, would
18 likely accomplish something the community could be proud
19 of; that both honors the legacy of Geneva's industrial
20 past and stimulates Geneva's future. Thanks.

21 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you. Next we have
22 Patrice Bertheau.

23 MS. BERTHEAU: Thank you. Patrice
24 Bertheau, 520 Rice Street, 120-year-old home that I have

1 lovingly and painstakingly restored. As a concerned
2 member of the community, I respectfully urge you to
3 consider the best interest of our residents in your
4 decision-making process.

5 And while I appreciate the historical
6 significance of the site, I believe that approving the
7 demolition would ultimately serve the greater good for
8 several key reasons. First, it's important to note the
9 extended length of time which no meaningful progress has
10 been made towards restoration or redevelopment.

11 And I'm hearing a lot of history here, a
12 lot of emotion here. There's blame going around, but as a
13 resident, who's to blame is irrelevant because we are at
14 where we're at, and that is no progress being made. From
15 my point of view, no progress in the near future.

16 The property has languished without
17 advancement, preventing any positive contribution to the
18 community. Second, the site's prominent location has
19 unfortunately turned it into a long standing eyesore -- I
20 hate to keep reusing that word -- detracting from the
21 overall aesthetic and vitality of the area.

22 The visibility amplifies its negative
23 impact on our neighborhood pride and economic potential,
24 as it discourages investment and tourism. We can't act in

1 a vacuum of things. We've got a referendum coming on
2 board for \$60 million that's being -- will be asked of us
3 taxpayers to pay for renovations. There's been several
4 hundred thousand dollars being spent on this already, with
5 -- again, from our point of view -- no progress.

6 Even if preservation efforts were to
7 succeed, the site's inherent inaccessibility poses, I
8 believe, significant challenges. It limits public
9 engagement and education about its history. A more
10 effective approach might be to commemorate the blacksmith
11 shop through a plaque or a sculpture installed in island
12 park where it could be easily viewed and appreciated by
13 all residents and visitors, fostering a broader community
14 awareness and enjoyment of what that actually is.

15 In weighing these factors, I believe
16 demolition, paired with thoughtful memorialization
17 elsewhere, aligns with the community's long-term
18 well-being. I thank you for your time and the dedication
19 that you are giving to preserving our shared heritage in a
20 practical and an inclusive manner. Thank you.

21 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you. Joel Erickson.

22 MR. ERICKSON: Hello, my name is Joel
23 Erickson. I am a 38-year resident of Geneva, and I was a
24 member of the Geneva Plan Commission for 18 years. So I

1 kind of sympathize with you. When I walk in and I see a
2 crowd in the back, you know it's going to be an
3 interesting evening. And so far, it's been interesting.

4 To talk about this, Mill Race Inn closed 15
5 years ago. The City designated the blacksmith shop as a
6 historic landmark eight years ago. Because the amount of
7 time that has passed, we need to consider current
8 realities. And this is where I'm going to go off my notes
9 because I want to talk about something that just -- as a
10 question, and we talked about what this building is going
11 to be when it's completed.

12 Say that the Shodeen Company has a come to
13 Jesus awakening and they agree that they're going to
14 rehabilitate this building. Let's talk about what's
15 involved. It's going to be a new foundation. He's
16 already stated the walls are unstable, so that means
17 you're going to have to take the walls down, reset them
18 with new mortar, new roof trusses, new roof, new
19 utilities, basically a new building.

20 So my question is: When you do this, what
21 do you have? Is this the same building that we spent the
22 last eight years debating about? I don't think it is.

23 In the eight years since the building was
24 landmarked, no third party has stepped forward to

1 undertake the expense of redeveloping the building. The
2 park district has declined interest as it is not part of
3 their mission. So who is going to step forward after
4 eight years to underwrite the redevelopment, and why have
5 they waited so long?

6 So what is going to happen if the
7 demolition permit application is turned down? And the
8 answer is nothing is going to happen. And maybe in five
9 years, some of you -- you've been on this board a long
10 time -- you might be here in five years hearing another
11 application for the same thing, and maybe it'll be the
12 same arguments again, and maybe another 10 years. But in
13 all of that time, we'll be looking at that building.

14 I strongly support the HPC voting to
15 approve the demolition permit application and allowing the
16 subsequent development of this property to proceed. Thank
17 you.

18 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you. Okay. Lee W. --

19 MR. EYSTURLID: Eysturlid.

20 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you.

21 MR. EYSTURLID: So I said that once. So my
22 name is Lee Eysturlid. I live at 108 Oak Street. And
23 unlike, I think, everybody else who said something, I live
24 across the street from this. And so when people say our,

1 us, we, I'm kind of at a loss.

2 But, you know, let me back into this. This
3 thing, retention of a building or structure on site in the
4 best interest of the majority of the community, that's all
5 subjective. In which case your job and what you've been
6 working on, I think you all have done a great job with
7 this really difficult situation over the last few years.

8 I would also add something. I have a PhD
9 in history, and I taught things like aesthetics, ethics,
10 and other things like that. History's not just a singular
11 building. History is space. History is space. It gets
12 commemorated, remembered, used.

13 And the fact is, is that when they shrank
14 the footprint -- which you did out of best practice to try
15 to deal with people who, I think, have been gaslighting us
16 for the last three or four years -- I think the reality
17 is, is that by taking that out, it's not just the present
18 of the history that you preserve, but it's the future of
19 the history you preserve.

20 And it's not just the building, it's the
21 space. And by removing the building, you open the space
22 up to a six-story monolith. And I know that's not part of
23 the point, but it is the point, because history is also
24 into the future. Otherwise, why are we preserving

1 anything? Why are we preserving the Little Owl? Why are
2 we bothering with any of these other buildings? Let's
3 just bulldoze everything and put up lots of good glass
4 stuff. That seems to be the thing.

5 The word ugly or eyesore is also
6 subjective. There's lots of ugly buildings around here
7 that I think we could tear down. There's stuff built in
8 the last 10 years that I think look horrible. I don't see
9 how that's -- the library comes to mind immediately, but
10 we're okay with that, I guess, because it's new.

11 Also for historical preservation, I think
12 you're setting a precedent, if you agree with what's going
13 on here. The stonewalling of the process therefore says,
14 Hey, when the building collapses, we win. So you know
15 what you need to do when you don't want to have to deal
16 with a historic building, just wait. And if you keep
17 waiting and waiting, people will give up.

18 And, you know, you keep putting out on
19 different sites and things like that, and different social
20 medias, Hey, it's an eyesore. Hey, it's an eyesore. And
21 then people want to bang things off. I'm also hearing
22 that we somehow took a count. Do we know exactly how many
23 people said they wanted it to go? No, it's a majority.
24 What does that mean? That's subjective as well.

1 The fact is that we can look at this as a
2 historic site. You said so. You approved it many times.
3 I think you made the right decision. The Court said so.
4 And now we're being told, Well, it's in the majority's
5 will. It's what we should be doing. And I -- with all of
6 this, it seems terribly squishy. And, yeah, we might have
7 to wait. I'm okay looking at that because I don't want to
8 see the historical reality of the site and the feeling
9 that it preserves, wiped out.

10 You're already building a monolith up on
11 the top of the hill there on 38th Street, which I can now
12 see from my house, over three stories of other things, but
13 that was okay. And we removed a house for that. Removing
14 it was also another act of gaslighting, because I saw the
15 \$1 sign on the side of the building, which was clearly a
16 kind of, Well, we're offering the site.

17 If you remove a building from the site it's
18 on, it loses its historicity. The fact is, is that the
19 building that got moved over there, I think it's almost
20 into St. Charles, nobody sees that as a historical
21 building anymore. It's lost. I'm sure the people who
22 live in it love it, but the fact is it's lost its
23 historical reality.

24 All of this is subjective. You have to

1 make a decision based on what you think is a historical
2 practice. But for us to abandon the building in the face
3 of what's been clearly a series of stonewallings, I think
4 a series of disingenuous statements -- like the charrette,
5 whatever that was -- the fact is that none of this has
6 really held up to what you all have been doing, I think,
7 effectively.

8 I also think they've been insulting to your
9 time and effort and your best abilities to try to make
10 this make sense. I would advocate that you wait. You
11 know what, if people don't like it, it's the law. It's
12 the process. It's the way you look to preserve things
13 because you have more information than other people. And
14 that's the way government works. Sometimes people don't
15 know. They just see things as they drive by.

16 And based on that, I think you can only
17 make one real decision, that you either have to hold them
18 up or they have to come up with something. And this idea
19 that they can't do this either speaks to the incompetence
20 or stonewalling. Thanks.

21 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you. Next we have Greg
22 Yde.

23 MR. YDE: Yde. I oppose the demolition of
24 the blacksmith shop. I moved -- I reside at 321 Fourth

1 Street in the 1856 Greek Revival house.

2 MR. ZELLMER: If you could just state your
3 name.

4 MR. YDE: Greg Yde, 321 Fourth Street.

5 Sorry. I moved out here in '94. I was charmed by the
6 buildings of downtown Geneva, the livability, the
7 walkability. And I think year by year, we're losing a
8 little bit more of it. I got this book when I moved here,
9 150 -- Reminders of 150 Years. It came out in 1985. Some
10 of you may have it. It refers to the blacksmith shop.
11 I'll just read a little bit.

12 Since 1933, a Geneva landmark, in itself,
13 is at its core an old stone building that has been a town
14 landmark since 1841. A town landmark. And we're talking
15 about demolishing the town landmark. This was written 40
16 years ago.

17 The previous speaker talked about the
18 monstrosity up the hill and they moved a house. It was
19 122 East Street. It was one of the oldest houses in
20 Geneva from the 1830s. Only a handful of houses that date
21 back that far. The house next to it was demolished. That
22 was built in 1838 by Peter Middaugh. It's gone. These
23 houses are gone. These structures are gone. You can't
24 bring them back.

1 Everybody uses the word eyesore. It
2 doesn't have to be an eyesore. You could paint the
3 plywood and plant some flowers in front of there just to
4 make it look a little better until people can figure out
5 what the heck they want to do with it.

6 And we have plenty of Geneva to build these
7 newer structures. We could go east of Eastside Drive. We
8 can go west of Williamsburg. We should just leave the
9 downtown alone, preserve what's still left before we turn
10 it into Naperville. No -- no offense, but we don't want
11 that here. Batavia, Geneva, St. Charles is the jewel of
12 the Fox Valley.

13 I was watching It's a Wonderful Life the
14 other night. We all know that movie, right? Do we want
15 Geneva to turn into Pottersville, or do you want -- are we
16 on Team Potter, or are we on Team George Bailey? That's
17 all I have to say. Thank you.

18 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you. Next is Ed
19 Streibig.

20 MR. STREIBIG: Hi. My name is Ed Streibig,
21 and I live at 132 South Bennett Street. I think that puts
22 me right up there with some of the closest neighbors to
23 the site. And I'm here tonight because I really want a
24 sidewalk. Every day I walk past the existing site with my

1 wife and our one-year-old son, our three-year-old
2 daughter, and it's unsafe. In the springtime, the curb is
3 muddy. In the winter, we're walking in the road. To get
4 here tonight, we walked right down Bennett Street through
5 traffic. And just last month a truck came off the road,
6 hit one of the telephone poles. If this continues, one of
7 these days it's going to be us.

8 So I'm here looking for progress. When I
9 think about progress, the quickest way to progress seems
10 like demolition. The retention of this building is not in
11 the best interest of the community. I'm one of the
12 closest -- we're some of the closest in the community, and
13 retaining this building is preventing progress.

14 If we were able to demolish it, we could
15 then eventually get to a sidewalk. I am a preservationist
16 myself. I have owned multiple hundred-year-old buildings
17 and spent thousands of hours stripping lead paint,
18 restoring historic windows, all kinds of things.

19 I like preservation. But I look at this
20 building and I think, What is there to preserve? The
21 limestone blocks, those are quite cool, those are worth
22 keeping. But let's just use those in the way the Romans
23 did. Let's take those same blocks and incorporate them
24 into a new structure.

1 So again, I believe the retention of this
2 building is not in the best interest of the community.
3 It's creating a safety hazard for myself and my family. I
4 would like to see progress. And because of that, I
5 strongly support demolition.

6 Just a quick question. I'm not sure if you
7 have the answer, but the quick question is: Of the
8 letters received, I wonder what was the overall count and
9 what is the percentage toward demolition versus the
10 percentage toward retaining the structure?

11 MR. ZELLMER: I don't think we have that
12 information, do we?

13 MS. STOOD: Due to the large amount of
14 letters that were received over the past few days, we have
15 not made a mathematical count.

16 MR. ZELLMER: Okay.

17 MR. STREIBIG: An updated tally would be
18 interesting to see. I appreciate it.

19 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you.

20 MR. STREIBIG: Thank you.

21 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. Next is Peter Ericson
22 (phonetic spelling).

23 MR. ERICSON: I'll pass. Thank you.

24 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. And then Han Tunga

1 (phonetic spelling)?

2 (No response.)

3 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. That's -- that
4 concludes the people that wanted to speak for that. The
5 next item would --

6 (Sotto voce discussion.)

7 MR. ZELLMER: I don't think there's anybody
8 else. The next would be questions about the proposed
9 boundary amendment. A request may be directed to the
10 petitioner's witness. However, the speakers are
11 maintaining order.

12 (Sotto voce discussion.)

13 MR. ZELLMER: Would you like to make a
14 concluding --

15 (Indiscernible due to crosstalk.)

16 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. Yeah. We could motion
17 to close. If we think we've heard enough, we can close
18 the public hearing. So if you'd like to -- we would no
19 longer get any testimony and we wouldn't be able to ask
20 questions of the --

21 MR. SANDACK: You could ask questions among
22 yourself and deliberate.

23 MR. ZELLMER: But not of the staff or of
24 Mr. Patzelt. So if you have anything that you want

1 clarified at that point, this is the last point to do it.
2 If not, can I get a motion to close the public hearing?

3 MR. PHILLIPS: So moved.

4 MR. TOBLER: Second.

5 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. Call the roll.

6 MS. MALKOSKY: Zellmer?

7 MR. ZELLMER: Aye.

8 MS. MALKOSKY: Tobler?

9 MR. TOBLER: Aye.

10 MS. MALKOSKY: Jensen?

11 MS. JENSEN: Aye.

12 MS. MALKOSKY: McManus?

13 MS. MCMANUS: Aye.

14 MS. MALKOSKY: Phillips?

15 MR. PHILLIPS: Aye.

16 MS. MALKOSKY: Riebe?

17 MR. RIEBE: Aye.

18 MS. MALKOSKY: Salomon?

19 MR. SALOMON: Aye.

20 MR. ZELLMER: Motion passes. The public
21 hearing is closed. We will no longer hear testimony from
22 the public or from the staff. I think what we -- we
23 should discuss -- make a discussion of what we think we --
24 this -- this testimony has taken and what -- what everyone

1 thinks.

2 MS. JENSEN: Yeah.

3 MR. ZELLMER: -- we -- with the idea that
4 we need to go to finding of fact based on the No. 4, which
5 is the retention of the building structure object is not
6 in the best interest of the majority of the community. So
7 that -- that's where we headed. And so we have to find a
8 finding of fact, and then we need to create a motion to
9 either deny or to accept their proposal.

10 So what's the feeling of the Commission as
11 they -- as we go forward? Jewel, go ahead.

12 MR. RIEBE: I was going to say one of the
13 things I found to be probably the most telling is the fact
14 that there hasn't been any plans to incorporate the
15 existing structure in a development plan.

16 I'm not an engineer, structural of any
17 type, but my primary residence is from the same time
18 frame, 1850s. I dealt with foundation issues. And we
19 thought, Hey, are we going to have to demo this property?
20 We didn't demo it. We were able to save it.

21 So the fact that there isn't a plan at any
22 level, which I don't think is impossible to do, I just
23 don't think it has been presented, which I'm not sure why.
24 And the fact that without demo there will be no plans

1 presented, puts us in a very precarious situation. We
2 don't want the -- no one wants the property to sit as is
3 but we -- I don't feel like we've got really a good faith
4 proposal of what to do with it, and it's kind of just been
5 waiting, waiting and waiting to strong-arm, whether it's
6 us or city council to give in, give them what they want.

7 So, yeah, I don't know if there's a
8 question there, but if this goes for the city council. I
9 wanted to hit on the record, again, I don't think we've
10 seen what we need. And I can understand why historically,
11 the last two times we said no.

12 MR. ZELLMER: Jewel.

13 MS. JENSEN: At this point, I am not
14 convinced that the site is not in the best interest of the
15 majority of the community. I'm not sure at this point,
16 how this can even be measured. We don't have the
17 necessary tools or information to come up with that
18 determination. It's subjective. So at this point, I'm
19 not convinced that approving the demo is in the best
20 interest of the community.

21 MR. ZELLMER: I think I would agree with
22 you, and also the fact that we are the Historic
23 Preservation Commission. We are not -- so that is kind of
24 our charter to look at historic structures and decide

1 their story, historicness, if you will, which has been
2 litigated -- it's been taken, so...

3 MS. MCMANUS: Yeah, we've already discussed
4 the historic value a couple of times. And you know, I --
5 I don't feel that new information has been presented. The
6 differences between the petition for the submission to
7 demo a few years ago versus today is that the property has
8 sat long.

9 And so I think the -- any sway in any
10 public opinion is just the continued looking at that site,
11 but this is not what we were here to consider. We were
12 here to retain these historic spaces. And the reality is,
13 again, we don't have a way of gauging what the general
14 consensus is within the community. We have
15 representatives here that have argued in both directions,
16 and I don't think that we really have a solid footing to
17 really say anything or change what we've decided in the
18 past.

19 MS. JENSEN: I also think that the rights
20 of the property owners in the community, they don't have
21 to compete. I mean, we're all in the same community
22 together. We should be coming together to develop
23 solutions that honor both principals, both the owner and
24 the community, because we are a community. We should be

1 working together to come up with a solution as opposed to
2 not working together and arguing about this.

3 You can catch more flies with honey than
4 you can with vinegar. Have you ever heard that? My mom
5 used to tell me that all the time. And I believe in that
6 saying, and I believe that we can come to a solution if we
7 do work together on this. I mean, we like you, David. We
8 really like seeing you, but we want to work together with
9 this, and we wish you a Merry Christmas.

10 MR. TOBLER: Well, just to play off what
11 you just said, Jewel, I think -- I mean, I look at it --
12 or just hearing, Why does it have to be the whole
13 building? Can it be a portion of a building that's
14 nonstructural to the new building? What that is, I have
15 no idea.

16 But I mean, like you said, some kind of
17 compromise that you at least get something out of it. It
18 may not be exactly what you want or looking for, because
19 you're not gonna make everybody happy, but it's at least
20 you got something that you can look and say, Yeah, there's
21 the old blacksmith shop. That was -- that was very
22 important to the growth of Geneva, for the city.

23 So that's what I would like to see. If
24 there was -- you know, what Mike brought up, just what

1 options can we have? I mean, can there just be an option?
2 Can you put the building over the other building, so it's
3 not held up by the main building? Can you put a portion
4 of it? Can you make it a small little room that you --
5 that's off to the side with a plaque? You know, it's a
6 gangway for people to walk through the park and go up to
7 it and get the information history off.

8 I mean, anything -- I think anything can be
9 done. I just -- I'm just reluctant just to say, let's
10 demolish it. And then say, Well, then we'll give you
11 plans afterwards, because then I just feel like it's all
12 going to go downhill then. I'll just stop there.

13 MR. SALOMON: I think, as was brought up,
14 is that -- you know, as Jewel said, you know, we all work
15 together as a community. We all work to try to help each
16 other. You know, in 2022, you know, the group came in
17 front of us saying, Hey, the swath of property is way too
18 big. It's ridiculous. The whole nine yards. Okay.

19 We made an accommodation in 2022 so that
20 this way you would have more property to develop that
21 wasn't part of the landmarked district. And since 2022,
22 they did nothing: no plans, no proposals, just letting
23 the building rot. Okay. I don't feel that's being a
24 partner because I think the ultimate goal is for a strong

1 wind to come down and blow it over. And this way, as a
2 safety hazard, it has to go away.

3 So I think there's been a lot of
4 disingenuity as far as this whole process is concerned and
5 that we have been upholding our bid to preserve the
6 property but also be a partner in helping them. And so we
7 gave them the property. We gave them a bigger -- a bigger
8 building plot to work with, and we got nothing.

9 So now it comes back. It's an eyesore,
10 yes, okay, because it hasn't been properly maintained.
11 They don't pay their fines. Okay. And who created the
12 eyesore? Not the Historic Preservation Commission.

13 So I think part of the process that's going
14 on here, on that side, is they're wearing the will of the
15 community down of seeing this gray plywood building with
16 ripped plastic on the roof, and as we can see inside,
17 graffiti inside. And that's why there's more people
18 speaking up now about wanting to tear it down because of
19 an eyesore that was not created by the community, but by
20 them.

21 And I think they're trying to wear
22 everybody down so this way they give up and say goodbye.
23 That's my -- good, bad, or indifferent, that's my opinion.

24 MR. PHILLIPS: And I totally agree with

1 George, and I think that I am not willing to reward that
2 kind of behavior with agreeing to demolish that building.
3 I think that the question really here is -- it's not
4 preservation or development. It's preservation and
5 development. That's what I think everyone on the
6 Commission wants. I think that's what the City wants.

7 Everybody wants that site to be held, and I
8 don't think anyone believes in their heart that there's no
9 other alternatives available to reuse or use that
10 structure in some fashion that could be of benefit to the
11 entire community.

12 It's very difficult for us to determine
13 what the best interest of the community is. I will be
14 voting, you know, against this petition. And if it goes
15 to city council -- you know, if it's -- if it ends up in
16 their lap, you know, maybe that's the better way to do it
17 because they are the elected representatives of the
18 community. We're an advisory board. And I think our
19 advice so far has been spot on and that's been legitimized
20 by city council and the courts.

21 And so I see there's -- there's no --
22 there's no reason for us to change our position at this
23 point in time.

24 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. I think we -- we heard

1 from everyone. I think what I'm -- what I -- I think our
2 finding of fact is, is that it's difficult to gauge the
3 actual majority -- what the interest of the majority of
4 the community is. We have heard both sides of it, and we
5 haven't heard enough of -- I guess we haven't -- I haven't
6 heard enough from the -- other than it's an eyesore and
7 it's kind of a self-created eyesore, even though it may be
8 the point that is, but -- so I think that's where we're
9 kind of fall -- where we're all coming down at.

10 So I guess that would be -- I think
11 everyone on -- does everyone agree with that?

12 MS. JENSEN: Uh-huh.

13 MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

14 MS. JENSEN: Yes.

15 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. So if I can get a
16 motion to -- we're gonna have to do the motion in -- in a
17 positive manner.

18 MR. PHILLIPS: What -- Jewel knows.

19 MS. JENSEN: Yeah.

20 MR. ZELLMER: Yeah. So -- and then -- and
21 then, Jewel, you don't need to vote one way -- or you can
22 vote your conscience, not the way --

23 MS. JENSEN: So I -- if I understand it
24 correctly, this is how I'm going to say it.

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1 MR. ZELLMER: Correct.

2 MS. JENSEN: Motion to approve the request
3 for demolition of the historic landmark location at 4 East
4 State Street.

5 MR. ZELLMER: That's correct. And so can I
6 get a second?

7 MR. TOBLER: Second.

8 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. If you can call the
9 roll.

10 MS. MALKOSKY: Zellmer?

11 MR. ZELLMER: Nay.

12 MS. MALKOSKY: Tobler?

13 MR. TOBLER: Nay.

14 MS. MALKOSKY: Jensen?

15 MS. JENSEN: Nay.

16 MS. MALKOSKY: McManus?

17 MS. MCMANUS: Nay.

18 MS. MALKOSKY: Phillips?

19 MR. PHILLIPS: Nay.

20 MS. MALKOSKY: Riebe?

21 MR. RIEBE: Nay.

22 MS. MALKOSKY: Salomon?

23 MR. SALOMON: Nay.

24 MR. ZELLMER: And then also, do we need to

1 do the -- was there a dedesignation portion or, no, we
2 don't need to do that?

3 MS. STOOD: This proposal is just for
4 demolition.

5 MR. SANDACK: This is just demolition.

6 MR. ZELLMER: Okay. Very good. Motion
7 passes.

8 MR. SANDACK: Fails.

9 MR. ZELLMER: Or fails. Our agenda, we
10 continue, we have secretary's report.

11 MS. STOOD: All right. I kept it pretty
12 quick for this month's report. We have three
13 administratively approved building permits.

14 MR. ZELLMER: Actually, why don't we wait
15 until people have left the building. We'll give it two
16 minutes and then we'll...

17 Excuse me. Take comments outside, please.
18 We still have to finish the meeting. Thank you. Thank
19 you.

20 Okay. I think we can start back up with
21 the secretary's report.

22 MS. STOOD: Beautiful. So as I was saying,
23 I kept it pretty quick for this month. We have three
24 building permits administratively approved. That includes

1 two reroofs, light for light, and one fence on the side,
2 and a rear lot, which have very low visibility.

3 And everything else -- any other projects
4 that we discussed previously are continuing as normal and
5 will be updated in the new year. Merry Christmas and
6 Happy Holidays to everyone who celebrates.

7 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you. Great. New
8 business from the Commission. Any questions? Comments?

9 MR. SALOMON: This has been fun.

10 MR. ZELLMER: Okay.

11 (Sotto voce discussion.)

12 MR. PHILLIPS: It's about the sidewalk.
13 That -- one of the people in the audience about the
14 sidewalk.

15 MR. ZELLMER: That doesn't seem to be
16 connected to this.

17 MR. PHILLIPS: No, it's not, but it's --
18 it's not connected to this at all, but is there another --
19 they live on, I'm assuming, the east side of Bennett; is
20 that correct?

21 MR. ZELLMER: I -- I don't know where they
22 live. I don't think it's germane to this anyway.

23 MR. PHILLIPS: No, but I just want to know
24 if there's some other avenue for them to petition the City

1 for some type of sidewalk where they apparently need it,
2 because I don't think that redevelopment of Mill Race Inn
3 property would necessarily answer that question for them.
4 And I'm just -- maybe --

5 MR. ZELLMER: Have you looked --

6 MR. DEGROOT: There's a potential that a
7 sidewalk could be built along this property, but the City
8 is entering into a comprehensive plan update, which has a
9 bike and pedestrian component to that, which will be
10 evaluating gaps in our network and trying to prioritize
11 which ones to fill. So, yes, there's an avenue coming up
12 very shortly.

13 MR. PHILLIPS: Okay. That's good. That's
14 what I wanted to know.

15 MR. SALOMON: And would they be -- could
16 they be made aware of that in some fashion?

17 MR. DEGROOT: Yes. I think --

18 MR. SALOMON: Is that on the Web at your --

19 MR. DEGROOT: We haven't launched it yet.

20 MR. SALOMON: Okay.

21 MR. DEGROOT: We just got the contract
22 approved last night.

23 MR. PHILLIPS: Oh, okay.

24 MR. DEGROOT: So that project will launch

1 in the new year.

2 MR. SALOMON: So what are you waiting for?

3 MR. PHILLIPS: It has to come before us.

4 You know how it is.

5 MR. ZELLMER: Yeah. Yeah. Actually, I
6 don't think --

7 MR. SALOMON: It's all your fault.

8 MR. ZELLMER: Well, anyway, from the public
9 -- anything more from the Commission? If not, from the
10 public? Al, do you want to say anything? I'm not that --
11 I'm calling on you.

12 MR. WATTS: I'm not the only one here
13 today.

14 MR. ZELLMER: I know. It's quite amazing.

15 MR. WATTS: Hi, Preservation Partners. I
16 just wanted to update you on, just in case you hadn't seen
17 this in the news, the City of Batavia, in a very short
18 order, approved the demolition of a 110-foot-tall chimney
19 that used to be part of the Key and Chapel of Jerry. That
20 is, if you're familiar with east side of Batavia, it's
21 where Paul Joey's restaurant is.

22 And just to, if you're not aware of that,
23 just to give a brief context, the HPC -- and we agreed
24 with them -- that, you know, the most of it has to go

1 because it's a very tenuous structural shape, but hope
2 that a remnant of it could remain.

3 HPC recommended 11 feet above the roof
4 line, but city council chose just to go all the way to the
5 roof line. So there will be -- there'll be some big
6 cranes over on the east side of Geneva very, very soon,
7 taking that down. So just wanted you guys to know.
8 Thanks.

9 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you. Okay with that, I
10 think that's everything. If we can get a motion to
11 adjourn.

12 MS. JENSEN: Go ahead, George.

13 MR. SALOMON: We are. Okay. Motion to
14 adjourn.

15 MS. JENSEN: Second.

16 MR. ZELLMER: All in favor?

17 (Group responds aye.)

18 MR. ZELLMER: Any opposed?

19 (No response.)

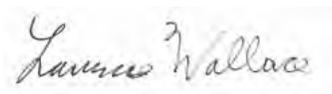
20 MR. ZELLMER: Thank you.

21 (Thereupon, proceedings concluded at 8:47 p.m.)
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Wanda Greenlee

WANDA GREENLEE, CCR

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