

City of Joliet

150 West Jefferson Street
Joliet, IL 60432



Meeting Minutes - Pending Approval

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

6:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

Joliet Historic Preservation Commission

Commission Members

Quinn Adamowski

Brian Bessler

Felipe J. Gloria

Kevin Heinemann

Candace Johnson

Kailee Lowry

Sharon Merwin

Aaron Mikottis

Ken Spiegel

Sara Stovall

Steven Wright

Citizens who are unable to attend the meeting can email comments in advance of the meeting to publiccomment@joliet.gov.

CALL TO ORDER

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Present Brian Bessler, Felipe J. Gloria, Candace Johnson, Kailee Lowry and Sharon Merwin
Absent Quinn Adamowski, Kevin Heinemann, Aaron Mikottis, Ken Spiegel, Sara Stovall and Steven Wright

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Joliet Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes 11-19-25

Attachments: [JHPC 11-19-25 Minutes.pdf](#)

A motion was made by Kailee Lowry, seconded by Sharon Merwin, to approve Joliet Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes 11-19-25. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Bessler, Gloria, Johnson, Lowry and Merwin

Absent: Adamowski, Heinemann, Spiegel and Stovall

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD ON AGENDA ITEMS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

OLD BUSINESS

Survey of Hitching Posts & Stepping Stones

Planning Director Jayne Bernhard reported that there were no spreadsheet entries and the project was not yet open to the public, and noted a public message could be issued to gather public input if the Commission concurred. Commissioners discussed possible locations and were encouraged to add them to the spreadsheet. Ms. Bernhard reported she shared the concept with City engineers.

NEW BUSINESS

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair Positions

A motion was made by Kailee Lowry, seconded by Brian Bessler to open the nominations for Chair. All Commissioners present voted aye.

Candace Johnson nominated Brian Bessler for Chair. No other nominations for Chair were made at that time.

A motion was made by Kailee Lowry, seconded by Felipe J. Gloria to close the nominations for Chair. No vote was taken to close the nominations.

A motion was made by Candace Johnson, seconded by Kailee Lowry to approve Brian Bessler for Chair. The motion was carried by the following vote:

Aye: Bessler, Gloria, Johnson, Lowry and Merwin

Absent: Adamowski, Heinemann, Mikottis, Spiegel, Stovall and Wright

A motion was made by Kailee Lowry, seconded by Brian Bessler to open nominations for Vice-Chair. All Commissioners present voted aye.

Kailee Lowry nominated Candace Johnson for Vice-Chair. No other nominations for Vice-Chair were made at that time.

A motion was made by Sharon Merwin, seconded by Kailee Lowry to close the nominations for Vice-Chair. All Commissioners present voted aye.

A motion was made by Brian Bessler, seconded by Kailee Lowry to approve Candace Johnson for Vice-Chair. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Bessler, Gloria, Johnson, Lowry and Merwin

Absent: Adamowski, Heinemann, Mikottis, Spiegel, Stovall and Wright

Arts, Culture, & Heritage Workshop – Joliet Comprehensive Plan – Key Themes

Ms. Bernhard reported on the Arts, Culture, and Heritage Workshop, including four topic stations that addressed preservation, arts access, cultural identity, and welcoming spaces. Feedback from the workshop supported historic preservation and placemaking, with concerns about funding incentives, and emphasized sharing the histories of Joliet residents. Commissioners noted limited public awareness of Joliet's history and existing amenities. Suggestions included improving website resources and developing videos to promote cultural and heritage assets.

Joliet Historic Preservation Commission Annual Report for 2025

Attachments: [CLG-Annual-Update-City of Joliet 2025.pdf](#)

Ms. Bernhard explained the annual report highlights heritage, cultural, and preservation initiatives, and would be submitted to City Council. The report noted the African American Context Study, I-80 Des Plaines River Bridge project, Comprehensive Plan, five meetings, zero Certificates of Appropriateness, fifteen administrative reviews, and no landmark or National Register nominations in 2025. Staff and commissioners continue training, including virtual sessions, and Ms. Merwin suggested additional free webinars via Wiss, Janney, Elster & Associates at wje.com.

A motion was made by Sharon Merwin, seconded by Kailee Lowry, to approve Joliet Historic Preservation Commission Annual Report for 2025. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Bessler, Gloria, Johnson, Lowry and Merwin

Absent: Adamowski, Heinemann, Spiegel and Stovall

2026 Annual Historic Preservation Strategy

Attachments: [2025 Action Plan-Annual Review.pdf](#)
[2026 Action Plan-Draft.pdf](#)

Ms. Bernhard and the Commission reviewed and discussed the 2026 draft goals and priority actions within three themes: Educate the Public about Historic Resources, Stewardship of Designated Historic Properties, and Promote Historic Resources.

A motion was made by Kailee Lowry, seconded by Felipe J. Gloria, to approve Annual Historic Preservation Strategy . The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Bessler, Gloria, Johnson, Lowry and Merwin

Absent: Adamowski, Heinemann, Spiegel and Stovall

STAFF REPORTS

Ms. Bernhard provided updates on the Comprehensive Plan, noting Community Workshop #2 would be held at the Joliet Public Library on February 26 to review public input, project goals, and four character areas.

Updates were also provided on the I-80 Des Plaines River Bridge project, including ongoing cost analysis, engineering review, and historical research. Ms. Bernhard reported on the Choice Neighborhoods initiative, including an active website and a past meeting that focused on housing options. The Rivers Edge Redevelopment Zone program was noted as state-approved and open to qualified projects.

Ms. Bernhard announced Historic Preservation Award nominations would open March 1. Potential nominees were discussed. Plans for National Historic Preservation Month in May include daily social media posts, with an additional suggestion to feature one historic building monthly.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Ms. Merwin highlighted the Commission's formation in 1991 and her years of service on the Commission. Ms. Bernhard expressed appreciation for her service.

The Commission discussed photographing hitching posts and stepping stones at residents' homes.

Ms. Bernhard reported Kevin Heinemann resigned due to relocation to Indiana.

Ms. Johnson inquired whether anyone attended the February 18 Kendall County Historic Preservation workshop and sending an apology for nonattendance. Ms. Bernhard noted she attended the Kendall County Regional Planning Commission Annual Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Brian Bessler, seconded by Kailee Lowry, to approve adjournment. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Bessler, Gloria, Johnson, Lowry and Merwin

Absent: Adamowski, Heinemann, Spiegel and Stovall

This meeting will be held in an accessible location. If you need a reasonable accommodation, please contact The City Clerk Office, 150 West Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois 60432 at (815) 724-3780.