




# Fairbanks North Star Borough

Mayor's Office

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TO: Historic Preservation Commission

THRU: Community Planning Department

FROM: Mayor Bryce Ward 

DATE: April 22, 2019

SUBJECT: Administration priorities and support for historic preservation activities

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Thank you for your willingness to serve on the Historic Preservation Commission and your dedication to historic preservation in our community. Our historic and cultural resources are so important, yet are too often overlooked. I support and appreciate historic preservation and its value to our community.

On April 2, Community Planning staff met with me to understand my administration's priorities regarding historic preservation. Specific topics discussed and my input follow:

- **SS Nenana preservation** is a benefit to the community and can be positively influenced by the HPC. My administration is working with the Friends of the SS Nenana to develop a productive partnership. The HPC could act in a supporting position by:
  - adopting a resolution of support for the Friends' activities, including funding efforts;
  - Conducting general advocacy and education activities;
  - Providing additional research and outreach;
  - Other activities as the HPC sees fit.
- **Tax exemptions** for historic properties and/or for appropriate improvements to historic structures might be an appropriate way to incentivize historic preservation in our community. I'd be interested in seeing what the commission might propose. Linking these incentives to local historic districts may be appropriate.
- **Nomination of local historic districts:** local districts can be a valuable tool, particularly in relation to tax exemptions. The authority for establishing and reviewing/regulating activities within such districts may need to be examined.
- **Nomination of Pioneer Park to the National Register:** while this is potentially a beneficial recognition, it should not be pursued at this time. A new FNSB Pioneer Park Commission is being formed and will advise on activities, planning and the general direction

for the park. It's possible that the HPC could partner with the Pioneer Park Commission in the future to complete this nomination process.

- **Community outreach and education** are important components of historic preservation in general and of individual projects.
- **Demolition permits review:** due to the levels of oversight and authority that would be enacted, I would prefer that the HPC does not pursue a procedure for reviewing the City of Fairbanks' demolition permits.

In general, I support historic preservation activities that promote economic development and that fit within the commission's existing scope and authority as defined in FNSBC 4.52. Since staff time dedicated to this commission is very limited, Commissioners could take the lead on research, outreach and other activities. I look forward to seeing what you prepare in support of these issues and projects. Please let me know what other support my administration can provide.