CITY OF ELY

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CITY OF ELY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

September 24, 2026, 8:30 a.m. **– Ely Volunteer Fire Hall – 499 Mill Street – Ely, Nevada**

1. Chairwoman Van Camp called the regular meeting of the City of Ely Historic Preservation Commission to order at **8:33 a.m.**, led in the Pledge of Allegiance, and asked for Roll Call.

Members present:
Chairwoman Janet Van Camp
Commission Member Jason Bath by Zoom
Commission Member Member Anthony Ithurralde
Commission Member Weston Johnson

Members absent:
Vice Chairman Mark Bassett

City Officials and staff present:
Mayor Nathan Robertson
City Clerk Jennifer Lee
City Treasurer Janette Trask
City Building Official Chris Flannery
Administrative Assistant Patti Cobb

Also, in attendance: Members of the public in attendance at the Ely Volunteer Fire Hall signed in (appears below): Lena Ocasio, USDA.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Marty Westland stated I live in East Ely. I know it's annexed, but it's one of the issues that I have on a very short list. I want to start by just saying thank you for the work you're doing, I'm sorry that I've not been attending these meetings. I've been kind of following where you're headed, and I am entirely in favor of preservation. This is a very important mission, in my opinion, but to make it happen, I'm going to ask for three things. I want you to come up with a good explanation, something that you can provide, put in a packet, and give to the public that explains the consequences of establishing a historic district. What the costs are, ramifications, pros and cons, what funding is going to be required, and how is it raised. Does it impose special taxes on

residences or businesses that fall in these districts? I'd like answers to questions like that. Secondly, if you're going to be historic, and I'm adamant about this, you should restore the street names. Nevada Northern Railway is a sophomoric fabrication. Ely City was formed, streets were laid out, and that is 11th. I would encourage you to do something kind of fun with it, because there is an 11th Street in Ely itself and for years, it was 11th Street East, maybe we could make it 11th Street, Ely City if you want it to be historic. Thirdly, and I think most importantly, Chris might be able to speak to this, but in my opinion, this is all just my opinion and observation, you need to do something to get the burden of the International Building Code off of these historic projects. You cannot go anywhere under that code, that's my opinion. Thank you for your consideration.

George Chachas stated Mr. Bath made some comments regarding adding some additional items. They weren't in the packet. If they're going to be brought up, they need to be brought up during public comment, not during the meeting, because there's no access for any of the public, let alone board members to look at. I've not received any information in regard to Avenue A on some of the issues I brought up last time and I'm concerned that if we're going to do a historical district, you need to contact all business owners along the proposed area and have a meeting with them to see what kind of impact they may be facing. I share the same concern that Mr. Westland has in that the International Building Code kills the little person, there's no circumventing that, because that's what's been adopted, that's what's in the books, and it hasn't been changed. Thank you.

3. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION ONLY OF THE CITY OF ELY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION.
A. CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: Move to approve the Consent Agenda item 3A-1 Minutes.

Moved by: Commission Member Ithurralde Second by: Chairwoman Van Camp Vote: Unanimous

1. Discussion/For Possible Action –Minutes.
    - August 27, 2026

B. NEW BUSINESS

1. Commission Member Bath – Discussion/For Possible Action – Selection of City of Ely Historic Preservation Commission Goals for FY 2027.

   Commission Member Bath stated the idea is basically to try to revitalize but also keep the integrity of the historical value of these buildings. The following proposed Initial Goals for the Ely Historic Preservation Commission were reviewed, and pictures of downtown buildings were provided as back up documentation of what they currently look like and what they could become:

Proposed Initial Goals for the Ely Historic Preservation Commission

Preserving Ely's Past — Investing in Ely's Future

Our Vision

The Ely Historic Preservation Commission should work to protect the historic character that makes Ely unique while helping our historic buildings once again become productive parts of our community

Historic preservation should not simply mean preventing change. It should mean finding responsible ways to give historic buildings **new life, new investment and new purpose.**

Our goal should be to help turn vacant, deteriorating and underused historic properties into **businesses, restaurants, shops, offices, entertainment venues, apartments, housing and community spaces** while preserving the historic character of Downtown Ely.

A major initiative of the Commission should be the creation of an:

Ely Historic Downtown Adaptive Reuse Program

The purpose of the program would be to make rehabilitation and investment in Ely's historic buildings easier and more financially feasible for property owners, entrepreneurs and investors.

1. Create an Inventory of Ely's Historic Buildings

- [ ] Identify historic buildings throughout Downtown Ely and other historically significant areas.
- [ ] Photograph and document each property.
- [ ] Record the building's approximate age, history, architectural significance and current use.
- [ ] Identify vacant, deteriorating and underutilized buildings.
- [ ] Identify buildings that may be at risk of significant deterioration or demolition.
- [ ] Determine which properties are already listed on historic registers and which may qualify.
- [ ] Create a prioritized list of buildings where rehabilitation could have the greatest community impact.

Goal: Understand what historic resources Ely has before they are lost.

2. Identify the Buildings Most Ready for Adaptive Reuse

Create a voluntary list of buildings with strong potential to become:

- Retail stores
- Restaurants and cafés
- Bakeries
- Professional offices
- Art galleries and studios
- Entertainment businesses
- Boutique lodging
- Mixed-use developments
- Upper-floor apartments
- Workforce housing
- Senior housing
- Short- and long-term residential units
- Community gathering spaces

The Commission should help people see **possibilities instead of just deteriorated buildings.**

3. Establish the Ely Historic Downtown Adaptive Reuse Program

Develop a formal program specifically designed to encourage private investment in historic properties.

The program should serve as a **one-stop starting point** for someone interested in rehabilitating a historic Ely building.

Instead of telling a potential investor:

"Here are the regulations you have to follow,"

our approach should begin with:

"What are you trying to do with this building, and how can we help you make it happen while preserving its historic character?"

4. Build an Adaptive-Reuse Funding Toolbox

Research and maintain a current list of funding opportunities available to property owners, businesses, nonprofits and local government.

Potential resources should include:

- Nevada Main Street grants
- Nevada State Historic Preservation Office programs
- Certified Local Government grants
- Historic Preservation Fund grants
- USDA Rural Development programs
- Community Development Block Grants
- SBA financing
- Nevada small-business financing programs
- Historic rehabilitation tax incentives
- Housing programs
- Energy-efficiency programs
- Foundation grants
- Private bank financing
- Local matching grants
- Façade improvement grants
- Low-interest rehabilitation loans
- Revolving loan funds

Goal: A property owner should not have to discover all of these programs alone.

5. Pursue Certified Local Government Status

Work with the City of Ely and Nevada State Historic Preservation Office to determine and complete the steps necessary for Ely to become a **Certified Local Government (CLG).**

CLG status can provide Ely with:

- Access to preservation grants
- Technical assistance
- Preservation training
- Assistance with historic surveys
- Planning resources
- National Register assistance
- Potential rehabilitation funding

Make achieving CLG status an early priority if Ely has not already completed certification.

6. Create a Local Historic Building Rehabilitation Grant Program

Work with the City, White Pine Main Street, businesses, foundations and other partners to establish a local matching-grant program.

Possible eligible improvements could include:

- Historic storefront restoration
- Windows and doors
- Masonry repair
- Roof stabilization
- Façade improvements
- Historic signage
- Exterior lighting
- Accessibility improvements
- Fire and life-safety improvements
- Architectural and engineering expenses
- Improvements necessary to return vacant space to productive use

Whenever possible, structure programs so that **public dollars leverage significantly more private investment.**

For example:

$20,000 public investment + $80,000 private investment = $100,000 building improvement.

7. Investigate Creating an Ely Historic Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Fund

Explore establishing a pool of money specifically for low-interest loans for historic rehabilitation and adaptive reuse.

Rather than giving all available funding away through grants, some money could potentially be loaned at favorable rates.

As loans are repaid, the money returns to the fund and can be invested in another historic building.

The objective should be to create a preservation fund that can continue helping properties for decades.

8. Make Housing a Major Part of Historic Preservation

Downtown revitalization should not stop at the first floor.

Many historic downtown buildings have unused or underused upper floors.

Actively investigate ways to convert appropriate upper floors and vacant buildings into:

- Apartments
- Workforce housing
- Senior housing
- Live/work spaces
- Mixed-use residential/commercial developments

Housing creates people downtown.

People living downtown support restaurants, stores, entertainment and services throughout the week.

9. Develop a "Vacant to Vibrant" Initiative

Identify vacant historic properties and work voluntarily with owners to determine why they remain vacant.

Common obstacles may include:

- Rehabilitation cost
- Building-code requirements
- Financing
- Structural problems
- Roof problems
- Electrical systems
- Plumbing
- HVAC
- Fire suppression
- ADA/accessibility requirements
- Lack of tenants
- Lack of development experience

Then determine whether grants, financing, technical assistance or potential investors could help overcome those obstacles.

Goal: Reduce the number of long-term vacant buildings in Downtown Ely every year.

10. Create Conceptual Adaptive-Reuse Ideas for Key Buildings

For important vacant or deteriorating properties, develop conceptual examples showing what the property could become.

Examples might include:

BEFORE: Vacant historic storefront

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Goal: Reduce the number of long-term vacant buildings in Downtown Ely every year.

10. Create Conceptual Adaptive-Reuse Ideas for Key Buildings

For important vacant or deteriorating properties, develop conceptual examples showing what the property could become.

Examples might include:

BEFORE: Vacant historic storefront

POSSIBLE FUTURE: Restaurant with restored storefront and apartments upstairs

These concepts would not be development plans or requirements. They would simply help owners, residents and investors visualize possibilities.

Use historic photographs whenever possible so proposed concepts respect each building's architectural history.

11. Recruit Investors and Entrepreneurs

Preservation should include finding people willing to invest.

Develop an inventory of adaptive-reuse opportunities that can be shared with:

- Local entrepreneurs
- Existing Ely businesses
- Property owners
- Developers
- Housing developers
- Retirees looking for business opportunities
- Former Ely residents
- Regional investors
- Tourism businesses

Market Downtown Ely as a place where someone can **own a piece of Nevada history and build a business around it.**

12. Make the Rehabilitation Process Easier to Understand

Create a simple guide for someone considering purchasing or rehabilitating a historic property.

Explain:

1. Who to contact.
2. What permits may be required.
3. What historic requirements apply.
4. What financing programs may be available.
5. What grants may be available.
6. What tax incentives may apply.
7. What design assistance is available.
8. Who can help them through the process.

The Commission should try to eliminate unnecessary confusion and delays.

13. Work Closely With White Pine Main Street

Historic preservation and downtown revitalization should complement each other.

Develop a strong working relationship among:

**Ely Historic Preservation Commission

- City of Ely
- White Pine Main Street
- White Pine County
- Economic Development
- Property Owners
- Local Banks
- Businesses
- Residents**

These organizations should share information rather than operate independently.

14. Establish Relationships With Funding Agencies

Invite representatives from organizations such as:

- Nevada State Historic Preservation Office
- Nevada Main Street
- Governor's Office of Economic Development
- USDA Rural Development
- Rural Nevada Development Corporation
- Housing agencies
- Regional development authorities
- Local lenders

to speak with the Commission.

Ask a very specific question:

"What programs can we bring to Ely that will make private investment in our historic buildings financially possible?"

15. Create a Downtown Historic Building Resource Page

Create an easy-to-find section of the City or Commission website containing:

- Available grants
- Low-interest financing

- Historic tax-credit information
- Design guidelines
- Rehabilitation resources
- Available historic properties
- Before-and-after projects
- Contact information
- Historic photographs
- Adaptive-reuse success stories

Make Ely one of the easiest small communities in Nevada in which to understand historic rehabilitation.

16. Celebrate Property Owners Who Invest

Recognize successful preservation projects publicly.

Create annual awards such as:

Historic Preservation Award

Best Adaptive Reuse

Downtown Investment Award

Historic Storefront Restoration

Vacant to Vibrant Award

Property owners spending their own money improving Ely should be recognized and encouraged.

17. Measure Results — Not Just Meetings

Create measurable annual goals.

Track:

- Number of vacant historic buildings
- Number returned to productive use
- New downtown businesses
- New downtown housing units
- Private dollars invested
- Grant dollars obtained
- Low-interest financing obtained
- Façades rehabilitated

- Buildings stabilized
- Historic properties documented
- Buildings added to historic registers

Publish a simple annual:

"State of Historic Downtown Ely"

Show residents what has actually been accomplished.

Recommended First-Year Priorities

Rather than trying to accomplish everything immediately, I recommend that the new Commission concentrate on these first:

- Complete training for new Commission members.
- Begin Ely's historic building inventory.
- Identify the 10–20 highest-priority historic properties.
- Determine Ely's Certified Local Government status and pursue certification if needed.
- Establish a working partnership with White Pine Main Street.
- Meet with Nevada SHPO and Nevada Main Street representatives.
- Create the first Ely Historic Preservation Funding Guide.
- Research establishment of a local matching-grant program.
- Research establishment of a revolving low-interest rehabilitation loan fund.
- Develop the framework for the **Ely Historic Downtown Adaptive Reuse Program.**
- Select 3–5 buildings as potential pilot adaptive-reuse projects.
- Meet voluntarily with those property owners to learn what is preventing redevelopment.
- Identify potential funding packages for those pilot projects.
- Establish measurable goals for the Commission's first year.

Our Guiding Principle

We are not trying to freeze Downtown Ely in the past.

We are trying to preserve the best parts of Ely's past and make them useful for Ely's future.

A successful Historic Preservation Commission should help create a Downtown Ely where historic buildings are **preserved because they are being used.**

That means encouraging investment that produces:

Historic Preservation

New Businesses

More Housing

Private Investment

Jobs

Tourism

Community Pride

Commission Member Bath stated being in the infancy of this program this is a lot to digest. but if we can get those first goals down for us for the first year, I think that everything on top of that will kind of fall into place as needed. Obviously, this is always evolving, so there may be changes that need to be made and that's just part of this whole process, but I think with that, we may be able to keep this town going for many more generations.

Commission Member Johnson stated I don't have questions, but I would like to comment on it. The mock-ups that you have here scare me just a little bit. Not because they don't look good, but a lot of the grants that I've looked into, involving preservation specifically, cite that it's about maintaining original architecture and how much you get for those grants is tied to preservation. I completely agree with adaptive reuse, especially with apartments. I think our downtown and our city would be a lot more self-sustaining, and wouldn't have to depend on the surge of tourism so much if we had even fifty or seventy-five people living on Main Street. I'd really like to stress helping out the current business owners; the people that are already there, because they essentially helped build the town that we're living in today. I'm a big believer that even yesterday is history. Something else I wanted to say about Ely as a whole is that the thing that makes it special, I think why a lot of people come here is because, not to say it in a bad way, but we have always historically been behind, culturally. I think we came out differently from the COVID era than a lot of the cities did. I just went on a recent trip to Texas through San Antonio and Houston and my goodness, the city is much different. You have to pay for parking, anywhere you go, you have to pay $30 just to park for an hour, it takes forever to find a bathroom, everybody's a jerk, and it is an entirely different culture. Somehow, whether we intended to or not, we have protected this little culture that we have here in Ely. We have this very specific, very unique identity that I think needs to be taken into consideration when it comes to revitalizing our downtown and our town as a whole, that investors and new businesses are great, but I think we don't want to destroy the very special thing that we have. Otherwise, I really like where this plan is going. Your first year is pretty comprehensive. I don't want to put a whole lot on the City staff, so if we're going to go forward with these goals, I think the next step would be assigning roles to our commissioners and putting as much work on the Commission as we can so that the staff isn't trying to pick up all of our slack. I certainly agree with one of the first things we need to do is an inventory, or a list of the ten to twenty buildings Jason had mentioned and then I think another thing that's important is to find out why the buildings are empty, why they want so much for rent, if they would consider lowering rent or something like that to bring in little businesses; because if you're trying to pay $1,700 a month in rent, you're not going to have any profit to expand your business. I think the adaptive reuse is a great idea and I like your concept pictures.

Commission Member Bath stated going back to the concept, obviously, again, some of them are major structural changes and obviously those are not going to fall into some of these grant programs. Most of those concepts look fancy, but if you look closely at them, it's changing the windows, the framing on it, or the awnings above it, and things like that. It looks like it's a lot, but it's a facade on the front, that is not overly expensive, and I use that term loosely because everything's so expensive, but comparatively to a complete

structural change. Now, obviously, the Corner Track Saloon over there, turning it into a pub, that is a complete change and Annie's was another example. Now, for the most part, Annie's on the front is almost just a facade, too, but again, you've got the interior to do and these would require some people with a lot of money and the willingness to invest in those kind of things, but my idea is to try to just spark interest and spark other ideas. I want to see us grow at a reasonable pace, and still preserve what makes us us.

Commission Member Ithurralde motioned to table the selection of City of Ely Historic Preservation Commission Goals for FY 2027. Commission Member Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Commission Member Ithurralde – Discussion Only – Presentation regarding Aultman Street between 1st Street and 11th Street during the 20th Century.

Commission Member Ithurralde reviewed the following presentation stating pictures speak a thousand words. (pictures of each block were provided on poster board):

Before we get started, I just want to take a few minutes to set the stage for what we're going to look at today.

As we've talked about, I really believe one of the Historic Preservation Commission's priorities moving forward should be Aultman Street, particularly from 1st Street through 10th Street. This stretch is essentially Ely's historic front door. For generations, it has been where visitors first experience the community, and it still tells the story of how Ely grew and changed.

What makes Aultman Street especially interesting is that you can still see the three major eras of Ely's development-the early mining and railroad years, the automobile and Lincoln Highway era, and then the modernization that came with the postwar years and ely air travel. All three left their mark on the buildings, storefronts, signs, and architecture we see today.

Rather than looking at the street only as individual buildings, I'd like us to look at it as one continuous historic district-where the strong buildings are, where we've lost pieces, where vacant lots have created gaps, and where there are opportunities for restoration, rehabilitation, façade improvements, or historically compatible infill.

The easiest way to do that would be to simply take a little 5-to-7-minute stroll down Aultman Street together here. Special thanks to Mary Harrison and the late Tom Bath for organizing this presentation for an exhibit at the Art Bank a couple years ago.

So, with that, let's start at 1st Street North and work our way up Aultman.

Block 1 North

- Not only did Route 50 travel through Aultman Street but Route 6 would also bring travelers down Murry Street and then they would turn on Aultman Street until the bypass alignment happened in the 1980s. So, this block had gas stations and service stations
- Billboards were right against the sidewalk to fill in empty lot gaps.

Block 2 North

- More garages and a blacksmith shop that was there until the 1970s

Block 3 North

- 2 story Bijo Hall which was also called American Legion Hall. The Tex Rickard's Athletic Club met here. Joe Dempsey and other boxers fought here. Mormons met there on Sunday until 1927. Mary Pavlakis had here bakery in this building. Was a great railroad era building. This now empty lot could be for great future downtown housing.
- Boots Miller Law Office, Ely Camera Man, thanks to his inspirational film mainly shot from this location, has shown me and many how exciting and vibrant the downtown was in the 1950s
- Ralph's Barber Shop and now a busy Barber shop again.
- KDSS radio station office.
- Empty lot
- 2 story Corner Track building. The decorative metal ceiling was salvaged from the Legion Hall.

Block 4 North

- 2-story Tex Rickard Capitol Club. Burned down 1955. Parking lot now.
- Ely Theatre ★ gem of downtown. Classic automobile/Lincoln highway Age Spanish revival brick/tile building. Nothing like it anywhere.
- 2-story Ely Mercantile/Golden Rule Store /Bank Club, one of the first Ely brick railroad age buildings under the slipcover Vegas style façade of the Mr. G bar.
- Mr. G restaurant is a separate building under Vegas style façade. Could be a good example of Postwar/Ely Air Travel Age façade.

Block 5 North

- Jailhouse — slip covers Vegas style Façade 80's loose interpretation of a jail. This building use to be Steptoe Drug/Goodman Tidball Grocery/Halls Hardware and original building is still under slipcover Vegas facade
- The Greek, great brick building, Olympic torches designed in the brickwork. Great example of Automobile/Lincoln highway Age building.
- 2-story Liberty Bar with vintage neon sign. Railroad age building.

Block 6 North

- 3-story Anne / Collins Hotel. Fantastic roof balcony. Could be great housing. Railroad Era building.
- 2-story original Standard Market/FBI offices/Swallow reality office.
- Economy Drug with old fountain soda. Could be great Postwar/Ely Air Travel Age façade again.

Block 7 North

- 2-story Masonic Hall. Great upstairs apartment. Great Railroad Age façade.
- Nana's Num Nums brick building.
- Ely Pool Hall.

Block 8 North

- Old White Pine High School. Soon to be old middle school
- Was first just the middle building in 1914. Then the west and east wings were built in the 1920s. The 1950s west wing was built after a fire.
- This building could be great future apartments or condos.

Block 9 & 10 North

- Centennial Building/LDS Tabernacle. Great example of Automobile/ Lincoln Highway Era building in brick
- Park-Vue Motel. Could be a great example of Postwar Era building and could also be used for housing.
- Cononelos Furniture Store.

Block 8 South

- Veterans Park + Courthouse. Railroad Days Era
- Old Courthouse which was turned into a hospital. No longer there
- White Pine Library. Postwar/ Ely air travel age architecture.
- New beautifully landscaped duck pond

Block 7 South

- 2-story Plaza Hotel. Was named after famous NYC hotel also next to a park. Can hopefully be partly saved or only brick façade saved. Should be future housing. Automobile/Lincoln Highway Era building

- 2-story Ely Basque Hotel Bar. Railroad era wooden building under brick veneer. Building could partly be saved or only façade, I hope. Could be an addition for Racks with housing upstairs. Great vintage perpendicular neon sign that if restored could help advertise for Racks.
- Club Rio with its great animated neon sign. Postwar/ Ely Air Travel Age building

Block 6 South
- 2-story Klass Realty. Second story could be housing.
- Debbie Furniture. Store window has been boarded up for a while.
- Empty lot.

Block 5 South
- First National Bank Postwar/Ely Air Travel age building restored right!
- Lucille Shop (now part of bank) had a classic postwar façade. Now gone
- 6-story legendary Hotel Nevada. Was the tallest building in Nevada. Famous musicians performed there. Famous actors slept there. Politicians gave speeches on platforms in front of this hotel. The place where tourists and locals gather. Classic optimism architecture of the automobile/Lincoln Highway Days of Ely.

Block 4 South
- Empty lot. Once was the Ely Drug Store
- Original brick Safeway grocery store. Eagle Club. Western Auto. Been boarded up for a while. Can partly be salvaged. At least façade. Could be a great small grocery store again.
- Let Print Building. 453 Aultman. Perfect example of Postwar/Ely Air Travel Age slipcover façade.
- Image Style salon 437 Aultman. Another good example of Postwar façade.
- Old Crystal Café. Empty now. Could be great little grocery store with parking next door. Was originally built in Railroad Days era with wooden decorative façade. Could be brought back again.
- 3-Story Northern Hotel. Build by famous sports promoter Tex Rickard. Before he built the 1925 Madison Square Garden in NYC, before he built the 1928 Boston Garden, he built the Northern Hotel in Ely in 1907. Destroyed by fire in the 1964. First Ely hotel to advertise hot and cold running water and electric lights.

Block 3 South
- JCPenney Department Store. Original floor tile in front of doors.
- 3-story Wilson Bates. Hidden gem. Railroad Days era façade under green metal veneer. Upper 3rd story windows are still there but not sure if ornamental cornice is still there.

Block 2 South
- Ely Ford

Block 1 South
- Gas station / Richfield service stations with vintage gas pumps. Perfect Postwar Era architecture restoration

3. Commission Members – City Clerk Lee – Discussion/For Possible Action – Approval to move the Historic Preservation Commission's November meeting to November 12, 2026 and cancel its December meeting, due to the Holidays and staff scheduling conflicts.

   Commission Member Johnson moved to hold the November 12, 2026 City of Ely Historic Preservation Commission meeting at 2:00 p.m. and to cancel the December City of Ely Historic Preservation Commission meeting. Commission Member Bath seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT:

No Public Comment.

5. ADJOURNMENT: THE MEETING MAY BE ADJOURNED BY APPROPRIATE MOTION OF THE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Chairwoman Van Camp adjourned the regular meeting of the City of Ely Historic Preservation Commission Meeting at **9:43 a.m.**

Patti Cobb
Attest

Janet Van Camp
Chairwoman