



# City of Reno Historical Resources Commission Handbook



City of Reno Historic Preservation

2023

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Cover Image: Commercial Row, Reno Nevada ca. 1909



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## Welcome!

Public service is a vital part of our community. As a Commissioner on the City of Reno's Historical Resources Commission (HRC), you become part of the legacy of Reno's efforts to celebrate and honor our shared history as well as be a part of shaping the future. Thank you for your dedication and service to the HRC!

## Overview

The purpose of the HRC is to serve as the official advisor to the City of Reno on matters related to the historic preservation of cultural resources and buildings. The HRC meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 4:00 p.m. at McKinley Arts & Culture Center.

## What does the HRC do?

From RMC 18.07.101:

1. Protect the historic integrity of Reno for the citizens of the community, visitors, investors, and property owners.
2. Promote the economic, cultural, historical, and educational well-being of the community.
3. Enhance pride in the historic accomplishments within the City of Reno.
4. Provide mechanisms for identifying and preserving the historic and architectural resources of the City of Reno which represent elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history.
5. Educate the citizens of Reno to the benefits of historic preservation of structures, areas, sites, neighborhoods, and other historic resources, thereby correcting existing and preventing further urban blight.

## Who are the HRC Commissioners?

The Reno City Council appoints seven commissioners that include professionals and members of the public to serve on the HRC. RMC 18.08.904 describes how the commission will be composed:

- A. One position held by a person who is a registered architect in the State of Nevada.
- B. One position held by a person who is a historian with knowledge of local history.
- C. One position held by a structural or civil engineer licensed in the State of Nevada.
- D. Two positions held by persons who have demonstrable interest, competence, or knowledge of historic preservation in the disciplines of landscape architecture, real estate, construction, community development, urban planning, archaeology, law, finance, cultural geography, cultural anthropology, or related disciplines.



## Important Documents

### Nevada Certified Local Government Handbook

Access the [Nevada Certified Local Government Handbook](#).

### Reno City Council Strategic Goals

<https://www.reno.gov/government/city-council/vision-mission-and-priorities>.

### Reimagine Reno City of Reno Master Plan, adopted 2017

<https://www.reimaginereno.us/>

### Reno Municipal Code Chapter 18, adopted 2021

View the section of Reno Municipal Code that establishes the Historical Resources Commission (RMC 18.08.904) and that regulates the activities of the HRC (RMC 18.07).

[Zoning Code](#)

### HRC Bylaws

See Appendix A.

### City of Reno Historic Plan - Adopted by Council in 2012

#### Vision Statement

Identify, recognize, and encourage the preservation of Reno's historic resources that include historic buildings, structures, objects, neighborhoods, emigrant trails, and highways, archaeological sites, and landscapes in an effort to foster civic and neighborhood pride so that future generations will have the opportunity to appreciate and understand Reno's unique cultural heritage.

[Historic Plan](#)

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## HRC 2022/2023 Strategic Plan

[2022/2023 HRC Strategic Plan](#)

## HRC 2022/2023 Strategic Goals



## Code of Ethics

### Code of Ethics for Public Officials - Reno Municipal Code 2.20

It is the policy of the City to uphold, promote, and demand the highest standards of ethics from all of its employees and officials, whether elected, appointed, or hired. City officers and employees shall maintain the utmost standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty, and fairness in carrying out their public duties; avoid any improprieties in their roles as public servants including the appearance of impropriety; and never use their city position or powers for improper personal gain. In construing this chapter, city officials should be guided by common sense. This code of ethics is supplemental to the provisions of the [Reno City Charter](#) (Statutes of Nevada, Chapter 662, Sec. 1.090 Appointive officers and appointive employees).

[https://library.municode.com/nv/reno/codes/administrative\\_code?nodeId=PT2READCO\\_TIT2AD\\_C\\_H2.20COETPUOF](https://library.municode.com/nv/reno/codes/administrative_code?nodeId=PT2READCO_TIT2AD_C_H2.20COETPUOF)



## National Alliance of Preservation Commissions Code of Ethics for Commissioners and Staff

See Appendix B.

## HRC Conflict of Interest Disclosure

See Appendix C.

## HRC Code of Conduct

As a member of the HRC:


- All Commission meetings are to be conducted in public session and noticed in accordance with state law
- Commission members will respect the limitations of their individual and collective authority. The role of the Commission is to advise the City Council and/or staff. Commission appointment does not empower you to make final decisions, unless authorized by state law or the group's enabling ordinance, or to supervise staff.
- The Commission Chair will ensure that all members have a fair, balanced, and respectful opportunity to share their knowledge and perspectives.
- The Commission will attempt to reach consensus on issues. If consensus is not possible, decisions will be made by majority vote. Strong differing opinions, such as "minority" opinions, should be recorded and acknowledged in the meeting minutes.
- You are a representative of the Commission. Even if you disagree with a vote of the Commission you should not actively work to undermine that decision.
- The Commission's responsibility is to represent the community, not personal interest.
- Study historic preservation programs and services, and analyze problems and needs.
- Offer new proposals and recommend changes in programs and policies.
- Provide community members with information about City policies, programs, and budgets.

Attendance requirements:

- Commissioners cannot miss more than 3 consecutive regular meetings.
- If a Commissioner must miss more than 3 consecutive meetings, they must receive permission from the Chair.

Time Commitment:

- Monthly HRC meetings are 2 hours long and will require a variable amount of preparation time in advance of meetings.
- Activities of the commission such as the consideration of applications, programs, proposals, and policy development may require additional time outside of meetings for research and preparation prior to discussion or action at regular HRC meetings.

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- Commissioners may participate in outreach activities including educational workshops, award ceremonies, and celebrations in addition to regular HRC meeting time.

### Role of Staff

Staff liaisons to the Historical Resources Commission will:

- Ensure that meeting notifications and recordkeeping occurs consistent with applicable state laws.
- Provide professional guidance, issue analysis, and recommendations.
- Serve as a communication link between the Commission, city administration, departments, and the City Council as appropriate.
- Assist with research, report preparation, and correspondence in keeping with the Commission's council-approved role.
- Present Commission recommendations to the City Council if requested to do so by either the Commission or the City Council.
- Manage the day-to-day tasks of the HRC.
- Take direction from the Arts & Culture Manager.

### Ground Rules

- Stick to the agenda / stay on topic.
- Do homework and be prepared--review agenda packet prior to meeting.
- Work collectively to have meetings that last no longer than 2 hours.
- Individual commission members and the collective group will be fair, impartial, and respectful of the public, staff, and each other.
- Assume positive intent.
- Listen to other's ideas.
- Be considerate of the timed agenda.
- Anyone can speak up if they hear anything that is inappropriate or not relevant to a productive meeting.



## Helpful Resources

[Nevada State Historic Preservation Office \(SHPO\)](#)

[National Alliance of Preservation Commissions](#)

[Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties](#)

[National Park Service Technical Preservation Services](#)

[National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

[Nevada Historical Society](#)

[Advisory Council on Historic Preservation](#)

[American Association for State and Local History](#)

[Docomomo](#)

[Nevadans for Cultural Preservation](#)

[American Institute of Architects Northern Nevada](#)

[Robert's Rules of Order Cheat Sheet](#)

[Preserving Place](#)



## Appendix A: Reno Historical Resources Commission Bylaws

### Article I Membership

The commission shall consist of seven members as required pursuant to Reno Municipal Code Section 18.06.104(c) as may be amended or renumbered. Terms of office are controlled by Reno Municipal Code 18.06.104(d) as may be amended or renumbered.

### Article II Meetings

The commission shall meet no less than 6 times a year at a time, date, and place determined by the Commission for regular meetings.

Additional meetings may be held at any time upon the call of the Chairperson, by a majority of the voting members, or upon the request of the City Council.

Meetings shall be in compliance with the Nevada Open Meeting Law ([NRS Chapter 241](#)).

### Article III Election of Officers

The Commission at its first regular meeting in January of each year shall elect a Chairperson and Vice-chairperson from among Commission members. In the event a vacancy should occur in the position of Chairperson or Vice-chairperson, the Commission members shall elect an officer from its members to fill such a vacancy pending the annual election of officers.

### Article IV Duties and Powers of Officers

#### A. Chairperson (presiding):

1. Preside at all Commission meetings.
2. Call special meetings of the Commission in accordance with the bylaws.
3. Sign Commission documents.
4. See that all Commission actions are properly taken.
5. Notify, in writing, the Reno City Clerk of any resignation or termination of membership.
6. Advise the City Clerk's office, in writing, of changes of address of Historical Resources Commission members.
7. The Chairperson may not make motions, but may second motions and participate in the discussions. He/She shall be an ex officio member of all subcommittees, with voice but no vote.
8. No member may serve more than four (4) full consecutive terms as Chairperson.

#### B. Vice-chairperson

1. During the absence, disability, or disqualification of the Chairperson, the Vice-chairperson shall exercise or perform all duties and be subject to all the

responsibilities of the Chairperson. In the absence, disability, or disqualification of both the Chairperson and the Vice-chairperson, the Commission members shall elect a temporary chairperson from among its members to carry out the duties of the chairperson for that meeting.

C. Recording Secretary


1. The Community Development Department staff shall serve as the Recording Secretary of the Commission.
2. Keep the minutes of all meetings in an appropriate minute book.
3. Give or serve all notices required by law or bylaws.
4. Receive, for the Commission, all applications as required by NRS and City codes.
5. Prepare the agenda and appropriate supporting materials for all meetings of the Commission.
6. Be custodian of Commission records.
7. Inform the Commission of correspondence relating to business of the Commission and attend to such correspondence.
8. Handle funds, if any, that are allocated to the Commission in accordance with its directive, by law, and City regulations, and report annually the status of any allocated funds.
9. File all materials required by law in the office of the Community Development Department.

## Article V Procedural Matters

- A. Quorum: A majority of the members entitled to vote shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Each member of the Historical Resources Commission who has knowledge of the fact that he/she will not be able to attend a scheduled meeting of the Commission shall notify the Community Development Department at the earliest possible opportunity and, in any event, prior to 5:00 p.m. pm the day prior to the date of the meeting. The Community Development Department staff shall notify the Chairperson of the Commission in the event that the projected absences will produce a lack of quorum.

- B. Designation of Voting Order: Voting to be verbal, with the Chairperson voting last.
- C. Reconsideration: Any decision of the Commission may be reconsidered if City Council has not acted upon the decision. A motion to reconsider may be made only by a Commission member who voted with the prevailing side in the previous consideration of the item and must be approved by a majority of a quorum of the Commission before the matter may be rescheduled for reconsideration.
- D. Conflict of Interest: Any member of the Historical Resources Commission who shall feel that he/she has a conflict of interest on any matter that is on the Historical Resources Commission agenda shall voluntarily excuse himself/herself, vacate his/her seat, and



refrain from discussing and voting on said items as a member of the Historical Resources Commission.

E. Resignations:

1. A Commission member who resigns voluntarily shall notify the Chairperson.
2. Resignation of the Chairperson is followed by the Vice-chairperson becoming Chairperson and serving the unexpired term of the vacated office. A new Vice-chairperson shall be elected at the next regular Commission meeting.
3. Automatic Resignation:
  - a. Three (3) consecutive absences (regular meetings) by a Commission member, whether excused or unexcused, shall result in the “automatic resignation” of that member.

Such “resignation” may be appealed to the Reno City Council. Said appeal shall be initiated by the member and filed with the Reno City Clerk.
  - b. “Automatic resignation” also applies if a Commission member is not, or ceases to be a resident of the State of Nevada.
4. Removal of a Commission member by City Council: Any member of the Historical Resources Commission may be removed from office by a majority vote of the City Council.

F. Press Release: No press release may be made to the news media by the Commission until 24 hours after said release has been delivered, in writing, to the City Manager.

G. Robert's Rules of Order are hereby adopted for the governing of the Commission in all cases not otherwise provided for in these rules.

H. These rules may be amended at any meeting by a vote of the majority of the entire membership of the Commission provided ten (10) days' written notice has been given to each member of the Commission.

Approved by Reno City Council September 8, 2010.



## Appendix B: National Alliance of Preservation Commissions Code of Ethics for Commissioners and Staff

### Preamble

Preservation commissions have been established by local governments throughout the United States to promote the preservation and appropriate development of heritage resources in their communities. The National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) is the only organization devoted solely to representing the nation's preservation commissions. Its mission is "to build strong local preservation programs through education, advocacy and training." As part of that mission, the NAPC has developed this Code of Ethics to promote and maintain the highest standards of honesty, integrity and professionalism among the commissioners and staff who serve their communities through preservation commissions.


These principles are derived from general societal values and recognized principles of professional responsibility. As societal values compete, so may ethical principles. The need for full public disclosure may compete with the need to respect confidential information, for example. The ethical commissioner or staff member must carefully balance various public and private interests based on the facts and context of each situation guided by the commitment to serve the public interest.

Individual commissioners should be knowledgeable, accurate, honest and forthright in their dealings with other commissioners, local elected officials and staff, applicants and the general public. Although not elected by the public, preservation commissioners are accountable for their actions in the communities they serve.

This Code of Ethics comprises guidelines for ethical conduct organized under three main categories:

- Responsibility to the Community
- Responsibility to the Profession
- Standards of Professional Conduct

Under each category are statements of principle to guide preservation commissioners and staff in choosing ethical courses of action for heritage preservation in their communities. The NAPC endorses this Code as the ethical benchmark to which all its members should aspire. In the absence of professional licensure for preservation commissioners and staff, the adherence to a code of ethics is a matter of personal responsibility. However, preservation commissions may wish to adopt these principles and standards as a guide. Although stated in the plural, each suggested rule also applies to an individual commissioner or staff member.




## Responsibility to the Community

The most effective historic preservation takes place locally, and all preservation commissioners and staff should remember that it is their duty, as public servants, to advance the greater good of the community.

1. Commissioners and Staff should be advocates for the community's heritage resources, striving to protect their integrity while recognizing the rights of citizens, individually and collectively, to their beneficial use and enjoyment.
2. Commissioners and Staff should promote public awareness, appreciation, access and support for the preservation of heritage resources.
3. Commissioners and Staff should develop standards and guidelines that are appropriate for the resources and protect the community's unique character, environment and quality of life.
4. Commissioners and Staff should respect the diversity of heritage resources that may hold different meanings for various groups and communities.
5. Commissioners and Staff should respect the public's right to know by providing full, clear and accurate information and observing both the letter and spirit of open meetings and open records laws.
6. Commissioners and Staff should provide opportunities for meaningful public participation in the work of the commission.
7. Commissioners and Staff should make timely, fair, informed and impartial decisions that guarantee citizens' rights to due process and equal protection under the law.
8. Commissioners and Staff should be sensitive to the interrelatedness of their decisions and the long-term implications for the resources and the community.
9. Commissioners and Staff should seek compromises or search for alternatives where necessary to achieve overall preservation goals and provide substantial justice for citizens.
10. Commissioners and Staff should recognize that the historic built environment changes over time and encourage new development that respects the historic character and fabric that preceded it.
11. Commissioners and Staff should continually evaluate and update their plans, ordinances, standards, guidelines and procedures to ensure they meet the community's current and future needs.
12. Commissioners and Staff should always strive to make decisions that are in the best interest of the community.

## Responsibility to the Profession

Preservation commissioners and staff are drawn from many disciplines and backgrounds. The common thread that joins them is their interest and commitment to preserve heritage resources in their communities. A multi-disciplinary profession has developed over the years from the




historic preservation movement, and commissioners and staff have an obligation to advance the best interests of this profession in the context of their commission work.

1. Commissioners and Staff should be mindful that they are representatives of the greater local, state, and national preservation community and conduct themselves in a way that brings credit to their commission and the profession.
2. Commissioners and Staff should share their knowledge and experience and contribute to the development of other colleagues, particularly newly appointed commissioners, students, and interns.
3. Commissioners and Staff should actively promote heritage preservation and strive to increase the involvement of underrepresented groups.
4. Commissioners and Staff should support through their memberships and other contributions organizations that promote heritage preservation.
5. Commissioners and Staff should work collaboratively with related professionals and professional organizations whose actions also affect heritage conservation including, but not limited to, planners, code officials, architects, landscape architects, archaeologists, attorneys, realtors, and developers.
6. Commissioners and Staff should treat fairly and comment responsibly on the professional views of colleagues and members of other professions.
7. Commissioners and Staff should render all practicable assistance to other colleagues and organizations in an emergency when heritage resources are at risk.
8. Commissioners and Staff should acquire a depth of knowledge that will enable them to explain to others the role of heritage preservation in a complex, modern world.
9. Commissioners and Staff should recognize that the field of heritage preservation is constantly evolving and actively pursue continuing educational opportunities in order to maintain, refine and enhance their capabilities as practitioners.

## Standards of Professional Conduct

As public servants, commissioners and staff are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the law. These standards set forth both a baseline for such legal conduct as well as aspirational goals for ethical behavior that may require a conscientious effort to attain.

1. Commissioners and Staff should thoroughly understand the legal framework of heritage preservation and consistently operate within the bounds of their authority and responsibility under the law.
2. Commissioners and Staff should treat all citizens fairly, impartially and with respect, and refrain from discrimination or harassment of any kind.
3. Commissioners and Staff should not accept gifts or favors under any circumstances where it might appear that acceptance could influence their judgment.

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4. Commissioners and Staff should disclose all personal or financial advantages that might accrue to them, their business interests or family members either directly or indirectly from a recommendation or decision.
  5. Preservation Commissioners and Staff who have an actual or apparent conflict of interest in a matter coming before them should recuse themselves entirely from deliberations and decisions.
  6. Commissioners and Staff are obligated to utilize their knowledge and experience to make decisions and therefore should abstain from participating and voting only in cases of a bona fide conflict of interest.
  7. Commissioners and Staff should not disclose confidential information obtained in the course of their duties, except as required by the law, or use confidential information to further a personal interest.
  8. Commissioners and Staff should not abuse their office by advancing an agenda that is not in the best interest of the community or heritage preservation.
  9. Commissioners and Staff should seek the advice of colleagues or other professionals on matters that fall outside their expert knowledge or competence.
  10. Commissioners and staff should be consistent in their actions and recommendations, treating similarly situated properties similarly and providing clear explanations when different treatment is required.
  11. Commissioners and Staff should reveal illegal conduct on the part of other commissioners, staff, officials, applicants or their representatives to an appropriate higher authority.
  12. Commissioners and Staff should not participate in deliberations or decisions without adequate preparation and knowledge of the matter before them.
  13. Commissioners and Staff should avoid dishonesty, never misrepresenting facts or distorting information to achieve a desired outcome.
  14. Commissioners and Staff should recognize the uniqueness of heritage properties, applying preservation theories, methods, and standards appropriate to each particular case.
  15. Commissioners and Staff should be sensitive to ethical issues and ensure they are raised, critically analyzed, and addressed by the commission and other appropriate authorities.

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This Code of Ethics was developed by members of the NACP through an interactive process beginning with a series of facilitated sessions held during the July 2006 NACP FORUM in Baltimore, MD. The resulting set of principles was further developed and refined by members during the following three-month period leading up to the November 2006 annual meeting of NACP in Pittsburgh, PA. The effort was supported by the Board of Directors and staff of NACP and coordinated by Professor James K. Reap, an attorney and member of the Board, with the involvement of the Historic Preservation Advocacy and Professional Development class in the Master of Historic Preservation Program at the University of Georgia. The NACP would like to acknowledge the organizations whose guidelines and materials were relied on in developing this code: the American Institute of Architects (AIA), American Planning Association (APA), American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC), and International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

NACP • P.O. BOX 1605 • ATHENS, GA 30603 • 706-542-0169 "Helping local preservation commissions succeed through education, advocacy, and training."

## Appendix C: HRC Conflict of Interest Statement

The primary responsibility of the Historical Resources Commission is to serve as an official advisor to the City of Reno City Council on topics related to historical preservation in the City of Reno. The HRC serves as the designated driver and facilitator of programs, policies and practices that support the protection of Reno's historic resources. In the recommendation of applications, conditions, programs, policies, practices and support, it is the HRC's duty to objectively consider the merits of each proposal based upon the backup materials and staff reports provided.

Individual commissioners should adhere to the following standards with regards to conflicts of interest whether they be perceived, potential, or actual:

1. The organization(s) represented by individual commissioners will NOT submit proposals as the lead respondent, a subcontractor, or in partnership with any respondent to be reviewed by the HRC. Commissioners will not write or contribute to any proposal submitted for opportunities under HRC oversight.
2. Individual commissioners will not enter into a written or verbal agreement for present or future employment, nor will they apply to be considered for employment, with any potential respondent to opportunities under HRC oversight. Commissioners will not have a conflict of interest related to any type of direct or indirect financial benefit, personal relationship(s), or other interests with any of the respondents to potential funding opportunities under the oversight of the HRC.
3. Commissioners will not be directly and/or indirectly lobbied by, and/or pressured by any agency/organization/individual(s) which have requested support and that will be evaluated by the HRC.