

MADISON HISTORIC DISTRICT BOARD OF REVIEW (HDBR) CODE OF ETHICS

Standards of Professional Conduct

As public servants, HDBR members 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) The HDBR and staff shall thoroughly understand the legal framework of heritage preservation and consistently operate within the bounds of their authority and responsibility under the law.
- 2) The HDBR and staff shall treat all citizens fairly, impartially and with respect, and refrain from discrimination or harassment of any kind.
- 3) The HDBR and staff shall not accept gifts or favors under any circumstances where it might appear that acceptance could influence their judgment.
- 4) The HDBR and staff shall 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) The HDBR and staff who have an actual or perceived conflict of interest in a matter coming before them shall recuse themselves entirely from deliberations and decisions.
- 6) The HDBR and staff are obligated to utilize their knowledge and experience to make decisions and therefore shall abstain from participating and voting only in cases of a *bona fide* conflict of interest.
- 7) The HDBR and staff shall 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) The HDBR and staff shall not abuse their office by advancing an agenda that is not in the best interest of the community or heritage preservation.
- 9) The HDBR and staff shall seek the advice of colleagues or other professionals on matters that fall outside their expert knowledge or competence.
- 10) The HDBR and staff shall be consistent in their actions and recommendations, treating similarly situated properties similarly and providing clear explanations when different treatment is required.
- 11) The HDBR and staff shall reveal illegal conduct on the part of other commissioners, staff, officials, applicants or their representatives to an appropriate higher authority.
- 12) The HDBR and staff shall not participate in deliberations or decisions without adequate preparation and knowledge of the matter before them.
- 13) The HDBR and staff shall avoid dishonesty, never misrepresenting facts or distorting information to achieve desired outcomes.
- 14) The HDBR and staff shall recognize the uniqueness of heritage properties, applying preservation theories, methods, and standards appropriate to each particular case.
- 15) The HDBR and staff shall 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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Responsibility to the Profession

The Historic District Board of Review 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 the HDBR and staff have an obligation to advance the best interests of this profession in the context of their work.

- 1) The HDBR and staff shall 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) The HDBR and staff shall share their knowledge and experience and contribute to the development of other colleagues, particularly newly appointed Board members, student and interns.
- 3) The HDBR and staff shall actively promote heritage preservation, supporting through their memberships and other contributions organizations that promote heritage preservation.
- 4) The HDBR and staff shall work collaboratively with related professionals and organizations whose actions also affect heritage conservation including, but not limited to, planners, code officials, architects, landscape architects, archaeologists, attorneys, realtors, and developers.
- 5) The HDBR and staff shall treat fairly and comment responsibly on the professional views of colleagues and members of other professions.
- 6) The HDBR and staff shall render all practicable assistance to other colleagues and organizations in an emergency when heritage resources are at risk.
- 7) The HDBR and staff shall acquire a depth of knowledge that will enable them to explain to others the role of heritage preservation in a complex, modern world.
- 8) The HDBR and staff, recognizing that the field of heritage preservation is constantly evolving shall actively pursue continuing education opportunities in order to maintain, refine and enhance their capabilities as practitioners.

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Responsibility to the Community

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

- 1) The HDBR and staff shall 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) The HDBR and staff shall promote public awareness, appreciation, access and support for the preservation of heritage resources.
- 3) The HDBR and staff shall develop standards and guidelines that are appropriate for the resources and protect the community's unique character, environment and quality of life.
- 4) The HDBR and staff shall respect the diversity of heritage resources that may hold different meanings for various groups and communities.
- 5) The HDBR and staff shall 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. They shall provide opportunities for meaningful public participation in the work of the commission.
- 6) The HDBR and staff shall make timely, fair, informed and impartial decisions that guarantee citizens' rights to due process and equal protection under the law.
- 7) The HDBR and staff shall be sensitive to the interrelatedness of their decisions and the long-term implications for the resources and the community.
- 8) The HDBR and staff shall seek compromises or search for alternatives where necessary to achieve overall preservation goals and provide substantial justice for citizens.
- 9) The HDBR and staff shall recognize that the historic built environment changes over time and encourage new development that respects the historic character and fabric that preceded it.
- 10) The HDBR and staff shall continually evaluate and update their plans, ordinances, standards, guidelines and procedures to ensure they meet the community's current and future needs.

(Adapted from a Code of Ethics developed by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions and published by them for use by local commissions.)

Approved _____

By Ginger Jorgensen
Vice-Chairman, HDBR, Ginger Jorgensen,
Presiding for: Chairman, HDBR, Dirk Cheatham

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