

GENEVA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

(Special Meeting)

Monday, January 12, 2026

City Hall Council Chambers

109 James St., Geneva, IL 60134

CALL TO ORDER

The Geneva Special City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Kevin Burns at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

Elected Officials present:

Alderspersons: Anaïs Bowring, Larry Furnish, Dean Kilburg, Brad Kosirog, William Malecki, Richard Marks, Amy Mayer, Jeff Palmquist, Martha Paschke, Mark Reinecke.

Mayor Kevin Burns, City Clerk Vicki Kellick.

Elected Officials attending by video or teleconference: None.

Elected Officials absent: None.

Others Present: City Administrator Alex Voigt, Assistant City Administrator Ben McCready, City Attorney Ron Sandack, Community Development Director David DeGroot.

Others attending by video or teleconference: None.

Mayor Burns read a statement (see Exhibit A) reminding the City Council to consider the December 16, 2025 decision of the Historical Preservation Commission in making its decision. He noted that the Council's only role is to consider reversing the December 16 decision and that no new evidence may be introduced. Seven "aye" votes are required to overturn the HPC's decision.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Consider Resolution No. 2026-03 Reversing the December 16, 2025 Determination of the Historic Preservation Commission to Deny the Demolition of the Historic Landmark at 4 East State Street, Geneva, Illinois.

Moved by Ald. Marks, Seconded by Ald. Kosirog.

Petitioner David Patzelt provided background information regarding the December hearing. He noted that numerous documents were submitted to the HPC including affidavits of ownership, floor plans, a detailed pro forma, and market values. As part of the application, 17 items were also presented as to why the HPC should allow the demolition of the building. He noted that 8 years have passed and 20 public hearings have been held regarding the site with no movement on either side. Mr. Patzelt stated that over 60% of letters received from residents over time were in favor of demolition. He then stated that the HPC failed to evaluate all 17 facts identified in the application and he requested that the City Council overturn the HPC's denial of demolition.

Historic Preservation Chair Paul Zellmer spoke and stated that the scope of the HPC review was limited and that the Commission was only tasked with evaluating the demolition request. He noted that the HPC considered the city staff report, the

petitioner's application, and the sworn testimony of both sides. The Commission found that the applicant's demolition request was not in the best interest of the community; there was divided public opinion over demolition; the applicant did not present a concrete development proposal; the prolonged deterioration of the building does not mean the building should be demolished, and the applicant did not meet the burden required under standard 4 to justify demolition of a designated landmark. Mr. Zellmer stated that the HPC acted within its authority to deny demolition.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Patzelt stated that no development plan could be proposed without knowing if the structure will remain on the land or not. He stated that a plan will be submitted if a demolition permit is granted and that the petitioner is willing to incorporate the stone from the structure into a type of historical memorial.

Attorney Sandack reminded the City Council to consider the record and the HPC proceedings and to act in a quasi-appellate manner.

Ald. Kosirog commented that he has deep respect for the HPC but that an adaptive reuse is not feasible and that the code does not call for maintaining a structure at any cost. He stated that retention is not in the best interest of the community and that demolition best serves the community.

Ald. Bowring stated that, just like the petitioner, she would like to see something happen at the site. However, options other than demolition are available to the petitioner and she feels that the petitioner is holding the site hostage if the structure is not removed.

Ald. Reinecke noted that this is a contentious issue but that there is an opportunity for solution-focused thinking. He stated that because this is a landmark, the demolition options are narrowed. While everyone wants something of value on the site, he asked if the structure could be preserved and economically viable and answered yes to both. He noted that he does not support demolition but instead supports collaborative efforts.

Ald. Malecki stated that there will be contention in the future no matter what the Council decides. He noted his concern about overruling the HPC as a matter of convenience.

Ald. Palmquist stated that there is a split opinion of residents regarding the demolition. He noted the constraints of reuse of the structure and noted that he could support its demolition.

Ald. Mayer stated that she believes that the structure will be expensive to reuse. She noted that Shodeen has reused and preserved structures in the past.

Moved by Ald. Mayer, Seconded by Ald. Furnish to amend the motion to include wording that remnants of the structure be made available as a historical memorial, the design of which will be submitted to City staff within 90 days.

AYES: 6 (Furnish, Kilburg, Kosirog, Marks, Mayer, Palmquist)

ABSENT: 0

NAYS: 4 (Bowring, Malecki, Paschke, Reinecke)

Attorney Sandak reminded the Council that their vote will be to reverse or affirm the decision of the HPC and that doing so must be based on the record.

Ald. Paschke stated that she wanted to support the amendment but did not based on the evidence before the City Council, noting that the petitioner had the opportunity to offer such an alternative at any time to the HPC but did not.

Ald. Kilburg noted that there has been a significant amount of preservation projects undertaken previously by the petitioner but stated that the time has come to move forward on the site after eight years.

Ald. Marks stated that it was difficult to see a reuse of the structure. He noted that the structure is not what it was in the 1800s and will vote to reverse the HPC decision.

Moved by Ald. Bowring, Seconded by Ald. Marks to call the question.

AYES: 9 (Bowring, Furnish, Kilburg, Malecki, Marks, Mayer, Palmquist, Paschke, Reinecke)

ABSENT: 0

NAYS: 1 (Kosirog)

ROLL CALL on the main motion as amended:

AYES: 6 (Furnish, Kilburg, Kosirog, Marks, Mayer, Palmquist)

ABSENT: 0

NAYS: 4 (Bowring, Malecki, Paschke, Reinecke)

MOTION FAILED

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Chris Aiston requested to know who the 1st Ward alderpersons are.

Resident Lee Eysturlid asked why the City has allowed the fines on the blacksmith shop to go unpaid by Shodeen. He stated that the HPC shrugged in response to the question and he noted that as a citizen, he would have to pay if he was in a similar situation.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Adjournment

There being no further business, moved by Ald. Kosirog to adjourn the Geneva City Council meeting.

MOTION CARRIED by unanimous voice vote of those present.

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 PM.

Vicki Kellick
Geneva City Clerk

January 12, 2026 Special City Council Meeting Preamble Regarding Meeting Process & Flow

City Council, representatives of Shodeen Group, the designated spokesperson for the City's Historic Preservation Commission – hereinafter referred to as HPC – ladies and gentlemen present in the Council Chamber and to everyone tuning in via the multiple public access channels and/or online...

Tonight's Special City Council meeting is being held for one reason and one reason only...for this Council to consider the appeal made by the Shodeen Group of the HPC's denial of their request for a demolition permit for the structure located at 4 E. State Street, based on the City Code 10-6-10 and standard #4 therein, The retention of a building, structure, object, improvement, or site is not in the best interest of the majority of the community – at the HPC's meeting held on December 16, 2025.

Shodeen Group exercised their rights to appeal the HPC's ruling on December 16, 2025 and, on December 17, 2025 – and per City Code Section 10-6-10 – filed the appropriate documents to effectuate said appeal to be heard by this City Council.

City Code 10-6-10 requires the City Council to hear the appeal, duly filed, within 30 days or receipt. Tonight, January 12, 2026 is well within the City's Code requirements.

Tonight the City Council is sitting in a quasi-appellate court capacity, and not in its typical legislative capacity.

More specifically, and as stated at the outset of my remarks, the Council's only role this evening – per language of Resolution 2026-03 - is to consider reversing the HPC's December 16, 2025 ruling to deny a demolition permit for the structure at 4 E. State Street.

In our capacity to consider the appeal, it's instructive to again reiterate that the Council – and by extension all parties present this evening and joining us via public access television and/or online – understand that the entirety of the evidentiary record has already been adduced effective upon the closing of the Public Hearing process held by HPC on December 16, 2025. For the record, said public hearing was opened at the 5:44 minute mark of the December 16, 2025 HPC meeting and closed at the 1:29:17 minute mark – 84 minutes and 44 seconds in total.

Accordingly, no communication received or presentations made after the closing of the public hearing on December 16, 2025 shall be considered evidence related to the Council's deliberations this evening and, no evidence may now be introduced or re-visited, including any individual fact-finding, presentations or interviewing of witnesses by Council members throughout the duration of this meeting.

All Council deliberations must be focused singularly on the record established by the HPC's December 16, 2025 and not on anything outside of that record.

Any effort to do otherwise, will be ruled out of order.

Tonight's meeting will proceed as follows:

1. A motion and second will be requested to put the matter before us and on the floor
2. The appellant, Shodeen Group, will be afforded an opportunity to speak
3. A representative of the HPC will be afforded an opportunity to speak

4. The Appellant, Shodeen Group, if they so choose, will be afforded the opportunity to provide closing remarks.
5. The Council will deliberate among and between themselves –
the Council is not permitted to cross-examine or request any additional information from either the representative of Shodeen Group or the HPC spokesperson during council deliberations.
6. Please direct your attention to the phraseology of the agenda item...the question before this Council is to consider “reversal” of the HPC’s denial to issue a demolition permit for the Landmarked Historic structure at 4 E. State Street...

Therefore, a vote to reverse the decision of the HPC must be cast by an “AYE” vote...and a vote to sustain or affirm the HPC’s decision must be cast by a “NAY” vote.

7. For this Council to reverse the HPC’s December 16, 2025 decision to deny the Shodeen Group’s request for a demolition permit for the structure at 4 E. State Street...at least 7 “AYE” votes from the 10 alderperson’s present are required.
8. Seated to my left is City Attorney Sandack...Mr. Sandack has been granted full authority to interrupt any speaker as well as any council member as necessary to ensure that comments are germane to the singular question before us.
9. The Council respectfully requests the cooperation everyone in attendance this evening to please refrain from any outbursts, sidebar conversations or any distractions whatsoever.
10. Finally, I kindly ask the Council to speak directly, loudly and clearly into the microphone...so everyone present and everyone tuning in remotely can benefit from the dialogue.

Are there any questions...

I will entertain a motion and a second to:

Consider Resolution No. 2026-03...Reversing the December 16, 2025 Determination of the Historic Preservation Commission to Deny the Demolition of the Historic Landmark at 4 East State Street, Geneva, Illinois.