

# Akron Documenters

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## Regular Meeting

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Agency: Akron Urban Design & Historic Preservation Commission

Date: July 16, 2024

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### Summary

- City staff members presented a plan to rebuild the water reservoir at Reservoir Park and demolish the water tower and pump house in Goodyear Heights. Local residents and city officials expressed concerns about the local landmarks like the pump station and water tower being demolished. The commission recommended that the city find a way to mitigate historical losses if demolition is necessary
- The commission passed a certificate of appropriateness so the city can demolish the back three wings of Firestone Plant 1 in South Akron.
- The commission passed Local Landmark Status for the Brown Family Home in Summit Lake

### Follow-Up Questions

- Have quorums been a consistent issue with the commission?
- Can the city still demolish the water tower and pump station even though the commission recommended they find a mitigation technique?

### Notes

- Mark Schweitzer started the meeting at 9 a.m. with Elizabeth Kukwa, Elizabeth Corbin Murphy, and John Wheeler present. Leianne Heppner arrived late to the meeting.
- Schweitzer moved to approve the April 2 meeting minutes.
  - The April 2 minutes are being approved now because there was not a quorum to vote on the minutes during the June 11 meeting
  - Kukwa moved to approve the April 2 minutes, and they were approved

- The minutes from the June 11 meeting passed unanimously
- Daniel DeAngelo, city planner, said the city plans to rebuild the current water reservoir and tear down the [Water Tower](#) and Pump Station in [Reservoir Park](#)
  - The 24-foot high and 24 million gallon reservoir was built in 1913 to replace overburdened wells in the [Goodyear Heights Neighborhood](#)
    - The reservoir has reached the end of its useful life and is now a liability and faces structural issues
  - The nearby water tower and pump station are decommissioned and the city has applied for funding to tear down all three structures
  - The new 12.4 million gallon tank will be built out of precast concrete and covered in a brick facade to match the nearby architecture
    - An operations building will be built to the west of the building near Brittain Road
    - A 10-foot- wide multi-use path will surround the tank
  - The Reservoir, Pump House, and Water Tower are eligible for the [National Register of Historic Places](#) but are not recognized nationally or locally, so a Certificate of Appropriateness from the commission is not needed
- Zoning Division Manager Michael Antenucci said the project will have to receive approval from the [Board of Zoning Appeals](#) because they have to approve public utility projects in residential areas
- Ward 10 City Council Member Sharon Connor said she would read statements from herself and At-Large Council Member Jeff Fusco
- Fusco wrote that he and Connor want the Tower and Pump station turned into an education facility to teach about Akron's water history. He said he supports replacing the reservoir but wants artwork on the new tank displaying Akron's water history. He said there is \$50,000 in the [2024 Capital Budget](#) for a feasibility study for Pump House and Water Tower adaptive reuse
  - Connor said she wants the reservoir replaced but wants to wait to demolish the pump house and water tower until a feasibility study is complete. She said the water tower is a neighborhood landmark featured in neighborhood imagery and merchandise. She said demolition of the water tower would add to a long list of industrial landmarks being demolished, including the Goodyear Mixing Plant and [B.F. Goodrich smoke stacks](#)
- A staffer from the Ohio EPA said the federal government requires buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places that are being considered for demolition to have preservation mitigation used, which for the tower could include a video and picture collection or lowering the water tower
  - The Ohio EPA tries to find the most cost-effective solution

- There will be a community meeting about the project on August 8
- Antenucci said the water tower and pump station could stay up while the reservoir is rebuilt
  - He said the city is open to maintaining the pump station (which is currently being used as storage) but wants to raze the water tower
- Murphy said when spending federal funds, the federal government requires that there is historical loss mitigation for buildings that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
  - Mitigation could include professional pictures, adaptive reuse, or [moving the building](#).
- Murphy moved to approve the reservoir replacement but required the city to find a mitigation strategy for the pump house and water tower
  - Motion passed unanimously
- Antenucci said the city didn't have a quorum during the last meeting to pass agenda Item A, a certificate of appropriateness to demolish the back three wings of [Firestone Plant 1 \(1200 Firestone Parkway\)](#). He said this will preserve a usable front wing and facade and the clock tower
  - Murphy moved to pass the certificate of appropriateness
  - Motion passed unanimously
- Antenucci said agenda Item B gives historic landmark status to the [Brown Family Home](#), 242 Lake St. in Summit Lake.
  - Historic landmark status would preserve certain [architectural aspects of the home](#)
- Schweitzer asked why more architectural aspects of the home aren't being preserved
- Murphy said the house is not architecturally significant but the Local Landmark Status would primarily preserve the history of the home
- Schweitzer made a motion to approve Item B
  - Item B passed unanimously
- The meeting ended at 9:34 a.m.

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**Notes to reader:** Unless quotation marks are used, all text is paraphrased. If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at [documenters@signalakron.org](mailto:documenters@signalakron.org) with "Correction Request" in the subject line.