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Planning Department
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MINUTES

January 28, 2021
Historic Landmarks Committee
Regular Meeting

3:00 pm
Zoom Meeting
McMinnville, Oregon

Members Present: Mark Cooley, Joan Drabkin, Christopher Knapp, and John Mead
Members Absent: Mary Beth Branch and Hadleigh Heller – Youth Liaison
Staff Present: Heather Richards – Planning Director and Chuck Darnell – Senior Planner
Others Present: Scott Hill – Mayor and Chris Chenoweth – City Councilor

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Mead called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

All Committee members introduced themselves to new Council liaison Chris Chenoweth. Vice Chair Mead explained the work of the Committee and Mayor Hill clarified the role of the Council liaison to the Committee.

2. Citizen Comments

None

3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Committee Member Drabkin suggested the Chair rotate among the members and that the Vice Chair move to the Chair position and a new Vice Chair be chosen every year.

Vice Chair Mead thought Chair Branch should be Chair for one more year and then it could rotate.

Committee Member Drabkin was concerned about the perception since Chair Branch was a business partner with Councilor Geary. She thought Chair Branch was doing a great job as Chair.

Vice Chair Mead said every Committee member had the same, one vote and Chair Branch had recused herself when there was an issue. He was willing to be Chair if that was the direction of the Committee.

Committee Member Cooley did not think there had been any conflict previously and Chair Branch was doing a fantastic job. He thought the biggest issues came from applicants who

hadn't understood the application and review process. They were working on ways to make the public more aware of the requirements early on and one way was to tell people they had business relationships with about them. The applications that had come through from Chair Branch and Councilor Geary were better than most because they knew the process.

There was consensus to discuss the option for a rotating chair at a future meeting when all members were present.

Committee Member Drabkin moved to nominate John Mead as Chair. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Knapp and passed unanimously.

Committee Member Mead moved to nominate Mark Cooley as Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Drabkin and passed unanimously.

4. Action Items

A. Discussion & Potential Approval of 2021 Work Plan

Senior Planner Darnell explained the items that had been included in the 2021 Work Plan. These included continuing the work that was in process, finishing the updates to the website, Historic Preservation Award program, conducting outreach with residential property owners from previous survey areas, and using CLG grant funds for projects. The Certified Local Government Grant application was due in February and they would have to know the projects to include. He suggested using the grant funds for historic preservation awareness, outreach, and education and hiring a consultant to assist with code analysis and updates, especially in regard to demolitions and downtown design review.

Planning Director Richards had concerns about the historic preservation program and education and awareness in the community. The community needed to be more aware of the value of historic preservation and the program the City used to implement and protect historic landmarks. The ability to use CLG funds to hire someone to help market historic preservation would be beneficial. She had been concerned about the number of demolition reviews versus the number of rehab project reviews.

Senior Planner Darnell said the amount of the CLG grant was \$10,000 and the City provided a match. The total amount would be \$20,000.

Planning Director Richards thought for the downtown design guidelines they could use Urban Renewal funding.

Chair Mead said he, Committee Member Branch, and Senior Planner Darnell would be meeting regularly to work through the guidelines.

Committee Member Drabkin asked how COVID would affect marketing.

Chair Mead said the marketing could be digital.

Committee Member Cooley asked if CLG funds could be used for outreach to the residential property owners from previous survey areas.

Senior Planner Darnell said yes, they could hire a consultant to assist with the overall awareness program as well as property owner outreach. Planning Director Richards said if the program was seen as a regulatory program with a lot of barriers it was difficult to get property owners to agree to add their property to the inventory.

Planning Director Richards said not much had been added to the inventory over the past 40 years. Property owners could request to not be part of the inventory and the support of the program was much more critical now from a jurisdictional perspective as well as a community value perspective. There were financial incentives for being on the inventory such as increased property values and tax credits. Those were the types of things a consultant could help craft a message about.

Committee Member Knapp was in favor of using the grant funds for marketing.

Chair Mead agreed there was a need for outreach to create awareness and education for the community at large both for modifications to properties on the inventory and the value of historic preservation. He was also in favor of using the grant for marketing.

There was consensus to use the grant funds for the public awareness and marketing projects only. The same marketing could be used to assist with the outreach to property owners in the areas that survey work had been done. Staff could explore other resources to help with updating the downtown design standards.

Committee Member Drabkin moved to approve the 2021 Work Plan with the modifications that the CLG grant funds be directed towards public awareness, education, and marketing. The downtown design standards update and review of historic preservation portions of the code would be completed internally. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Knapp and passed unanimously.

5. Committee/Commissioner Comments

None

6. Staff Comments

None

7. Adjournment

Chair Mead adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.