



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
501 N. Anderson St., Ellensburg WA 98926

MINUTES OF THE LANDMARKS & DESIGN COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

Date and Time: Tuesday, November 2, 2021, 5:45 p.m.
Place of Meeting: Hybrid Meeting In Person and via Zoom
Present-In Person: Mollie Edson,
Present-Via Zoom Dorothy Stanley, Marty Blackson, Darren Reid, Lathan Wedin, Zane Kanyer,
Absent: Amy McCoy
Others Present: Stacey Henderson, Senior Planner – Historic Preservation; Kirsten Sackett, Community Development Director; Brenda Devore, Ellensburg Downtown Association Executive Director, and Sadie Thayer, Kittitas County Historical Museum Director

Note: These are **Summary** Minutes *not* Verbatim Minutes

1. Call to order and roll call of members

Meeting called to order by Chair Mollie Edson at 5:45 pm.

2. Approval of the agenda

Commissioner Blackson made a motion to amend the agenda to move introduction of the new EDA Director as Item 4a. Commissioner Stanley seconded.

All in favor, motion passed.

3. Approval of the minutes of the Meeting of October 19, 2021.

- a. Commissioner Stanley made a motion to approve the minutes of October 19, 2021. Commissioner Wedin seconded.

All in favor, motion passed.

- b. Chairwoman Edson asked Darren Reid to introduce himself as a new commissioner of the LDC, as the Ellensburg Downtown Association representative Commissioner.

4. New Business

a. Ellensburg Downtown Association Update.

Brenda Devore introduced herself as the newest executive director of the EDA. She has several years of experience on the board of directors serving the Issaquah Downtown Association, before becoming their Executive Director. She later became a board member of the Issaquah History Association. She looks forward to working with the Landmarks & Design Commission and Kittitas County Historical Museum.

Devore said the EDA has applied for funding from the Ellensburg Arts Commission to restore an iconic mural that can be part of a downtown tour, and something for the residents of Ellensburg to be proud of. The budget is \$18,000 for the project, they are seeking \$2500 in grant money from the Arts Commission to help them begin soliciting proposals.

b. Review of proposed building height restrictions in relation to the historic district.

Director Sacket presented part of the proposed zoning ordinance update, asking for feedback from the commission, per the request of City Council. Part of the ordinance update is to increase the building height allowance in the CC zoning district. It is currently set at 45 feet, and the proposal is to increase it to 60 feet. This proposal includes caveats that buildings within the historic district have to remain at 45 feet, and that any buildings exceeding 45 feet have to be 700 feet away from the boundaries of the historic district. This change in height allowances is related to updates that are being made to the tables in the city code, because of these updates the building height restrictions came up, and City Council asked for LDC's recommendation.

Chair Edson asked for a visual representation to better understand the current allowances in the downtown area, and asked if the Windrow an allowed height? Director Sackett noted that it is at an allowed height, and that the Patricia Place apartments are also good visuals of the height allowed.

Director Sackett shared her screen to show the new tables and how they are changing.

Commissioner Kanyer noted that if there is opportunity to utilize the open areas around the historic districts- Does the height matter? Is there that much of a difference between 4 and 5 stories? He doesn't feel like there is much of a difference, and feels that it might be good to allow more density and verticality. Commissioner Blackson asked exactly what are they supposed to be deciding. Director Sacket noted that there are three options: 1. Is the LDC okay with increasing the height allowance? 2. If they are okay with the height increase in the Central Commercial zone, do they want to cap allowed height within the district? 3. Or do they want a height buffer as they move out of the historic district?

Commissioner Reid commented that he didn't feel the buffers are necessary, as the districts are in close enough proximity resulting in almost no available areas within the CC zone that could utilize the higher height limit. He also feels that encouraging building downtown helps to support the downtown businesses. He also noted that for developer's economies to scale, it is sometimes a more economical project if the 5th story is allowed.

Commissioner Stanley noted that the height is okay but would want to make sure the proposed architecture matches the downtown buildings. Commissioner Kanyer asked if there was an opportunity to include the design review for these possible projects with the LDC and allowing them to comment on projects that are near to the Downtown, to be able to ensure compatibility.

Commissioner Wedin is in agreement with the other commissioner's comments. Director Sackett asked Commissioner Wedin if he has any feedback for the City since he has been on other design review committees. Commissioner Wedin feels that there is definitely a place for the LDC to review new projects for compatibility.

Director Sackett asked the commission for clarification on their thoughts of the 60 foot

restrictions. Commissioner Reid proposed 45 feet within the local historical district, and 60 feet allowed everywhere in the CC district, except for where they are immediately adjacent to residential zones. Commissioners agreed, and Director Sackett will take this back to council for review.

Discussion about how the design should be addressed so that the LDC can make more recommendations for more attractive buildings in the CC district.

c. Work session discussion to plan 2022 LDC goals, events, and projects.

Senior Planner Henderson introduced the topic. She said that the idea was to talk about next year and prioritize what the commission wants to accomplish and plan ahead on projects that are important to the commission.

Planner Henderson shared her screen to highlight the City's comprehensive plan historic preservation chapter. She said it offers up several goals, policies, programs and action items that the commission could begin to pursue.

She thought it would be a good document to keep in mind as they discuss the work plan for 2022. She noted that she had asked Sadie Thayer of the Historical Museum and Brenda Devore of the EDA to be here for the conversation. She said the yellow highlighted items coincided with the types of priorities that the commission has brought up in previous conversations, as possible good places to start.

She then shared the powerpoint on the screen which displayed other types of work items that they could work on next year. These types of projects could be reviewed at meetings when there are not COA's to review.

Historic Preservation Month

May is Historic Preservation month, Chair Edson wanted to make sure this is planned well in advance. During Historic Preservation month, the LDC could use assistance from the museum and from the EDA. During that month last year, Historic Preservation Awards were announced, and Ms. Thayer ensured there were newspaper articles about historic properties. Planning for the 2022 Historic Preservation awards will require: 1) Establishing guidelines and criteria for the preservation awards, and 2) preparing Yard Signs for those receiving the award. Planner Henderson can help prepare a presentation to City Council for the preservation awards, as well as the proclamation.

Planner Henderson introduced the BeHeardEburg tool, which is under the purvey of the Public Information Officer Nicole Klauss. She suggested doing something like a "Throwback Thursday" where Commissioners can take turns posting pictures of historic buildings, kind of like a "then and now". Commissioner Reid said that the Throwback Thursday could also be something that the EDA promotes, and in coordination with the Museum, as they already do that occasionally.

The other BeHeardEburg tool Planner Henderson suggested, was to utilize the mapping tool. The idea would be to encourage public participation on this mapping tool. The public can add pins, comment, and share stories, local history, favorite buildings or places, favorite memories. The thought is to get excited about local history in a way that relates to those who live here. Commissioners Kanyer and Blackson were interested in this idea. On this same mapping idea, Ms. Devore asked if there are programs in place to

celebrate historical time anniversaries of buildings. Such as the age of a building, or the age of a business. Like 100 years, or 125 years. She thinks that could be a fun thing to do as part of Historic Preservation Month in May, and this could end up being a part of the mapping idea.

Chair Edson said that the City does have a nice mapping of the downtown historic area, as well as the residential area. This could be promoted more or used for walking tours. Ms Devore said this looks like something that can attract tourism. Chair Edson also mentioned this could coincide with audio art tours where you can listen to an interview that goes along with the QR code.

Additional outreach ideas for preservation month included attending the Saturday market, which starts in May. Commissioner Reid noted that the year before there was a tour of several homes in the historic residential district. Commissioner Wedin suggested tapping into the resources available at CWU regarding historic preservation. He also thinks we should be connecting with the schools, sending home flyers, etc. Ms. Thayer from the Museum shared an idea based off of a project out of Historic Chehalis. It is a banner project for the downtown area that showcases historic photographs as time capsules along the street.

Chair Edson said there can be subcommittees for some of these ideas, and Commissioner Blackson, Commissioner Reid, and Commissioner Kanyer were interested in participating on the subcommittee for Preservation Month.

Demolition Ordinance

Planner Henderson explained that August is the deadline to have the demo ordinance ready to begin the public review process for adoption. The previous subcommittee was Commissioners Edson, Blackson, and Stanley. We can look to another subcommittee meeting in January to set benchmarks to meet the August deadline. Planner Henderson noted that she reached out to DAHP and they have provided feedback on the ordinance as well. Chair Edson asked about demolition, said that she doesn't like that the demolition could go through without notifying the neighbors. Planner Henderson said that in addition to the demolition ordinance, it's good to be proactive as well. There could be outreach to property owners that don't know if they are in the historic district. Commissioner Reid said he had previously been asked about putting together a pamphlet on how to relocate historic houses. One thing that could be done would be identifying bare lots in town, to better understand where historic infill could happen.

Standard of Care Discussion

Commissioner Reid said he wanted to bring up the concept of creating a "standard of care" in the historic downtown area. Some owners take more care than others, and it makes for an incoherent downtown core. There are buildings that have been let go with lack of care over the years. He wants to tackle this on the EDA level too, with the idea of pulling together the building owners to develop the standards of care. He said that the EDA Outreach Committee has identified this as an item to address in 2022. There are building owners downtown that DO want to see standard of care. Commissioner Kanyer noted that there is a property maintenance code that could be looked into. Ms. Devore said that the ROTC group at the college would like to have projects that they can do throughout the school year. They would like to show the community that they are engaged in the downtown. This is a group of about 40 people. They've already asked to

shovel snow, apply deicer, take care of graffiti, etc. Some of the businesses just don't have the funds to renovate their buildings, so it is important to explore how to help these owners.

CLG Grant

CLG grant was awarded to conduct a new Reconnaissance Level Survey of the First Railroad District. DAHP felt that rewriting the original 1970's nomination was a large task since that nomination does not include much information, and a good first step was going to be to gather more information about the district. Chair Edson said they could also do a push for people to get their structures designated as historic.

Miscellaneous Ideas

Murals:

Chair Edson said that the Ellensburg Radio just submitted for a grant with the Ellensburg Arts Commission to do an audio mural walk, same idea with a QR code.

Planner Henderson said that Mayor Tabb had reached out to her, and he has noted that there was a lot of interest in restoring two of the rodeo murals. She thinks they are trying to get the murals improved by 2023.

Residential Brochure:

Chair Edson said we could look into getting the brochure regarding what you need to do when you own a house in the historic district. The commission should send it out again to the neighborhoods. To stay on top of making sure projects come to the LDC before they start work.

Trees:

Commissioner Stanley said she is also concerned about dying trees because people are not watering. There was a suggestion that perhaps the Environmental Commission might be invited to discuss what can be done to help with preserving trees. Maybe an adopt-a-tree to save trees. Also bring the new arborist into this discussion in the future.

Economic Vitality:

Commissioner Wedin said he is also interested in bolstering the discussion on historic preservation helping lead to economic vitality. He feels that we should try to find ways to bolster the downtown, with more money if we can find sources. He feels that there are a lot of resources that the commission may be able to tap at CWU. We should reach out to the various departments and possibly the school district too.

Partnership:

Ms. Thayer approached the podium. She said that a lot of the ideas shared are really great plans that the museum can definitely help with. They have a lot of resources, and they have often partnered, and will continue to partner with the City and other individuals. They are often doing research for property owners, and they can provide information to help owners understand the historical importance of their homes.

Planner Henderson said she will send out a summary of the meeting and send it out to the Commissioners to help them stay on track.

5. Old Business

None

6. Citizen Comment

None

7. Staff Update/Discussion Items

- a. Next meeting - will be November 16, 2021. There are two COA's to review.

8. Commission Representative Update

None.

9. Adjournment

Commissioner Stanley motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Reid seconded.

All in favor, motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15.