



## BENTON COUNTY HISTORIC COURTHOUSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes Friday, September 16, 2022

Members Attending: Jessica **Hougen**, Benton County Historical Society Executive Director; HCAC Vice Chair: Jill **Van Buren**, Courthouse Preservation Committee representative; Christina **Rehklau**, Visit Corvallis, Executive Director; Roz **Keeney**, Preservations Works; HCAC Chair: Chris **Wesfall**, Oregon Judicial Department, Trial Court Administrator; Bob **Richardson**, Senior Land Use Planner OSU

Advisory Staff Attending: Lynne **McKee**, Director of Benton County Natural Areas, Parks & Events; Cynthia **De Le Torre**, Benton County Community Outreach & Engagement Coordinator; Inga **Williams**, Benton County Community Development Associate Planner; Nick **Kurth**, Benton County, JSIP Manager

Others Attending: Recorder: Lizz Gustin, Benton County Natural Areas, Parks and Events Administrative Assistant II, HCAC Recorder

- I. Meeting called to order 1000
- II. Approval of September 16, 2022 minutes – Keeney requested a name correction from Kenney to correct spelling Keeney.
- III. Citizens' call to order – Wesfall stated none present.
- IV. Government/Civic/Public Use Repurposing Discussion (Review and Conclusion)  
**Wesfall** did an overall review of last meeting ensuring the last conversation is completed – Wallsinger provided the white board information of the courthouse 31k sq. ft. – expensive to maintain – difficult to renovate – we came up with 3 possible functions of the building - had a tour of the state of national representatives prior to today's meeting and there are more structural walls then it appears at first sight; **Rehklau** – what is a specialty court? **Wesfall** - explained what a specialty court: mental co-coherent with a judicial issue – the courts work with their needs to help modify their behaviors to stop the continued recidivism; **Keeney** – so these courts will not follow to the JSIP? **Wesfall** - We are looking at space allocation overall gross footage we can afford to build – an overall construction plan to add courtroom - taking those out of the court space where it's more engaged then just the norm justice system. **McKee** - new crisis building being built and the look of that synergy; **Wesfall** – 1 block away from here; **Keeney** how much space is that? **Rehklau** approx. 8k with potential to have housing included within; **Wesfall** - we did cover a little of the pros and cons for the functions listed – use and occupancy of building does not change it will not trigger a “required” seismic upgrade- anything out of the

current use and capacity the seismic upgrade – Nick Kurth was basically agreeing that if we stayed at current use we could save money and time to build up to the amount it will cost on the seismic upgrade; **Van Buren** - agreed with allowing time to get the money ready; **Wesfall** - continued with review of Pros/Cons; **Richardson** - the communication challenge if it did or didn't need space how to convince the voter this is a need; **Wesfall** - we do not want to interrupt the path that JSIP is currently on, the HCAC timeline moved to avoid any confusion and the decisions have been made to await public input until after the JSIP bond measure; **McKee** does everyone feel we have all the appropriate pro/cons listed? All nodded and silently agreed

V. Residential/Lodging Repurposing Discussion

RESIDENTIAL LODGING: **Wesfall** – Let's freeform on this; **Richardson** - this may be helpful to separate this as lodging sounds like hotel not residential; **Rehklau** - they usually function together as their regulatory rules such as zoning somewhat coincide; **McKee** - okay let's look at just residential; **Hougen** Condo/Apartments; **Rehklau** - mixed residential mixed with lodging; **Keeney** - low income housing / subsidized; Cons - **Hougen** the bathrooms; **Richardson** big con the seismic upgrade expense difficult to maintain the historical character remove much the interior from public view, a hotel the public can rent a room vs private long term making it less visible for others; **Wesfall**-pro is a seismic upgrade this would stabilize the structure; Nick Kurth had entered Wesfall did a fast short rundown of where we are; **Keeney** - the only way I could see this work is if there was a condo 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> floor – can this handle that? **Wesfall** - the last time I was there those do look like condos, there are chimneys used for a lot of the running of utility; **Rehklau** - bringing people downtown as currently it feels empty providing to the economic support of downtown; **Wesfall** - if this is a condo then a different vibe would be brought vs low income; **Keeney** - isn't there a national trend where we have a low/high mix? **Richardson** - residential short term rental and long term as the building can accommodate.

LODGING: **McKee** – McMenamins; **Van Buren** - with the college being here McMenamins would be awesome and definitely used; **Rehklau**- a con is getting a developer willing to do and not own the land, having a non-branded hotel would pitch very well especially with the small amount of rooms this would be similar to Attica with 34 rooms after your students leave this would fill the economics for the famine times; **Keeney** - I believe tourism would be a pro **Rehklau** - I would think of lodging here small but chic; **Wesfall** - we will be looking at parking issues; **Richardson** - it changes no minimum parking requirements anywhere; **Kurth**- remind everyone we are demolishing the old jail and that would accommodate parking and green area; **Richardson** - parking will definitely be a challenge regardless and how street parking gets managed; **Van Buren** parking is tough during the day but wide open in the night; **Rehklau** - some pros again will be revue stream coming in; **Van Buren** - the jail as a B&B would be a turnkey opportunity; **Wesfall** - parking is still a need here and business and land owners would be more comfortable if you express the parking; **Richardson** - the hotel management would need to drive the parking whether it is 1 space per room or 2 – valet parking – not a fan of turning a beautiful lawn into parking but understand; **Kurth** - definitively concluded there is no restoration process for the jail from an engineering / cost perspective; **McKee**- managed externally would be an added PRO; **Richardson** how much interior is actually protected under the historic? **Hougen** - only if funding from fed does not matter historic registry you can do as

you want depending on state/county rules; **Keeney** - this is the only building that the interior is called out; **Wesfall** I think we need to discuss this with Jason.

**VI.** Private Offices Repurposing Discussion (As Time Allows)

**Wesfall** – anything other than government; **Van Buren** - like law offices or real estate; **Keeney** – the top floors of Inkwel there are private offices - which I am in favor of this mix use; **Richardson**- they could come into almost any space and make it work; **Van Buren** well a con for that will be parking; **Richardson** – I see parking be less an issue with this use vs lodging – an issue we will always have with “stupid” cars – ground floor would keep a good synergy if kept more retail/commercial then your offices above; **McKee** - we need to look back with the mix use and see what mingles best; **Van Buren** using the words mix use depends on the crowd as they all envision different occupants – in these terms we could define more later just getting the concepts now; **Wesfall** just with this brainstorming we have identified on the separate of use by floor; **Keeney** with little offices you may have more a revolving door – with tenant turn overs; **Richardson** yes the question of ownership should truly be set; **Wesfall**- we currently manage Crestview apartments so that has been established within Benton County; **Kurth** not the county’s motto to become a landlord; **McKee** we should look into the nonprofit as they normally see budget struggles; **Wesfall** asked the quieter of the group to speak to ensure they are heard; **De Le Torre** we should look at conflict resolution limitations on space as a business starts and wants to expand years down they will leave; **Keeney** does downtown need this type of space as you look around it appears empty everywhere is this a need? **Wesfall** - a good question inquired with **Rehklau** if she had the inside scoop; **Hougen**- it’s not that they do not want to rent it’s a better tax write off to the owner to keep empty; **Rehklau** suggests Kate Porsche, Economic Development Manager to answer the question on need it is more her area then herself – Landlord purposefully keeping empty is an issue they saw when they were in the search of space for the visitor center – BOC has not asked for a viability piece – DLR group did a feasibility study felt during CoVid shut down so could be a little skewed; **Kurth** this was not just looking at Corvallis it went all the way to Salem so numbers could be skewed in the sense being done during CoVid.

**VII.** Other – Arts/Culture/Education and Restaurants will be the next meeting discussion

**Keeney** - expressed the way we are functioning now is moving forward then when the committee started; **McKee** - the studies I looked at on other courthouses have all used mix use; **Van Buren/Wesfall** explained the ADA currently at the courthouse to Keeney – ADA will show up on all repurposes.

**VIII.** Adjournment – 1125