



BENTON COUNTY HISTORIC COURTHOUSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes Friday, November 18, 2022

Members Attending: HCAC Vice Chair: Jill **Van Buren**, Courthouse Preservation Committee representative; HCAC Chair: Chris **Westfall**, Oregon Judicial Department, Trial Court Administrator; Jessica **Hougen**, Benton County Historical Society; Christina **Rehklau**, Visit Corvallis, Executive Director; Roz **Keeney**, representing PreservationWORKS; Scott **McClure**, representing the Historic Resources Commission; Peter **Betjemann**, OSU, Director of Arts and Education, College of Liberal Arts

Advisory Staff Attending: Lynne **McKee**, Director of Benton County Natural Areas, Parks & Events; Jesse **Ott** Deputy Director of Benton County Natural Areas, Parks & Events; Commissioner Nancy **Wyse**, Liaison; Nick **Kurth**, Benton County, JSIP Manager; Inga **Williams**, Benton County Community Development Associate Planner; Paul **Wallsinger**, Benton County Facilities Manager

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

- I. Meeting called to order 1003; **McKee** will be retiring in December; Jimbo Ivy, Theatre Supervisor, Corvallis Parks & Recreation and Kate Porsche, Corvallis Benton County Economic Development Office, Economic Development will no longer be on the committee.
- II. Approval of October 21, 2022 minutes; **Van Buren** motioned to approve; **McClure** seconded; approved with no opposed.
- III. Citizens' call to order; **Westfall** stated none present.
- IV. Arts/Culture/Education Repurposing Discussion; **Westfall** quick overview of where HCAC is in usages a pro/con style and we are currently on Arts Culture and Educational uses – nothing is off the table except for demo we will not flatten the building.; **Kurth** recommends we review the DLR study as they did touch on this in the feasibility test. **Keeney**- education classes from LBCC or OSU; **Hougen** - the performing arts being made at OSU was that involved?; **McKee**- I believe this was addressed in the study; **Keeney** - this was starting so I do not recall actual details being in the study; **Westfall**- Wyse has the study and will advise of anything that jumps out.; **Van Buren** Corvallis is pretty endowed with arts will this not cause competition, kind of a CON; **Wallsinger** - all these uses would fall into current infrastructure; **Van Buren** outdoor art could come indoor; **Keeney** the architecture alone is art; **Westfall** so we would not need to retrofit?; **Wallsinger** Yes these would fit within the skin but a seismic upgrade would be needed;

Rehklau the Pros for foot traffic increase – a concern I have would be the competition as you already have an arts center – how would we handle the costs in these when most places are tapping them out such as majestic theatre / Whiteside who doesn't receive city funding has to fight for funding as well – do not feel this would be strong enough to bring the foot traffic increase we may be looking for.; **Westfall** we are not looking for a Gilbert house like in Salem; **McKee** when I was in Salem the city owned the building at deep woods but those that resided had to do the fundraising not the city; **Rehklau** do not compare to Salem as majority of visitor itineraries start in Portland the further you get away from that the less foot traffic unless it is something extremely rare to bring people here; **Van Buren** maybe a hybrid arts and museum to bring tourists into town; **Hougen** unfortunately we are down the street and we do not see much tourist foot traffic- also the nonprofit situation out here is ridiculous so trying to think you will find a group is probably less likely as they are pulled as is; **Kenney** put a history in the basement and we can tie it into the public school systems like a partnership with the school district as I do not feel that exists in the community; **Hougen** teachers I speak to have advised that they are so regulated and having that resource time and pull to make that change may just not happen; **Westfall** lets add mix use; **Rehklau** had her PR study and this would need to be a rest/bar to bring the tourism a museum just does not have that pull anymore so mixed use would definitely be best; **Westfall** interest in school/OSU partnership- we did a 50 children group just recently OSU has approached us for using some space for mock trials; **Van Buren** we do preschool all the way to retirees- there are a lot interest in the building and the reason they don't come in is there is no need for most persons to come inside- our tours are very specific- as of the history it is dependent upon the age of the school child- history about the building not so much the county; **Kurth** the Heidi Center in Wisconsin – was a catholic school now mixed use but they have Chippewa Falls- bring in a lot of national off Broadway and that brings in the tourists- naturally those that come through Portland would then stop in Corvallis; **McKee** while doing the fair each year I have learned routing works amazing with most gigs; **Ott** jumping on what Christina said I feel we could link it to our wine and outdoorsy offerings; **Hougen**– yes this has brought tourists in and then out to the wineries; **Rehklau** but wouldn't they pick Eugene over Corvallis we should look at their facilitates major off Broadway wine thing is awesome but the hardcore wine tour is more north of us so this would need to be unique- maybe more educational like OSU fermentation- we are only 30 miles south but truly on the outskirts of that heart of wine country in Oregon- North concentration of wineries is Yamhill / Washington County; **Wyse** like a wine tour that hits our history – conclusion on feasibility mixed use was in dire need small- medium scale performing arts; **Westfall**- keeping with time management reiterates what we have on the white board. Does everyone feel we captured the thoughts? **Van Buren**- I think we need to feel out funding – pro or con? **McClure**- arts and culture although I support it appears more transitory I tend to lean more long term so I would discount the arts and culture and keep with the educational side; TLT not a pro or a con but flexible.

- V. Commercial/Retail/Restaurant Repurposing Discussion; **Kenney**- well my hubby drinks beer and trust we go everywhere for a sip so beer should go with the wine as well; **McKee**- McMenamins History Tours packs them in; **Ott**- why wouldn't the brothers take this on? **Westfall**- perfectly valid discussion and McMenamins was brought in earlier; **Kenney** we have 2 already would you

think they would like 3? **Rehklau**- just remember there is others then McMenamins such as Atticus/ just saying that the model is very valid for this area- unique lodging needs, there is no boutique lodging; **Westfall** I want to document this as a PRO – how would we word that without scaring off possible partnerships. Read whiteboard aloud to those online; **McKee**- is there a lot open retail space downtown? **Hougen**- better tax write off if left empty; **Rehklau**- there is a space that is huge but they refuse to divide up and it was too big for our visitor space **McClure**- if we are talking about restaurants is this a 9-5 to serve the workers or a destination for tour foodies **Kenney**- it should be a draw not just a 9-5 my conservatory friends have brought up the alterations needed for restaurants and how ugly the HVAC is; **Westfall**- yes we would have to fit for compatibility more constraints on a local registry we are not on a national; **Betjemann**- does this exist in another community? There are wine bars everywhere it would need to be unique enough to draw people out of their norms to come here to do what they do in their own region – Big Gilbert museum is crushing it; **Van Buren**- Most recognizable courthouse in the state / lets address some stores – this would need to be unique and viable to have them leave the sidewalk to come inside; **Wallsinger**- coming from Big mall myself yes there will need to be a foot traffic threshold prior to committing – bldg. is well suited though as it is broken up – Canary Mall – Reed in Salem; **Van Buren**- can be challenging with multiple levels; **Wallsinger**- well yes the 1st and second floor would work but the higher up floors not necessarily; **Betjemann**- what about an arts district t artists to use as practice / sales – create the art then sale, Riverartsdistrict.com a great example;

- VI. Mixed Use Repurposing Discussion (Time Permitting); Discussion on a mixed use arts venue was discussed by all present, due to multiple people speaking all at once I was not able to capture this discussion
- VII. Other; none discussed with group
- VIII. Adjournment; 1130 Next Meeting: December 16, 2022