



## BENTON COUNTY HISTORIC COURTHOUSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes Tuesday, March 8, 2022,

Members Attending: Kate Porsche, BC Economic Development Manager; Christina Rehklau, Visit Corvallis Executive Director; Simon Date, Corvallis Chamber of Commerce President/CEO; Jessica Hougen, Benton County Historical Society Executive Director; Jimbo Ivy, Corvallis Parks & Recreation Theater Supervisor; Bob Richardson, Senior Land Use Planner OSU; Peter Betjemann, Director of Arts and Education, College of Liberal Arts OSU; Jill Van Buren, Courthouse Preservation Committee representative; Roz Kenney and BA Beierle, Preservations Works; Scott McClure, Historic Resources Commission representative; and Chris Wesfall, Oregon Judicial Department, Trial Court Administrator

Advisory Staff Attending: Lynne McKee, Benton County Natural Areas, Parks and Events Director; Nick Kurth, Benton County JSIP Manager; Paul Wallsinger, Benton County Facilities Manager; Jason Allen, Survey Program Coordinator, Oregon State Historic Preservation Office; Erica Ceder and Christina Kruse, DLR Group and Nancy Swain, recorder

- I. Introduction of Committee Members - McKee welcomed all and asked attendees to self-introduce by name and organization representing.
- II. Mission and Member Expectations - McKee stated this Ad Hoc Committee will likely meet through 2022 and maybe into early 2023 with the goal of making a recommendation to the Benton County Board of Commissioners for the adaptive reuse of the Benton County Courthouse. Noting these are not the only potential uses McKee outlined three immediate ideas: leave as a governmental building, rent space out under NAPE control or turn it into a center for creativity/cultural innovation. Commissioners indicated a preference for broad community access in the re-purposing.
- III. Justice System Improvement Program Presentation – Nick Kurth, JSIP Manager presented an overview of the steps taken to determine the new location of the Justice system in north Corvallis. With this location identified and with the

decision to create a justice campus, the Benton County Courthouse is no longer needed to support the justice system. Re-purposing the Courthouse is an historic opportunity for the community. Kurth shared that he has actually seen this same type of re-purposing back in his home state of Wisconsin and is excited by the opportunity our community is facing.

- IV. DLR Group Courthouse Feasibility Study Presentation – Erica Ceder, Senior Associate, DLR Group and Christina Kruse, DLR Group presented the analysis they completed including market analysis, user demands, community needs and comps studies. Examples of re-purposed Courthouses were shared and discussed. When asked if any examples of option 1 (keeping it for governmental use) were found, it was stated no relevant examples were found. McKee stated she would email the full report to all. Corvallis High School's theater complex was not included in the analysis because there is very little access due to direct school programming. Betjemann shared his enthusiasm for the project as there could be great synergy with OSU's performance spaces. Discussing the space at the Courthouse, Kurth stated the jail structure is slated to be torn down and how that space will be used has not been determined. Hougen noted Benton County Historical Museum information is missing; DLR representatives noted at the time the report was compiled the Museum's Director position was in transition and assured Hougen this can be added to the report. Allen asked if facilities other than Courthouses were studied; they were not as the scope of the work was to review Courthouse re-purposing.
- V. Establish Committee Meeting Schedule - McKee stated she would Doodle Poll members to set the next meeting where a Chair and Vice Chair will be selected and the group would decide on the timeline and process the group utilize.
- VI. Other - McKee reiterated the Commissioners' priority for the Courthouse is that it remains open to the public and be put to use befitting its stature. Wallsinger will give a building condition status update at the next meeting.
- VII. McKee recognized everyone for their time commitment and thanked everyone for helping the guide the community in making this big decision.
- VIII. Adjournment