



BENTON COUNTY HISTORIC COURTHOUSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes Friday, May 6, 2022

Members Attending: Kate Porsche, BC Economic Development Manager; Christina Rehkla, Visit Corvallis Executive Director; Jessica Hougen, Benton County Historical Society Executive Director; Jimbo Ivy, Corvallis Parks & Recreation Theater Supervisor; Bob Richardson, Senior Land Use Planner OSU; Jill Van Buren, Courthouse Preservation Committee representative; Roz Keeney, Preservations Works; Chris Wesfall, Oregon Judicial Department, Trial Court Administrator

Advisory Staff Attending: Commissioner Nancy Wyse, BOC Liaison; Lynne McKee, Benton County Natural Areas, Parks and Events Director; Nick Kurth, Benton County JSIP Manager; Cynthia De La Torre Benton Co Health; Erica Ceder, DLR Group; Jason Allen, Preservation Program Chief OSU

Others Attending: Lizz Gustin, Benton County Natural Areas, Parks and Events Admin Specialist

Introductions: McKee opened the meeting by asking everyone to self-introduce and say a sentence or two about who they are to introduce themselves for new members Lizz and Cynthia. Jill Van Buren is an official historian and tour guide for Benton county Courthouse. Kate Porsche is a serial historic home owner and fixer upper. Nancy Wyse is the BOC liaison. Christina Rehkla is the executive director for visit Corvallis. Erica Ceder has presented the most recent assessment of the historic preservation plan. Jason Allen is here to help as a representative of the State Historic Preservation Office. Nick Kurth is managing the Benton County Justice System Improvement Project. Roz Kenney is a historical architect type as a member of preservation works and historic resources commission. Bob Richardson is the senior land use planner at OSU. Jimbo Ivy is the Theater Supervisor for City of Corvallis Parks & Rec. Chris Wesfall is the trial court administrator for the Oregon Judicial Department. Cynthia De La Torre works in the healthy community division within the County Health Department, doing outreach and engagement

Previous Meeting Minutes Review –McKee began with the review and approval as there was no approval last time. Nobody has had a chance to review as they were just sent out the previous day all nodded for approval next meeting.

Chair and Vice Chair –McKee continued on with the selection of a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson for Benton County Historic Courthouse Advisory Committee. McKee reiterated all support staff will be at the disposal of voted in chair/vice chair. Kurth and McKee acknowledged that if nobody wants to step up, they can continue to lead the meetings. Wesfall asked McKee to describe the expectations of the Chair and Co-chair. McKee explained how they would be the ones working close with the support staff to define the project plan vision leading the discussion with other members , lead the meetings with assistance of materials being communicated. Being this is a new committee it's a work in progress for a definitive description of expectations. Keeney extended interest but would not have available time currently and will not for another 2 months. VanBuren extended her hand to be the

Vice chair and Wesfall extended his hand for chair. McKee asks for a motion and Keeney moved that Wesfall and VanBuren be nominated Rehklau second. All in favor, positions were confirmed Chair – Chris Wesfall and Vice Chair – Jill VanBuren.

Project Plan – McKee presented an outline of the past discussed Project Plan, stating with the review of the three Re-Use options on the table presented by Ceder and Nick had provided a great presentation of the condition of the courthouse. With those tools this should allow this committee to further find a functioning re-use option using the Project Plan. McKee expressed the budget on the project plan is not the budget necessary for re-purposing but the cost to do research and public engagement what it will cost to get the recommendation to the BOC. Kurth went into further details on the Objectives of the project plan. Repurposing is why we are here and it is a goal but without strong public support this fails. Keeney asked if it's one of our goals to, actually seismically retrofitted to save the building one of our goals as well. Kurth answered that this is more of a strategic position then it would be a goal. McKee stated the goal of this committee would be just to determine the repurposing that they think serves our community best. It would fall to county facility staff to determine what would need to be done to the building to make it functional and safe for that repurposing. Keeney went into options on seismic funding, that this aspect needs to be worked right away, asking if this is the committees' purview. McKee stated funding request by county has been submitted however, this is all on the finance side at this time. Keeney How do we know there will be strong public support Kurth replied polling would be the most direct way – Van Buren states you could put a measure on the ballot to get an indication of support. Richardson asked will we go with this is the dream of repurpose but on financial basis this is the reality of what we can repurpose? Porsche reiterated the same concerns as Keeney and Richardson will we have the public support if we do not provide a dollar amount as well. McKee agreed that this is something that does need to be looked at before going to the BOC. McKee stated this is why Ceder and DLR are still onboard as we go through this process they will be able to do further studying. Ceder reiterated the DLR group has only presented a Part 1 of the feasibility study – potential options. The business planning has not been done at this time and with the committee guidance we could explore this planning. Keeney asked when the bond measure goes to public as she states the courthouse was not budgeted into it. Kurth stated that bond is in 2023 but they are currently doing some polling they are looking at some starter money but it would not be enough to do construction. Keeney who are we polling? Kurth the voters for spring election are being polled. We have listed a facility asking the public to rank so the information we would receive would be relative importance of repurposing the historic courthouse. Wyse states there is some value in everything we can think of just jotting it in a list to whittle down. Keeney feels Allen would have some great ideas we have not heard yet from Ceder. Allen reiterated the courthouse is publicly owned and we must be mindful of Oregon revised Statute 358.53. Allen thinks that the question that we should be asking is more along the lines of; Is the program that we're looking to go put into this building, whatever that turns out to be, can it be reasonably achieved? Keeney has requested that Allen reach out and ask other states how they did their process. Case studies is something Keeney feels the courthouse committee could really use. Allen stated he will make some connections to see if they cannot guest speak at a HCAC meeting in the future. Rehklau states her concern that when researching we look at a similar population and similar sort of make up to Oregon. From a tourism perspective there is a 35 mile bubble around Portland and Corvallis falls more inline as rural. McKee seconds Wyse on putting all options on the table for brainstorming to ensure we are touching base on everything. Cedar explained the focus of their options was based on the layout of the courthouse. McKee requests Allen to bring some case studies to next meeting so we can better brainstorm and start looking at the pros and cons of the ideas. Keeney inquired Porsche if she has a way to pull some case studies as well. Porsche stated she is down 25% on staff so her outreach may not be too far due to this. Porsche feels looking at this from multiple lenses brings more diverse ideas to the table. McKee to reach out to National Trust for Historic Preservation. Porsche to reach out to Sherry Stewart on some case studies. Wyse inquired on documents placed anywhere on the past history/timeline of the courthouse. Cedar states this is located

in the preservation plan and available on the national registry nomination. McKee has agreed to provide Google Doc access for HCAC members to access with all of our documents.

Adjournment- McKee bulleted what was discussed noting this has been a great major discussion. Emailing homework for those that will be bringing case studies to next HCAC meeting. Next meeting to be in person and will provide zoom access to those in need. VanBuren, Wesfall, McKee to discuss after the logistics of next meeting. Bring calendars as a standing meeting time will be determined. Wesfall reiterated reading of the minute to get them off the agenda. McKee advised Wesfall to take charge at this time and adjourn the group as the Chair Person.