

MINUTES

Historic Preservation Code Review: Citizen Advisory Committee
April 5, 2017

Members Attending: Per Hogestad, Darryl Austin, Leslie Williams, Brian Cooke, Anita Rainer; Meg Dunn; Jennifer Carpenter; Janelle Kechter; James McDowell; Matt Robenalt
Staff: Tom Leeson, Karen McWilliams, Cassie Bumgarner, Maren Bzdek, Brad Yatabe

I. Update on Consultant Selection

RFP did not produce a qualified respondent for the required scope of work, so the City has cancelled the RFP and will proceed with a sole source contract with *Clarion Associates - Denver* (Matt Goebel, Principal). Clarion did not reply to RFP due to scheduling and staffing issues that are now resolved. City has determined they are appropriate as a sole source contract based on directly relevant experience in preservation and urban planning, infill development and design, and economic evaluation in the state and also here in Fort Collins. Clarion produced report on economic benefits of historic preservation for state of Colorado (distributed to CAC members at this meeting). City hired them last year to study area of adjacency and demolition by neglect. Clarion is also the consultant for City Plan and Transportation Plan Updates. Staff will share with CAC Clarion's scope of work as soon as it is finalized. First CAC meeting with Clarion will be on **July 12, 2017** (the July CAC meeting is the 2nd Wednesday due to the July 4 holiday)

II. History of Historic Preservation in the U.S.

Karen provided perspective on the long history of legislative efforts at the national level that form the basis for why and how we practice historic preservation in Fort Collins today:

- Preservation movement began in 1850s
- 1906 Antiquities Act and formation of the National Park Service and its oversight and authority in historic preservation
- The growth of automobile travel in the early 20th century and its impact on communities and urban design, as well as the introduction of heritage tourism and the ability for citizens to put their own communities into better context
- Creation of Colonial Williamsburg and the role of preservation in shaping patriotic national identity and unique sense of American history
- The Interstate Highway Act and urban renewal programs of the 1960s, impact on communities (demolition, neighborhood division, loss of historic fabric) which led to a variety of community problems
- High-profile loss of Penn Station and creation of NY Landmark Preservation Commission in 1965; galvanized public interest in preservation
- 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, which provided legal recognition, emphasized importance of preserving historic sites to give a sense of place to individual communities, and established National Register and state historic preservation offices
- Expansion of preservation beyond individual buildings to consider historic neighborhoods and landscapes in 1970s.

III. History of Historic Preservation in Fort Collins

- Rapid growth in FC in 1960s led to loss of stately homes, commercial buildings and churches; example of First National Bank, demolished to make room for modern bank

with drive through, and noted that the replacement 1st Bank building today is now significant in its own right

- Historic preservation is not static but changes and evolves over time; buildings can gain and lose significance and integrity; issues and needs change; national and state preservation philosophies change; community appreciation for its history develops.
- Downtown FC was blighted in 70s as businesses moved to south end of town and empty buildings were boarded up; one-way couplets were considered as a traffic solution, which caused Old Town owners to band together to create the historic district in 1979. As a group, they saved Old Town and in doing so, changed how our community looks at preservation.
- 1994 Historic Resource Preservation Program Plan, component of Comprehensive Plan. Have done several studies of the preservation program since, to make sure that what we are doing is consistent with national programs. 2012-2014 review focused on policy, with extensive outreach, surveys and stakeholder meetings. This review will focus on process improvements.
- Preservation programs align with City's triple bottom line goals. Economic sustainability: incentives; more than \$4.5 million in grants; secondary investments of \$10 million (conservative estimate). Social sustainability: neighborhood stability, pride of ownership, sense of place, desirability. Environmental sustainability well aligned with historic preservation: embodied energy; inherently sustainable and energy efficient historic design features, already existing building stock.

IV. Delving into the Codes: Municipal Code Article 1 and Article 2

Article 1: "In General"

- Definitions: for general reference and elaboration of code; also appropriate to look to plain language, dictionary definitions.
- Declaration of Policy: what City Council has adopted as its rationale for the Historic Preservation program. Not just buildings—also districts, objects, and sites. "Public necessity" language is a strong statement. Reflects preservation as a required component for community well-being. [**Meg: suggested that group consider adding language to this section that relates specifically to Climate Action Plan goals.*]
- Purpose Statement: fostering civic pride; tourism opportunities; economic vitality; promoting good urban design; promoting private ownership of those resources (City can only support a limited number of public sites/museums.) [**James: is the order of these principles meaningful? Brad's response: there isn't a particular hierarchy. It is there to help understand and to answer the question, "why does this code exist?"*]
- Designation Eligibility: needs both significance and integrity. Based on federal standards. No set age for designation; many communities have 50-year rule (Denver uses a 35 year threshold, Greeley 40 years). Fort Collins looks at historic value rather than age.
- Significance: Events/pattern of events, persons/groups, design/construction (architecture); information potential. National Register emphasizes history first; in Fort Collins we emphasize architecture more.
- Integrity: ability of property to convey its significance without extensive explanation needed (obvious to casual observer); 7 aspects: materials, association, design, feeling,

workmanship, setting, location (not all are required, but a preponderance of most must be retained).

- The more significant a building is, the less integrity is required. If significance is more limited, it's important to have very good integrity to strengthen its eligibility.
- We also distinguish between individually eligible properties and those that are contributing to a district. Other communities do not make these distinctions.
- Code also describes how eligibility is determined, how appeals work.
- [**Jennifer: for this code review, important to look at levels of protection and listing process--relationship of national designation to local designation. E.g. Some communities automatically put National Register designations on the local register; National Register does not distinguish between individually eligible vs contributing.*]

Article 2: Landmark Designation

- Designation is the foundation of all historic preservation.
- In Fort Collins, City Council designates the property by ordinance.
- Consensual and non-consensual designation: consensual designations straightforward; LPC evaluates and makes recommendation to Council.
- Nonconsensual: lengthier process involving minimum of 2 hearings with LPC. If LPC believes worthy, goes to Council to make decision. High threshold and very seldom used.
- Appeals: All final decisions (staff and LPC) can be appealed to Council; final Council decisions can be appealed through the courts.

V. Wrap-Up/Next Steps

Areas needing revisions already identified to some degree, but CAC and consultants will identify missing pieces. Examples of questions and priorities were discussed:

- the nonconsensual designation process--how many citizens are required, length of timeline, etc.
- Should we continue to distinguish between individual and contributing to a district?
- Code that relates to how historic resource protection affects development proposals.

CAC role is responding to proposed code updates that emerge from Clarion's efforts. Members should share their issues/concerns to make sure they are included in process. Case study suggestions are also welcome. Clarion will be looking at best practices nationwide and recommending tailored solutions that meet our specific local needs, within that larger context.

The CAC discussed whether to continue to meet or take a break until July. Agreement that it is beneficial to continue to meet, become better educated about current codes and background info.

Next meeting: May 3, 2017. Agenda: continue to discuss existing code and draw out issues and questions from CAC members. Use case study/studies to illustrate how code is applied and where improvements may be warranted.