

**MINUTES
CARBONDALE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
October 7, 2021**

CALL TO ORDER

Nick Miscione called the in-person/virtual October 7, 2021, meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The following members were present for roll call:

Members:	Nick Miscione, Chair John Williams, Member Eric Sechrist, Member Kim Magee, Member Melissa Jones, Member Jess Pederson, Member Heather MacDonald, Alternate
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Town Staff Present:	John Leybourne, Town of Carbondale Staff Liaison Kae McDonald, Boards & Commissions Clerk
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CONSENT AGENDA

Motion Passed: Jess Pederson ***moved*** to approve the Carbondale Historic Preservation Commission (CHPC) meeting minutes from September 2, 2021. John Williams ***seconded*** the motion, and it was ***unanimously approved***.

PERSONS PRESENT NOT ON THE AGENDA

There was no one present, not on the agenda, to address the CHPC.

PROPOSED LETTER TO SOM OWNERS

Nick asked if any of the commission members had comments concerning the proposed letter to Structure of Merit building owners.

Jess thought overall it was a warm and friendly letter.

Melissa asked for clarification on the cost: 1) The building owner and Town of Carbondale each pay \$150.00? and 2) are they each \$300.00 regardless of size?

John Williams responded in the affirmative for both questions and asked if the letter clearly conveyed that message. He noted that they will be installed by Public Works (and that the HPC still needs to get approval for that process by the Public Works Director).

Jess asked if the commission members will see the basic design for approval.

John Williams pointed out that the 12" by 18" historical summary plaque is like those already posted in the downtown area.

Kim shared her screen and previewed an example of the preservation plaque, noting that the plaque comes with a stake attachment. She also pointed out that it doesn't show the address but wondered if that is something that needs to be added.

John Williams noted that a primary goal is to make sure the homeowners know it is voluntary.

Eric Sechrist reminded the commission members that a standardized location had been discussed at previous meetings and noted that with the possible use of a stake for the preservation plaque it would add

flexibility in where it can be located. He wanted to make sure all the commission members were agreeable to that.

Jess responded that as a property owner, he would appreciate input into where the plaque is located.

Eric Sechrist then wondered if any information should be included on how the plaque is attached because property owners might be confused as to the obligation of where to locate it.

Kim pointed out that they need to make sure it has holes in it to mount it to the house.

John Williams suggested that the homeowners provide their input concerning how the plaque is displayed and since the plaques will be individually purchased, they can specify that when the plaque is ordered.

Heather suggested ordering each plaque with both mounting options.

Kim asked about putting the address on the plaque.

John Williams thought that it should be on the historical summary plaque, but if the preservation plaque is mounted on the building it doesn't need an address.

John Leybourne recommended changing the language to Structure of Merit and include the address.

Eric Sechrist suggested having the logo under which was QR code that will link to the Structure of Merit surveys. He pointed out that if the QR code is added, each plaque would need to be ordered individually.

John Leybourne noted that Ridgeway has both small plaques and others with a QR code which was very interesting to access.

Melissa suggested waiting to see how many people respond so the commission members get a sense for what they prefer before ordering in bulk. She thought the addition of the QR code might appeal to more people.

Kim was also in favor of the QR code.

Eric Sechrist suggested that if a QR code is used maybe a second option isn't necessary and provides more uniformity. He suggested offering a different type of material instead. He also suggested reserving the larger plaques for the downtown area and using the QR codes for residential buildings.

John Williams was in favor of giving people a choice. He would like to time the order for early spring so they can be installed as soon as the weather is favorable to do so. He pointed out that customizing the metal plaques will increase the price. He also preferred a more generic plaque that can be securely fastened to the building.

Jess wondered if just one type of plaque should be used because it would simplify things and make it more affordable.

John Williams pointed out that the different types of plaques are two different types of material.

Kim noted that the QR codes appealed to her because not all the survey information is accurate, and the information can be updated without having to order a new plaque.

Nick suggested continuing the discussion at November's meeting. He suggested distilling what might be offered to just a few options to come to a consensus more easily.

CARBONDALE CPU KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Nick opened the discussion by referring to the packet attachment “Carbondale Comprehensive Plan Update Key Recommendations Draft” submitted by Cushing Terrell; he asked that the discussion center on how it relates to historic preservation.

John Leybourne noted that the packet pages that specifically relate to the Historic Preservation Commission are numbered 17, 18, and 33, and reflects the input the consultants received during the September meeting.

Nick noted that on page 18, the consultants focus on vacant lots/vacancies and building height. He asked the commission members to share their opinion about vacant lots and vacancies in general.

Jess pointed out that vacancies are still market driven and while there are some vacancies available for rent, the vacant lots are developer-fueled. He noted that there is plenty of office space available, but the residential piece is lacking. He wasn’t sure how the new construction along Highway 133 would affect office space.

Eric Sechrist agreed with Jess and went on to note that rental costs are quite high along Main Street, so the newer construction along Highway 133 is attractive. He wasn’t sure it was great to have so many vacancies.

Nick responded that within the last five to seven years he has seen developers choose to pass up empty lots in the Historic Commercial Core in favor of building or scrape/replace along Highway 133. He pointed out that while there is development occurring in Carbondale, it is not in the HCC.

John Leybourne agreed with Nick and noted that there is mixed use development along Highway 133, as well as larger projects in contrast to the HCC where the vacant lots are mostly owned by one entity. He went on to point out that profit is the motivating factor for the Highway 133 development and with the requirements in the HCC for no residential on the ground floor (or within 25’ of the ground surface) and to provide parking, it is very expensive.

Nick wondered what the solution is and suggested that lifting the height limitations to include a fourth story might alleviate some of the pressure. He asked if the commission members had any comments or objections to the idea of allowing a fourth story in the HCC.

Jess responded that scale-wise, he thought that the Spruce building was as tall as you might want to go. He explained that for his property at 2nd and Main it is zoned residential low density beyond the alley so he would have to step down a design on that side and along Main Street would need to step the design down to allow for sunlight. He went on to explain that if he wants to preserve the historic portion of the building, that is another restriction and commenting that there are a lot of challenges to owning a commercial building in the HCC.

Nick proposed a draft letter that alludes to those challenges: 1) restrictions are unduly burdensome and the Historic Preservation Commission is in support of removing those restrictions and 2) the Historic Preservation Commission supports modifications to the Comprehensive Plan that would lead to changes in the Unified Development Code.

Jess agreed with Nick’s proposal and referred to the building design that includes LuluBelle’s (on the south side of Main Street between 3rd and 4th Street). He was able to set back the third floor and create a courtyard that opens the space up--the property owner made the design work and profited. He thought that the HCC was more vital than ten years ago, but that it hasn’t been overdone. He also noted that there are good examples of development dating back fifteen years, but not much recently and wondered what has changed.

John Leybourne wasn’t sure because most of the regulations have been in place for that length of time. He thought it might be that developers are weighing the profitability.

Jess thought that regulations put in place to create vitality may ultimately have the opposite effect.

Nick reiterated his proposal to draft a letter and noted that deadlines are coming up on the Comprehensive Plan update, so now is the time to write it. He underlined the need to weight in on the draft recommendations. He noted his personal support of Cushing Terrell's recommendations and interpreted the commission members comments so far to support lifting restrictions.

Kim agreed that her impression was that restrictions aren't necessary, but at the same time the proposal to allow a fourth story makes her uncomfortable. She asked Nick to explain the development process to understand why.

Nick explained that as the pro forma process unfolds, the commercial requirement is burdensome—the developer is forced to make up the potential cost burden by adding residential units above the commercial ground floor, but there aren't enough residential units that can be included in the second and third floors to accommodate the 20% affordable housing requirement. By adding a fourth story, that alleviates the space issue and Nick's sees that as a potential solution, but public sentiment in Carbondale is against development like Willits or "big box."

Jess responded that the scale of Carbondale's downtown is more suited to boutiques than big box.

John Williams concurred that he likes the scale of the town as it is now. He didn't think big box stores belonged and preferred downtown businesses to cater to the locals. He thought that the vacant lots would allow room to grow, but he supported growth limits—he has heard a lot of community members comment that Carbondale is growing too fast.

Jess pointed out that one factor for the lack of smaller businesses is that the tap fees are quite high and that must be paid up-front, which might be challenging for a small business.

John Williams preferred that creativity of individuals to that of big developers.

Nick countered that it is wishful thinking that Carbondale won't change and when growth limits are imposed, "normal" people become gentrified. He added that the cost of housing keeps going up and if the community wants affordable housing, they must find a way to pay for it.

Eric Sechrist replied that he is struggling to respond—he wants vitality, but at what expense. He didn't think the argument was black-and-white, but more is shades of gray. He preferred incentives for developers to build what the Town wants or needs. He noted that the development at Willits or El Jebel might not exist if Basalt had agreed to the development and thought the parallels were similar between Carbondale's Main Street and Highway 133.

Nick thought the comparison between old town Basalt and Willits is interesting—old town Basalt has pedestrian scale and walkability, but Willits also provides a similar level of pedestrian scale and walkability. He noted the dichotomy between Carbondale's Main Street and Highway 133 makes him uncomfortable—development along Highway 133 caters to cars. He added that walkability is the great equalizer, and that architecture is about people. If someone is in their car, they lose that sense of community, which is the point of historic preservation.

Kim agreed that walkability is a significant aspect of historic preservation.

Eric Sechrist wondered that when looking at historic preservation and allowing a fourth story within the HCC, what does the community gain? He went on to say that he typically doesn't connect economic vitality to historic preservation, but they are intertwined. He noted that he would be in favor of loosening some restrictions, but it would depend on what they are and how it affects the HCC.

Nick suggested taking a smaller piece and promote language to give the Historic Preservation Commission more purview over the Old Town Residential district as described on the last page of the draft Key Recommendations.

Jess pointed out that Accessory Dwelling Units are key to helping homeowners figure out housing versus allowing larger developers to do it.

Nick asked for the commission members approval to draft a letter that supports the key recommendations for the OTR and bring it for approval at the November meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The October 7, 2021, regular meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for November 4, 2021 at 6:30 pm.