

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE WALLACE PLANNING, ZONING
AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
March 4, 2020**

Chairman Sherman called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm in the council chambers.

Roll Call: Commission members present: David Copelan, Sarah Murphy, David Sherman, Gail Featherstone, Bill Hood present at 6:08 pm and Katie Watterson present at 6:12 pm. Absent commission members: None

Flag Salute

Minutes:

D. Copelan made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 5, 2020 meeting. S. Murphy seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carries. No further discussion.

D. Sherman asked the status on the FAQ Pole Barn summary he brought last month to the commission. All present stated they thought it was adequate and had good information for the public.

Business:

600 Cedar Street – moving external exhaust fan on side of building to roof

Robert Wuerfel, owner of the “The Blackboard” is requesting a certificate of appropriateness for the moving of the external exhaust fan on the side of the building to the roof of the same building contingent that no fire shaft is required by the state HVAC inspectors. Discussion was held. Mr. Wuerfel’s application stated that he would like to leave the exhaust fan where it is presently until February of 2021, at which time he would then move it to the roof. D. Copelan made a motion to award a certificate of appropriateness to 600 Cedar Street, “The Blackboard” for moving the exhaust fan on the side of the building to the roof, contingent that no fire shaft is required by HVAC Inspectors by February 2021. Seconded by G. Featherstone. Roll call vote: Copelan; aye, Murphy; aye, Sherman; aye, Featherstone; aye. All present in favor, motion carries. No further discussion.

507 Cedar Street – Repair mortar on building and recap and repair parapet.

Don Hofmann, owner of 507 Cedar Street, is requesting a certificate of appropriateness for the repair of the deteriorating mortar on the west facing side of the building and possibly removing the stucco completely. He is also asking permission to repair the parapet in the back of the building which may require shortening it by one foot. Motion made by S. Murphy to award a certificate of appropriateness to Don Hofmann, owner of 507 Cedar Street, for the repair/removal of mortar and stucco on west facing side of building as well as shortening the parapet in the rear by one foot for repair. Seconded by G. Featherstone. Roll call vote: Hood; aye, Copelan; aye, Murphey; aye, Sherman; aye, Featherstone; aye. All in favor, motion carries. No further discussion.

104 Elm Street – Demolition of shed/construction of new garage

Ron and Shelli Niemi, owners of 104 Elm Street, are requesting a certificate of appropriateness for the demolition of the existing 15’ x 21’ shed with the construction a new garage in its place. Discussion was held. S. Murphy made a motion to award a certificate of appropriateness to Ron and Shelli Niemi for the demolition of existing shed and the construction of a new garage in accordance with the drawings submitted. Seconded by D. Copelan. Roll call vote: B. Hood; nay. More discussion was held on the design of the garage pertaining to windows. After clarification was made on the material used for letting light into the building, B. Hood wanted to change his vote. Roll call vote: B. Hood; aye, D. Copelan; aye, S.

Murphy; aye, D. Sherman; aye, G. Featherstone; aye, Watterson; aye. All in favor, motion carries. No further discussion.

301 Cedar Street – Restoration and bathroom/shower stall addition

Brian L Westmoreland, doing business as Authentic Restoration Services, Inc as a contractor for 301 Cedar Street is requesting a certificate of appropriateness for the restoration and addition of a shower stall. Discussion was held. No drawings have yet been submitted. D. Copelan made a motion to table until drawings are provided. Seconded by K. Watterson. Roll call vote: Hood; aye, Copelan; aye, Murphy; aye, Sherman; aye, Featherstone; aye, Watterson; aye. All in favor, motion carries. No further discussion.

303 Third Street – Move exterior door

Carl and Gina Hill, owners of 303 Third Street is requesting a certificate of appropriateness to move the exterior door from the current location on the side to the center of the house. Discussion was held. Motion made by D. Copelan to award a certificate of appropriateness to Carl and Gina Hill, owners of 303 Third Street for the moving of the exterior door to the center of the house and replacing the existing door opening with siding to match existing. Seconded by B. Hood. Roll call vote: Hood; aye, Copelan; aye, Murphy; aye, Sherman; aye, Featherstone; aye, Watterson; aye. All in favor, motion carries. No further discussion.

937 Residence Street – Demolition of burnt house and clean-up of debris

Roy Conwell, owner of 937 Residence Street is requesting a certificate of appropriateness for the demolition of the house due to the current damage done by fire. Discussion was held. Motion made by D. Copelan award a certificate of appropriateness for the demolition of 937 Residence Street as well as cleaning up of the debris. Seconded by B. Hood. Roll call vote: Hood; aye, Copelan; aye, Murphy; aye, Sherman; aye, Featherstone; aye, Watterson; aye. All in favor, motion carries. No further discussion.

Informational:

Spencer Howard, representing Northwest Vernacular, spoke and addressed the commission and visitors present about the Historic Preservation Plan and its function and purpose. He stated he is here speaking with individuals about the current plan and what changes, challenges and benefits the residents see of having a Historic Preservation Plan. Northwest Vernacular will draft a new, improved version of our Historic Preservation Plan and submit to the commission and community for review at the May 6, 2020 Planning and Zoning Hearing. Before that hearing, information will be gathered from surveys submitted for review, interviews from business owners and residents, and etc. Northwest Vernacular will present their findings as well as make recommendations for review in May. The commission will then present the draft to the Council and make their recommendation for approval.

Quick overview of what Historic Preservation is:

Historic Preservation is a movement in Historic Planning. The 1966 Historic Preservation Act codified it and is delegated down from the National Parks Service and The Department of Interior to the State Historic Preservation Offices which then delegates that authority to Certified Local Governments. The City of Wallace is a Certified Local Government which means that the decision making and evaluation that are part of Historic Preservation are made at the local level with the main purpose being the appointed commissioners have a better understanding of the needs and circumstances of the owners and what it means to be doing the work proposed on the buildings while maintaining the character and integrity that represents Historic Preservation. The commission is also a local resource for preservation for the residents.

Fundamentally, Historic Preservation follows a process of (1) Identify, (2) Evaluate, (3) Educate, and (4) Nominate. Spencer stated that Wallace was able to push through and nominate the city and effectively secure its place. However, the order that is typically done first is to identify the architectural features, history and background of the area. The evaluation of the Wallace Historic Preservation Plan that was done was very straight forward and easy to identify. The education part is extremely important to the Plan because it gives background to the why Wallace created the Historic District and what it means to the town. The Historic Preservation Plan is a tool used by the City and the Commission along with the property owners as "stakeholders" as well as the local museums, the Wallace Chamber, and etc. who have an interest in the success of Wallace to establish a vision and have attainable goals. Policies and actions are in place to support the vision and goals, but need to be concise and written in such a way that there is no ambiguity to what is required.

Historic Preservation Plans typically have a lifespan of 15-20 years. After that, a review is needed for possible updates and changes.

Questions and Answers:

Tammy Copelan asked if the preservation plan will have a focus towards enforcement or recourse if someone is found noncompliant?

Spencer said yes. The City Council enforces with the recommendation of the commission. It really depends on the Council and which battles they want to take on. Education and communication to a neighbor can go a long way for compliance. Design guidelines, clarity and strength of the ordinance is a key element for compliance as well. As part of the revised plan, line item suggestions and examples will be made for these exact issues and how to prevent noncompliance.

David Copelan asked if Northwest Vernacular has any examples of a Historic Preservation Plan similar to Wallace to use as a template?

Spencer stated that McMinnville, OR is a good example. Spencer is more than willing to send over that plan for the commission to review as well as other key elements from other historic districts that have solid compliance wording and code backing.

Jamie Baker stated that when improvements are done, which can be quite costly, there really aren't any incentive for the improvement. Property taxes increase because of it. Jamie asked if the new plan could include a tax incentive for compliance/improvement.

Spencer stated that Washington State did just that with the Special Valuation Program which is a tax reduction program. The plan will have recommendations as well as communicating with the County Assessor for pathways for including this incentive into the property valuation for the City of Wallace.

Greg Bosen commented about the importance of compliance and why it was not included in the survey. He stated that he feels the City of Wallace is significantly lacking in this area and follow-thru with consequences for noncompliance needs to be addressed.

Spencer stated that he didn't realize that compliance was such an issue or concern in the City of Wallace, but again, they will be making line item suggestions that address that issue in the new plan. Spencer also spoke that it is the City Council along with hired city officials, not volunteer appointed P&Z Commissioners, that enforce noncompliance.

D. Sherman spoke to the consequence in the code as being a misdemeanor or the possibility of assessing civil penalties, but nothing about fines or citations. Nor does the current code give clear language as to who can prosecute/enforce the misdemeanor.

Jim See asked how Northwest Vernacular will evaluate what the community really wants. How can they be certain that the surveys are from legitimate residents in Wallace?

Spencer stated that he will collect surveys and be communicating with residents and "stakeholders" to determine common ideas, concerns, or themes for the new plan.

D. Sherman asked how long will he be taking comments or the survey from people for his research. Spencer said ideally the end of March.

A statement was made regarding the buying up of buildings and not doing anything with them other than waiting for the market value to increase so they can be sold to make a significant profit. Spencer stated that there are some cities in Washington State that have addressed that very issue, but cautions that it's not easy, quick or a cost-effective practice for a City to engage in. It can take years. McMenamins Elks Temple in Tacoma, WA and another commercial building in the same town are an example in which the city used "imminent domain". The previous owners fought the city all the way to the Supreme Court and ultimately lost, however, Spencer does not suggest the city go down that path.

D. Sherman spoke to the current code having the wording "duty to maintain". David asked if the new plan might speak to that.

Spencer again stated that when residential or commercial buildings pose a structural threat to itself or other properties or the general public, that would be up to the City Council to decide if imminent domain would be a path they would choose. Also, a pattern of consistently following a procedure to notify the owner for addressing the issue is a key element to enforcement of the Historic Preservation Plan.

Rider Gatereaux asked if there was a different standard in compliance between contributory, compatible and noncontributory.

Spencer said it all goes back to the identification and evaluation of the building when it was nominated. The ordinance would clarify this. Again, Spencer stated that he would make recommendations if there is ambiguity in our code. Spencer also discussed the process of evaluating a building for contributory versus noncontributory.

John and Debbie Ruggles asked if there is a protocol for changing the compatible designation status of a house into a contributory designation status.

Spencer said that there was a process and he would make suggestions in the new plan to add wording to the code.

Jim See asked about the street scape, sidewalk, or curbing including trees and shrubbery and asked if those would be included in the new plan?


Spencer stated that the existing tree ordinance will be reviewed and see how it relates to the Historic District and determine if there is need to tie back into historic precedence and provide recommendations.

Questionnaires, comments, and any additional information the citizens may feel necessary for the Historic Preservation Plan should be brought to the City Hall and kept for Northwest Vernacular to review. They will accept these up until the end of March. May 6th, 2020 Northwest Vernacular will return to Wallace with a presentation of the Historic Preservation Plan draft for review.

Motion made by D. Copelan to adjourn. Seconded by S. Murphy. All in favor, motion carries. No further discussion. Meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm.


David Sherman, Chairman of Commission

Attest:


Amanda Trogden, Deputy City Clerk