



**Minutes**

**DESCHUTES COUNTY HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION AND BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS JOINT MEETING**

**DESCHUTES SERVICES CENTER**

**1300 NW WALL STREET, BEND, OREGON, 97703**

**MARCH 4, 2024 – 5:30 P.M.**

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**I. Call to order**

Chair Rachel Stemach call the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Historic Landmarks Commissioners present in-person: Chair Stemach, Lily Syphers, Eli Ashley, Lore Christopher. Commissioners present via Zoom: Vice Chair Dennis Schmidling, Marc Hudson. Board of County Commissioners present: Chair Patti Adair and Phil Chang. Staff present: Tanya Saltzman, Senior Planner, Peter Gutowsky, Community Development Department (CDD) Director, Stephanie Marshall, Legal Counsel, Nick Lelack, County Administrator.

**II. Public Comment**

None

**III. Action Items**

**1. *Welcome and Roundtable Introductions***

The meeting commenced with introductions from all attendees, including members of the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) and Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). Given that four of the seven HLC members were newly appointed, introductions provided an opportunity for background sharing and discussion of preservation interests.

**2. *Preservation Topics and Interests***

• **State – Level Updates on Cultural and Archaeological Resource Protection**

Planning staff provided an update on the ongoing statewide process for revising rules on cultural and archaeological resource protection. The revision process is expected to take six to eight months and aims to improve coordination between local and tribal governments. CDD is monitoring these developments and will keep the BOCC and HLC informed as new rules are proposed.

• **Engagement with Tribal Communities**

Commissioner Chang inquired about past interactions with local tribes. Staff noted that the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs have engaged in land use discussions, primarily related to resort development and water management, but there has been limited direct engagement on historic preservation matters. Commissioners expressed interest in improving outreach efforts to local tribes and exploring ways to involve them in preservation initiatives. It was noted that while the tribes receive general land use notifications, no specific invitations have been extended for participation in HLC activities. One idea considered was to make a formal overture to acknowledge the Commission's interest in their

perspectives. Some Commissioners recommended waiting until state recommendations are finalized before engaging the tribes directly, to avoid overwhelming limited tribal resources. Others emphasized the importance of outreach, proposing informal engagement in the interim. Past outreach efforts were noted, including personally delivering invitations to tribal representatives for participation in planning efforts. The Commission agreed that face-to-face engagement is valuable.

- **Field Trip Proposal**

The group discussed organizing a field trip to the Warm Springs Museum or other tribal cultural sites to gain a better understanding of indigenous heritage in the region. There was broad support for this initiative.

- **Landmark Designation and Broader Historical Context**

Commissioners discussed the scope of the HLC's mission, debating whether it should be limited to reviewing landmark designations or expanded to broader educational initiatives. There was consensus that the Commission should play a role in public history and education while maintaining its core responsibilities.

- **Recognition of Non-Structural Cultural Landscapes**

The group discussed the issue of preserving historical landscapes that lack physical structures, such as traditional indigenous land management sites (e.g., areas subject to prescribed burns for food production). Staff noted that such designations are possible but require extensive community engagement and research.

- **Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant Opportunities**

Staff reviewed the available CLG grant funding, which supports preservation initiatives. Past grant-funded projects included historic resource surveys and educational programs. The next grant cycle will begin in February 2025, providing an opportunity for the HLC to propose new projects.

- **Potential Updates to the Historic Resource Inventory**

Commissioners discussed updating the county's inventory of historic sites. Past surveys primarily focused on built structures, but future efforts could expand to cultural landscapes. Staff explained that reconnaissance-level surveys are the first step toward identifying new historic resources and can be funded through CLG grants.

- **Public Education and Awareness Efforts**

Commissioners expressed interest in increasing public awareness of the county's historic resources.

Suggestions included:

- Developing an improved online story map of historic sites
- Collaborating with local museums and historical societies
- Organizing public history events
- Engaging in social media outreach

Staff noted that the City of Sisters recently revamped its historic preservation website using CLG grant funds and suggested the county could pursue a similar project.

- **Outreach to Property Owners of Historic Sites**

Commissioners discussed reviving outreach efforts to property owners of historic landmarks, reminding them of the significance of their properties and encouraging participation in preservation efforts.

- **Preservation Month Activities**

Commissioners brainstormed potential activities for Preservation Month in May, including:

- A public barn photography project to document and celebrate historic barns in the county
- A social media campaign to highlight historic landmarks
- A potential collaboration with Bend Source to engage the public in nominating historic sites for recognition

- **Collaboration with Other Historic Preservation Groups**

The group acknowledged the importance of strengthening ties with historic commissions in Bend, Redmond, and other nearby jurisdictions. Past joint meetings and informal coordination efforts were noted as beneficial, and there was support for re-establishing regular communication.

- **City of Sisters Historic Preservation Project Update**

Staff provided an update on a CLG-funded project in the City of Sisters, which is developing guidelines for fire resilient building materials that align with the city's Western design theme. The project aims to balance historic preservation with wildfire mitigation.

- **Consideration of Future Historic Resource Surveys**  
Staff encouraged the Commission to begin identifying themes or priorities for the next round of historic resource surveys. The previous survey focused on recreational sites, but future efforts could include agricultural properties, cultural landscapes, or indigenous heritage sites.
- **Preservation of Historic Barns**  
Commissioners expressed interest in documenting historic barns in the county, recognizing that many are deteriorating; a related idea involved launching a public photography initiative to capture images of barns before they are lost. There was also discussion about potential CLG grant funding for a formal survey of historic agricultural structures.
- **Coordination with the Deschutes Historical Museum**  
Commissioners acknowledged the Deschutes Historical Museum as a valuable partner for preservation initiatives and discussed potential collaborations. Staff noted that the museum director will be reaching out regarding Preservation Month activities.
- **Future Work Plan Development**  
Staff provided an overview of the upcoming work plan process, which will define HLC priorities for the next fiscal year. Commissioners were encouraged to consider potential projects and provide input at the next meeting.

#### IV. Historic Landmarks Commission and Staff Comments

- Commissioners expressed appreciation for the support of the BOCC
- Commissioners emphasized the importance of defining clear goals for the HLC's expanded role in public history and education.
- The next HLC meeting is scheduled for May 6, 2024, where work plan discussions will continue.

#### V. Adjourn

Chair Stemach adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Tracy Griffin, Administrative Assistant

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