



TOWN OF BEAUX ARTS VILLAGE

PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

February 25, 2016
Kendall

Present: Commissioners Paula Dix, Jan Johnston, Hans Juhle, Jeff Kendall and Chairperson Bennet Yen

Excused: None

Staff: Planner Mona Green, Deputy Clerk Angela Kulp.

Commissioner Kendall called the meeting to order at 7:09pm.

MINUTES: Commissioner Kendall moved to approve the January 21, 2016 minutes as amended; Commissioners Johnston and Dix requested correction on what is considered old and new business going forward; Planner Green confirmed as appropriate. Commissioner Johnston seconded. Vote: 5 For, 0 Against. Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE: Deputy Clerk Kulp shared some recent articles she thought may be of interest, and reminded the Commissioners of the upcoming class, "A Short Course in Local Planning", in Bellevue March 2, 2016 for anyone interested.

By-Laws – Copies of all previous By-Laws were distributed for discussion along with the Commission's September 1, 2011 minutes where By-Laws were last discussed and updated. Commissioner Dix recommended tidying the language in section 4 of the current By-Laws about the Chairperson description and shared her suggestions in writing. After some discussion, Commissioner Johnston moved to approve Commissioner Dix's suggestion and Commissioner Juhle seconded. Vote: 3 For, 1 Against. Motion carried; Chairperson Yen abstained from the vote.

REPORTS: There were no reports at this time.

OLD BUSINESS: Historic Preservation- Certified Local Governments (CLG's)

Commissioner Dix had consolidated all CLG answers to the resident questions posed during last fall's feedback into a draft for the Commission. The Commissioners recognized Commissioner Dix's hard work and thanked her for her additional time on this document consolidation. Chairperson Yen suggested a search be done for the word "inventive" to confirm if the word "incentive" was intended instead. He also suggested any reference to "I" be changed to "We", "The State" or "The Planning Commission" for greater clarity. Commissioner Dix noted the "I" statements had come from the State's DAHP and can be noted as such. Planner Green recommended the questions be numbered for easier discussion, and that sources should be cited at the

end with notes. Commissioner Juhle wondered if a current dollar amount would be more accurate for the example used. After some discussion in clarifying the example uses the property's structural value only of a building or house, and not the land value, it was agreed the example used by the state is appropriate and should remain as given. Commissioner Juhle also asked about restrictions being clarified but Commissioner Dix indicated we're not to that point yet, and that would be discussed in greater detail at a later stage when certain benchmarks had occurred, if the CLG process went forward. Chairperson Yen suggested an introduction paragraph be added, to recapture what the Commission is trying to do, and confirm the process is still voluntary as he noted even when stated that was a recurring question. Deputy Clerk Kulp agreed to edit the document again, and have it reviewed by Planner Green. The Commissioners agreed that pending these corrections, it could be sent as an attachment to all property owners with their March newsletter.

OLD BUSINESS: Zoning Code

Deputy Clerk Kulp distributed the "MRSC Design Review Guidelines" as recommended by Planner Green at last month's meeting for further review. Deputy Clerk Kulp also distributed the Commission's May 21, 2015 minutes for reference on the subject. Planner Green noted she is not advocating for, or arguing against a Design Review Board, she just wanted the Commissioners to see it as another example or option of what's available to a jurisdiction to influence design. Commissioner Johnston argued a Design Review Board is doomed here in Beaux Arts because of the contentious nature of the process, our very small community and saw it as overkill. Chairperson Yen reminded the Commissioners that Mr. Durr explained a Design Review Board could be managed by an independent third party, where the cost is paid by the applicant. Commissioner Juhle shared his concern about potential problems with a Design Review Board, and noted communities with them have consistency with properties that we do not have here. After additional discussion, the Commissioners agreed a Design Review Board would not be an effective tool for the Town of Beaux Arts at this time.

Deputy Clerk Kulp re-distributed a list for reference of all Beaux Arts properties sorted by residential lot size that she originally put together in January 2015. It shows the lots ranging from 5203 to 32,165 square feet, and it also shows the average lot size to be 12,752. She noted 32 of the total 117 lots are under the current conforming size of 10,000 square feet.

Deputy Clerk Kulp also shared copies of the "Issaquah Highlands Architectural Guidelines" and their "Harrison Street Architectural Standards" as recommended by Guest Bob Durr at last month's meeting for further discussion.

Planner Green noted the Issaquah and Harrison Street guidelines were laid out for a new development but given that the Beaux Arts community was laid out over 100 years ago, those types of guidelines would be hard to implement here now, unless the Town wanted to focus all future development on going back to its Craftsman roots. She stressed when you're trying to codify good design, tweaking the current code can help individuality and flexibility without trying to start over from scratch.

Commissioner Johnston had several suggestions for these adjustments which would not mandate specific designs but instead focus on general design principles. She thought the Issaquah and Harrison Street guidelines were comprehensive and had a lot of good ideas. She suggested the Commission choose some of them that would work here, make them easy to do, and state those guidelines clearly in our code. She also suggested going through their guidelines section by section and offered to do that for the Commission with her recommendations as an architect with experience in the residential spec and custom building sectors, to which the Commissioners agreed. Commissioner Johnston further noted we have a good zoning code already, and it could be made a little more restrictive with more façade modulation requirements. She shared her concern for not wanting to see three story homes with flat roofs here as are cropping up in Enatai around us now, and felt we need both encouragement of good guidelines and a tighter code.

Chairperson Yen shared he thought the Issaquah and Harrison Street guidelines were too restrictive for this community, but he recognized a few good points worth considering such as garages set back and façade requirements he thought could be incorporated into our existing code. He encouraged optional guidelines rather than mandatory requirements. He noted he would like to see our code be a bit tighter, without going as far as Issaquah and Harrison Street guidelines; likening it to having a house with a garage instead of a garage with a house. Mr. Yen urged the Commission to steer clear of grey zones subject to interpretation and instead focus on identifying what we want using good architectural features and guidelines.

Commissioner Juhle agreed the Issaquah and Harrison Street guidelines were too cumbersome and too cookie-cutter for us. He suggested we put out a request to the Town for feedback on design guidelines to which the Commissioners agreed. Commissioner Juhle urged the Commission to consider just stating guidelines of what we like rather than formalize a mandate of what we cannot do, using examples such as a preference for quality materials. Commissioner Johnston disagreed, sharing a concern over builders who won't care what we prefer; only what our codes mandate.

Commissioner Kendall noted his concerns about design being subjective. Commissioner Dix suggested each commissioner come with a "wish list" of suggestions for the zoning code to narrow things down a bit. Chairperson Yen echoed the "wish list" which was supposed to be brought forth this month, and urged commissioners to not be too restrictive or subjective in their suggestions. Commissioner Juhle summarized the concerns tonight on this issue as either being objective or subjective, dividing the Commission. He noted he doesn't know how to codify the objective, which is hard to define. Commissioner Johnston made some suggestions, and Chairperson Yen re-emphasized encouragement of preferred guidelines. Commissioner Kendall reminded the Commission they can be as restrictive now as they want, as over time the focus will change and so will the codes depending on whatever are the current issues of concern. Deputy Clerk Kulp confirmed a previous commission over a decade ago was focused on property consistency with new structures when old structures were plentiful and here we

are years later discussing preservation of old structures that are no longer plentiful so indeed the current issues change as do the codes.

Chairperson Yen reminded the Commissioners for next month's meeting that Commissioner Johnston will bring her recommendations pared down from Issaquah and Harrison Street's guidelines. He also reminded all Commissioners to bring their own "wish list" of design guideline suggestions as outlined tonight. And, Deputy Clerk Kulp will put a notice in the next newsletter requesting resident feedback on design guidelines as well.

NEW BUSINESS: There was no new business at this time.

Adjourn: Chairperson Yen moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Johnston seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:39pm. Vote: 5 For, 0 Against. Motion carried.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be at Commissioner Johnston's home on Thursday, March 17, 2016, 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Angela Kulp, Deputy Town Clerk