

CITY OF LA GRANDE
Landmarks Commission Meeting

Regular Session

Thursday, February 9, 2023

La Grande City Hall
1000 Adams Avenue

MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Cassie Hibbert
Lindsay Costigan
Katie Boula
Rod Muilenburg
Tracey Hanshew

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT EXCUSED:

DISCUSSION/DISPOSITION

STAFF PRESENT:

Mike Boquist, City Planner
Kendra VanCleave, Planning Tech I

CITIZENS PRESENT

Brian Hjelte, Waterleaf Architecture
Sarah Hollenbeck, EOU Capital Project Mgr.
Anna Wilcox, Waterleaf Architecture
Peter Meijer, Peter Meijer Architects

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

HIBBERT called this Regular Session of the Commission to order at 6:05 p.m., and asked for Roll Call; a quorum was determined to be present.

AGENDA APPROVAL

No changes. The Agenda was approved as presented.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Consider Minutes from December 8, 2022 meeting.

HIBBERT commented she was absent/excused at this meeting, but the Minutes reflect she called the meeting to order.

BOULA introduced the following Motion, with COSTIGAN providing the Second.

MOTION: The Minutes of the December 8, 2022 meeting be approved as amended.

USC: Unanimous

NEW BUSINESS

- a. *Consideration of Historical Appropriateness*
1 University Blvd, 01-HLA-23
Eastern Oregon University

HIBBERT asked for Commissioner declarations or challenges. There were no declarations or challenges.

BOQUIST opened with the application requesting a determination of historic appropriateness for the Eastern Oregon University, Inlow Hall Grand Staircase demolition and reconstruction project.

BOQUIST continued the ordinance is fairly simple for properties listed on the National Register and projects. Landmarks is charged with reviewing compliance with the Secretary of Interior Standards. The State Historic Preservation Office has been involved in the design.

HIBBERT asked for the applicant's presentation.

Sarah HOLLENBECK Capital Projects Manager for EOU introduced Brian Hjelte, the Architect of Record for the project along with Anna Wilcox of Waterleaf Architects and also Peter Meijer from Peter Meijer Architect.

HJELTE gave the presentation for the project. The project had a wide range of hurdles the projects team had to tackle. The Italian Renaissance Revival staircase was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the "Administration Building, Eastern Oregon State College" nomination in 1980. With the continual deterioration of the staircase due to ground movement, climate and deferred maintenance, the Grand Staircase was deemed unsafe and partially fenced off from the public. Additionally, many of the balustrades are missing and the current state of the Grand Staircase is dangerous.

The reconstruction work will be completed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Reconstruction. Overall, the project will reconstruct the entirety of the Grand Staircase as accurately as possible. Construct the support system necessary to combat unstable soil, slope and climate. It will meet safety and seismic codes. The Grand Staircase will be built with improved structural supports and drainage, meet standards for the railings and guardrail and will have integrated lighting making it safer to use.

Additionally, enough of the Grand Staircase remains intact and there is sufficient and historic documentation to create an accurate restoration. The elements are cast stone with a concrete core. Originally the Grand Staircase had a fine grain rosy colored finish with a light catching aggregate. The proposed reconstruction will likely be a buff color and will try to achieve the original pigment of the Grand Staircase. The priority will be to have the on-site concrete and off-site pre-cast concrete match to compliment the color of Inlow Hall.

BOULA asked if there will be a more expanded version of the history of the Grand Staircase document for the Community. Peter MEIEJER responded they have been working with EOU for signage with a plaque near the base of the stairs.

COSTIGAN asked at a community outreach meeting she attended, if there were any funding requirements for ADA compliance. Anna WILCOX responded regarding an egress path, the stair in itself is not an egress path. The stair is a Grand Staircase and is a technical term in the Building Code. There is no ADA path specific required and didn't have to include an ADA specific stair as there are additional paths you can take to get to

campus. There were metal handrails added to the stair compliant to building code. Additionally, all the metal handrails include a controlled integrated LED light so the entire path will be lit.

COSTIGAN asked about timelines. HOLLENBECK responded currently once all permits and all the necessary approvals are into EOU, it will go out for bid. Looking at late spring early summer to get started.

HJELTE commented as soon as the demolition is done, the archeologist will do their study and report, then construction will start. During the demolition process the archeologist will be onsite.

HANSHEW asked once the demolition is done will there be a tribal representative come in. HOLLENBECK responded there will be someone on site during demolition.

COSTIGAN asked if there is a vegetation plan to mitigate root intrusions. HJELTE responded yes and several fir trees will be taken down and the root structures will be removed that go under the stair.

MEIJER commented the project has from the beginning included AINW (Archaeological Investigations Northwest). The project does have inadvertent discovery clauses in it as part of the archaeology work.

HIBBERT stated there are two goals for this meeting for the Landmarks Commission:

1. Review and approved the project based upon the adherence to SHPO.
2. Take a look at any mitigation opportunities.

HIBBERT directed the group to look at page 5 in the staff report.

BOQUIST commented the text in red under Conditions of Approval is language consistent with what SHPO is asking of the project. It's more of a reinforcing a requirement already out there.

BOULA suggested the plaque have additional details to include the interpretive aspect of it. HANSHEW asked if it should include a land acknowledgement as part of a public history. BOULA responded yes

HIBBERT commented the technical part of this architecture is exciting and would like to recommend to salvage a balustrade and discuss how it was recast and set.

COSTIGAN introduced the following Motion with BOULA providing a Second.

MOTION: I move that the Findings of Fact and Conclusions set forth in the Staff Report be amended and that the Project be deemed historically appropriate and conditionally approved:

1. That the owner (project manager) document, with photos, all existing conditions from all elevations prior to demolition and provide such documentation to the City of La Grande Planning Division for record retention in the application file.

2. That one or more plaques be installed in a prominent location, visible to the public, that identifies the original date of construction for the Grand Staircase, as well as the date of reconstruction, along with some interpretive panels that talk about the Staircase and the process of getting it constructed.

3. That the plaques discussed above include educational elements about the historic importance "of the site" to the La Grande community, as well as the pre-European community.

4. That the plaques discussed above include a Land Acknowledgement

Recommendation (Optional): If possible, the Landmarks Commission recommends salvaging one of the hourglass balustrades and creating an exhibit feature that discusses how it was cast and set. Ideally, this would be an educational exhibit that includes a discussion on how the recreation was done and any improvements in materials and design that would make it longer lasting in new construction.

USC: Unanimous

STAFF COMMENTS:

BOQUIST commented about applying for the grant to nominate the Carnegie Library. The bid that Lindsay provided gives a good scope of work to apply for the grant. Once we get the award, it will go out for bid.

HIBBERT commented she talked to Darcy Dolge Executive Director of Arts Center East to get on the Agenda for March.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

BOULA commented what the next steps are to apply. BOQUIST responded just a matter of using the City login for the National Preservation Trust Grant to apply for the June 1 round when the application is available.

HIBBERT stated the La Grande Main Street Downtown Design Committee is retaking over the review of the Façade Grant program. On March 15th there will be a training on the Landmarks Standards in hopes of providing more support to help applicants with applying for Landmarks.

HIBBERT stated she received the results from the City Council retreat on their priorities and goals and would like to put on the Agenda as a business item at the next

meeting to review. BOQUIST commented there wasn't anything Landmarks related however, once Landmarks applies for the grant, that will get included on the Monthly report, but will share the retreat items to review at the next meeting.

BOULA commented she would like to have another SHPO/Landmarks training and possibly combine with the Main Street Design Committee. BOQUIST commented he will include that as an agenda item for next meeting.

There being no further business to come before this Regular Session of the Commission, BOQUIST adjourned the meeting at 7:13p.m. The Commission is scheduled to meet again in Regular Session, Thursday, March 9, 2023, at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 1000 Adams Avenue, La Grande, Oregon.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Kendra VanCleave, Department Secretary

Chairperson

DATE APPROVED: _____: