



**Benton
County**

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT**

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HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 | 6:30 PM

**4500 SW Research Way, Corvallis
2nd Floor Conference Room, Kalapuya Building
Or via Teams**

The meeting started 6:30pm.

Those present at the meeting included:

HRC Commissioners: Bruce Anderson, Adrienne Fritze, Autumn Peterson (chair), Jay Sexton
Gabe Shepherd, County Commissioner

Staff: Morgan Driggs, HRC Liaison; Andréas Khechfe, HRC GIS Intern

A. Welcome & Introductions

Chair Peterson led the meeting remotely.

B. Items from Staff

a. GIS project update by Andréas Khechfe

Andréas was hired to create a geospatial historic resources database and assess the condition of the resources, where their spatial data was, and also include things like real estate data and lot size, etc. The data lived all over the county's electronic files, some of the data wasn't spatially correlated, some of it was just old scan documents. The question that Shannon Bush posed to him before she went on leave was how can we preserve all historical resources, not just the ones on the register, and not just the ones that are qualified on the register, but even the ones that are no longer with us. He found the old historical resources data set which had 55 historical resources. There were tons of gaps in the data set. Essentially, this data set included serial numbers, tax lots, owner data, mailing addresses, etc. This original historical resources data set only included resources on the Benton County Register. So, the idea was, let's get historic resources that are also qualifying or ones that are eligible to become historical resources, even if they're not on the county or the national registry. He was able to determine which historical resources the county wanted to put on the data set. Then he had to scan and scrub lots of databases that were on the county electronic files as well as on the internet through Oregon State and scan the databases to find historical documentation. A lot of the information on this data set he was given was super outdated.



So, you'd go to search a tax lot number on the county GIS webpage and you wouldn't find anything. He had to go back and find where some of the addresses had moved. Essentially, he had to compile multiple different data sets: surveys, arc pro datasets, and inventories to merge them into one homogeneous data set that can be used for community development purposes. He ended up with 144 historical resources and counting versus the 55 he started with. He was also able to spatially locate demolished resources so if someone were to inquire about it, you could say that it was demolished and it was at this site. The data set essentially helps us provide a baseline for how our historical resources GIS data should be stored, because there was no protocol when he started this project.

He is also working on an ESRI StoryMap to complement the driving tours pamphlet. He would like to update a historical resources survey to survey all the historical resources and find their site conditions, whether they're great condition, excellent condition, or broken down, and update the survey because right now the survey data is from 2009 and a lot of it's fairly accurate, but some of it since so much time has passed. The StoryMap is very easy for everybody to use and is a wonderful tool. He then presented the StoryMap for those present. The recording will be made available to the commissioners. He would like to ask the commissioners for feedback.

Commissioner Fritze asked for Andréas's biggest takeaway from the project. He found that Hugo Neumann would supply Oregon State students with alcohol during the prohibition. It was fruit wine made of cherries, blackberries, or wild huckleberries. While going through data on the Charles Davis house he found that Charles Davis's daughter passed away in the Hospice place right across the street from where he lives. He loves how, when you live in such a small area, the history remains super local. He loved going on deep dives and getting a closer look at the people that shaped the county and seeing things at the local level versus working for the federal government. He likes that at the local level you get to really interact with your community and he's really excited to do surveys over the summer so he visit the places he's researching. His biggest takeaway is how much rich history there is in the area.

Commissioner Fritze mentioned that there is only one drawing, the Kalapuya Man, in terms of documentation of the Kalapuya people. The local tribes may have other depictions in their archives or in any of their educational materials that could potentially help augment the information we have on the Kalapuya.

b. CLG Grant update

We have some funds left to fund more hours for Andréas and he's going to work more on the StoryMap and conduct surveys on the condition of the historical resources throughout the county.



- c. Scott Ramsey from the College of Philomath Community Corporation asked for a letter of support from the HRC to assist them in applying for grants to update the entryway of the college. Morgan then read the letter of support. They said they would gather signatures from all the commissioners.

C. Historic Preservation Month Celebration

Morgan shared the schedule of events for the celebration the next night at the Majestic Theatre. Morgan hired the Tuesday String Band (a picker band), which is composed of former Western Oregon University music students. They will play for the first half hour as people are filing in, then Rebecca Landis and Doug Eaton will honor Ross Parkerson. Then Julie Williams and Lori Stephens will present and Commissioner Anderson will speak to National Historic Districts positive impact on cities and surrounding real estate values, and we'll end with trivia. Commissioner Anderson will talk about the fine line between owning a building on the historic register and having what feels like a restrictive federal HOA and preserving the appearance of the neighborhood. Peer reviewed studies have shown that these National Historic districts with these restrictive rules raise the real estate values of the entire surrounding area. They also increase tourism and people just really like them. The commissioners discussed the overarching theme of the night, which is straddling preservation and being a steward of the future climate and that they aren't mutually exclusive. Commissioner Fritze asked for a call to action for the attendees. The commissioners decided there's not really a call to action, but Commissioner Anderson will talk about the events of the month and Spectres and the theme. Morgan volunteered to host the trivia and had prizes to give out to the winners, gift certificates to tours with Jema. Morgan will buy food from the Market of Choice deli for the celebration.

D. Items from the Public - None

E. Items from County Commissioner Liaison Gabe Shepherd - None

F. Items from the HRC Commissioners – Commissioner Sexton was selected by Kuri from SHPO to be on the review committee for Preserving Oregon Grants.

Commissioner Anderson was able to have so many attendees of his tour because he rolled little half sheets of paper and wrapped them in rubber bands and put them on the front porches of everyone in the College Hill National Historic District.

G. Minutes Review and Approval – April 30, 2025

Minutes were approved once we reached a quorum.

Adjournment at 8:00pm

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 25th, 6:30 PM