

**City Of Woodland
City Council Meeting Agenda Summary Sheet**

Agenda Item: Historic Preservation Discussion	Agenda Item #: <u>Workshop item 3</u> For Agenda of: <u>January 14, 2013 Workshop</u> Department: <u>Planning</u> Date Submitted: <u>January 8, 2013</u>
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Cost of Item: 0
Amount Budgeted: _____
Unexpended Balance: _____

BARS #: Description:

Department Supervisor Approval: Carolyn Johnson, Community Development Planner

Committee Recommendation: _____

Agenda Item Supporting Narrative (list attachments, supporting documents): 1. Oct. 1, 2012 Planning Commission Recommendation to Council
Summary Statement: After the attached recommendation was issued, members of the Council expressed continued interest in some sort of historic recognition of local buildings outside of a formal historic preservation program.

Staff Report to Council

From: Carolyn Johnson, Community Development Planner

To: Woodland City Council

Date: September 26, 2012

Regarding: Status of Researching a Historic Preservation Ordinance

1. SUMMARY

Investigating options for a historic preservation program was a 2011 and 2012 planning goal. After a thorough investigation, this recommendation to Council was prepared.

2. RECOMMENDATION

At this point in time, the Planning Commission and staff recommend against the adoption of the State's model historic preservation ordinance. The concern is that a local historic preservation program would not be successful because of:

- The small inventory of possible historic places,
- Difficulties in finding qualified volunteers to serve on a historic preservation commission, and
- The added administrative burden placed on City staff.

This recommendation is being made after careful consideration of the costs and benefits of the program. For a time, thought was given to having Woodland Revitalization lead a historic placard program. The group has since undergone changes such that this is no longer an option.

3. KEY ISSUES

The adoption of a historic preservation ordinance appears unlikely to be successful for a number of reasons. Washington communities adopt the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation's model ordinance to gain authority to encourage and enforce historic preservation. The State's model ordinance is built on the idea that cities and counties that adopt the model ordinance will become Certified Local Governments (CLGs). There are benefits to becoming a CLG as well as responsibilities. These are summarized as follows:

Benefits and Responsibilities of becoming a CLG:

1. **Grant opportunities.** There are 49 CLGs in Washington State and DAHP receives approximately 20 grant applications per year from these communities. Of these 20 applications, between 12 and 15 are selected for funding each year. Annual funds available range from \$110,000 to \$120,000, making average awards rather small. Typical grant funded projects include survey and inventory work, educational programs, and website development. Grants typically required a 60/40 match; with 40% coming from

the community (in-kind work can count towards this 40%). Occasionally, no-match grants are available.

2. **Technical assistance.** Technical assistance and training from the State Historic Preservation Officer is available to CLG communities.
3. **“Special valuation”.** Owners restoring historic properties are subject to increased property taxes once improvements are made. This can discourage some owners from rehabilitating their structures. To encourage rehabilitation, the legislature has made available a property tax relief tool that provides a financial incentive for rehabilitation. The primary benefit of “special valuation” is that during the 10-year special valuation period, property taxes will not reflect substantial improvements made to historic property. Only local governments which implement the law (via adoption of the model ordinance) are eligible to pass on the tax relief to the public. The local government is responsible for identifying the types of properties that are eligible for special valuation and establishing a local review board that will review applications.
4. **Historic Preservation Commission.** To become a CLG, a community must have a Historic Preservation Commission whose members, amongst many other duties, review proposals to construct, change, alter, modify, remodel, etc. properties listed on a local historic preservation register. At least two members of the commission must be professionals from the fields of architecture, history, planning, archaeology, or other related fields. One challenge to establishing a Historic Preservation Commission would be finding qualified people interested in serving and keeping them engaged during their service.
 - ✓ There is a base requirement that at least two individuals with professional expertise serve on local historic preservation commissions. Some small communities have combined their planning commissions and historic preservation commissions. However, as MRSC points out, this would make it more difficult to meet the requirements of the CLG program because of the requirement for two professional members. *DAHP generally prefers to maintain separate historic preservation commissions and planning commissions because their functions and purposes are different and it can muddy the functions of both groups.* For some small communities, DAHP has waived the provision for two professional members, however, it is always understood that when there is an opening to be filled on the commission, that those professionals are sought.
 - ✓ Walt Hansen Sr. is aware of approximately 10 property owners who, in the past, have expressed interest in being listed to a local register. Given this small number of resources, keeping an engaged historic preservation commission could be a challenge.
5. A third challenge is the additional administrative burdens placed on City staff related to staffing another commission, inventorying, maintain a local register of historic places, etc.

4. ALTERNATIVE TO A HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

Staff has explored the option of joining, through an interlocal agreement, Clark County’s historic preservation program as do the other jurisdictions within the County. Unfortunately, this is not an option available to Woodland because the vast majority of our building stock is within

Cowlitz County. Unfortunately, Cowlitz County does not have a county-wide program that Woodland can join.

5. REVIEW HISTORY

The Planning Commission has explored the option of a historic preservation ordinance over the past year following the timeline below:

- ✓ March 2011 - Exploration of a historic preservation program listed as a 2011 priority for the Planning Commission
- ✓ 05/11/2011 PC held workshop to review background information and to review the State's model ordinance
- ✓ 06/08/2011 PC held workshop to review lessons learned by other communities with historic preservation programs
- ✓ 07/21/2011 PC reviewed model ordinance and background materials
- ✓ 02/15/2012 PC workshop where costs and benefits of the model ordinance were discussed and alternatives to the model ordinance were explored
- ✓ 02/29/2012 CC expressed their continued interest in having the PC explore options for a historic preservation program
- ✓ 03/27/2012 Staff made presentation to DWR and members of the Woodland Historic Museum Society
- ✓ 04/19/2012 PC asked staff to draft a recommendation to Council

CMJ