



City and Borough of Juneau, Alaska Historic Resources Advisory Committee

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XXXXXX 00, 2024

CBJ Human Resources Committee

Ella Adkison, Chair; Wade Bryson; Maureen Hall; Neil Steininger

Subject: Historic Resources Advisory Committee

The Juneau Historic Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC) has an identity crisis. In 1987 HRAC¹ was established to advise the city on preserving Juneau's unique and rich history. Unfortunately, over the years support and commitment of the assembly has waned. In the early 1990s Juneau developed a historic downtown improvement plan. Implementation included updates and improvements to downtown utilities, streets, and amenities such as period reflective lighting fixtures, flower baskets, and decorative banners. The city's improvements sparked a revitalization by private property owners who restored the luster of their historic buildings giving downtown a new lease on life.

Along with establishing HRAC, the city adopted historic district standards that would preserve visual aesthetics of the downtown area. The community development department budget featured a line item for historic preservation activities and public education of the importance of preserving historic buildings to keep downtown a vital area. A design review board was established to review all improvements in the downtown historic district. Contemporary designs are not restricted if they retain the pedestrian scale and harmony of the original district.

Ultimately the design review board was eliminated, the required historic district development permit was eliminated, the preservation budget was eliminated, enforcement was eliminated, and now application of the standards often falls through the cracks. Unfortunately, the loss of these important preservation tools has, in part, put the viability of the downtown historic district in peril. Currently there are approximately eighteen vacant storefronts in the district.

Other pressures have or will affect the viability of the historic district including the expansion of tourist related businesses on South Franklin Street, the proposed new cruise ship complex west of the district, moving City Hall out of the district area, and the Gold Belt proposal for a cruise ship complex on West Douglas Island.

¹ (Title 49.10.410) Historic Resources Advisory Committee:

- Reviewing and making recommendations about local projects that might affect properties identified in the local Historic Preservation Plan.
- Reviewing and developing nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for properties within CBJ.
- Cooperating and consulting with the Assembly, the Historic District Commission, the Community Development Department, and the State Historic Commission on matters concerning historical districts and historic, prehistoric, and archaeological preservation in the City and Borough.
- Reviewing and making recommendations about the collections, exhibitions, education programs, long-range plans, and other pertinent activities of the Juneau-Douglas City Museum.
- Performing other actions which are necessary and proper to carry out the above duties.

Historic preservation is an important element of a community's character, identity, and viability. Historic preservation goals and objectives are identified in the CBJ Comprehensive Plan (2013), Historic and Cultural Preservation Plan (2020), and the *Draft* Blueprint Downtown Plan which states:

“Juneau’s unique history and heritage is an asset worthy of investment. These assets attract tourists, shoppers, businesses, and residents. Over the years, many historic buildings have been lost, making those that remain even more important if downtown is to keep a link to its past. Designated historic landmarks and the centrally located Downtown Historic District are invaluable cultural resources that can contribute substantially to downtown’s economic vitality and identity.”

For many years, Juneau has been a leader, throughout Alaska, in its historic preservation efforts. As the State Capital, it is appropriate to be a model for the rest of the state regarding responsible preservation of historic and cultural resources. Juneau was one of the first communities in Alaska to meet the requirements of the Certified Local Government (CLG) program established by the federal National Historic Preservation Act. This program offers resources and funding opportunities to assist communities with historic preservation activities. Juneau has received CLG grants amounting to \$509,628 for preservation projects and training (see list on page three of this letter). For the last three grant cycles Juneau has not applied for any grants due to no budget available for staff to support historic preservation.

HRAC promotes the reinvigoration of historic preservation efforts. The recommendations below are not seen as all-inclusive but would “get the ball rolling” back to the level of preservation activities seen in the past. The Committee recommends the following:

- A. Re-establish budget for ½ FTE staff position at the Community Development Department for historic preservation activities that support the goals and objectives identified in the adopted Historic and Cultural Preservation Plan. The highest priority activities would be:
 - a. Submitting applications for CLG grant assistance and providing in-kind staff match to nominate the Juneau Townsite district to the National Register of Historic Places.
 - b. Allow staff and HRAC to work with “Juneau Main Street” program and its efforts to revitalize the Downtown Historic District.
 - c. Reinstate the required permit process for development in the historic district to alleviate projects from falling through the cracks. This was begun about three years ago but has not proceeded due to staffing limitations.
 - d. Provide outreach to property and business owners about the importance of preserving the downtown historic district and enforcement through the development and sign standards.

HRAC appreciates the value of the Human Resource Committee’s (HRC) time thus this letter has tried to capture the most timely and relevant issues at this point. HRAC is more than willing to further discuss historic preservation issues with HRC at its convenience.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our recommendations.

Sincerely, for the Juneau Historic Resources Advisory Committee.

Gary Gillette, HRAC Chair

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Juneau CLG Grant Awards

Historic Preservation Planning Grants

Historic Preservation Plan, Phase I. 2015; Phase II, 2017.
Juneau Memorial Building Use and Preservation Plan. 2012.
Juneau Downtown Historic District Design Standards Evaluation. 2005, 2006, 2007.
Historic/Cultural Preservation Plan. 1995, 1996.

Survey and Inventory Grants

Treadwell Mining Complex Historic Properties Study. 2009.
Historic Preservation Database. 2008, 2010.
Merchant's Wharf Historical Survey: Historic Property Evaluation of Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar
Perseverance Trail Survey, Last Chance Basin to Silver Bow Basin. 2003.
Historic Building Survey of the Casey-Shattuck Neighborhood. 2000, 2003.
Historic Cemeteries in Douglas, Alaska. 1994.
Inventory and Survey of Historic Shipwrecks. (6) 1991.
Chicken Ridge Neighborhood Historic Building Survey. 1991
Report of the Treadwell Historic Resources Survey. 1990.
Report of the Juneau Dairy Farming Historic Resources Survey. 1990.
Historic Structures Report for Jualpa Mine Camp of the Alaska Juneau Gold Mining Company. 1989.
Douglas Townsite Historic Building Survey. 1988.
Juneau Townsite Historic Building Survey. 1987. Updated Survey. 2021, 2022

National Register of Historic Places Grants

Juneau Memorial Library Nomination. 2004
Historic Cemeteries of Juneau and Douglas, Alaska. 1996.
Chicken Ridge National Register Nomination. 1992.

Historic Preservation Development/Predevelopment Grants

Alaska-Juneau Gold Mine Power Towers. 2014.
Treadwell Saltwater Pump House Stabilization. 2013.
Stabilization of Historic Structures at Jualpa Mine Camp Historic District. 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2006.

Historic Preservation Education Grants

Treadwell Mine Interpretive Panels, 2017.
Evergreen Cemetery Inventory and Interpretation. 2014.
Treadwell Mine Signs and Interpretive Shelter. 2012.
Treadwell and Jualpa Mines Interpretive Signs. 2010.
Downtown Juneau Interpretive Signs. 2005.
Interpretive Signs for Traditional Places. 2001.
Historic Preservation Web Page. 1998, 2000.

Commission Training Grants

National Alliance of Preservation Commissions Forum, 1999, 2005, 2008, 2014, 2015, 2017.
Local Historic Preservation Commission Training. 2009, 2012.
CLG Workshop. 2000.
Economic Perspectives: Making the Historic Preservation Connection Workshop. 1993, 1994.
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