

Cyndy King

From: Ron Parsons <captronpar@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, July 1, 2024 12:20 PM
To: Participate
Subject: Forest Service Park.

Please leave the FS Park as is. It needs a facelift... painting, paver work, general landscaping. Let's preserve what little is left of old Ketchum. Thanks.

Sent from my iPhone

Cyndy King

From: HP Boyle <boylehp@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 30, 2024 8:50 AM
To: Participate
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT for Item 10 City Council Meeting 7/1/24

From TheKetchumSun.substack.com

ISSUE #11: Let's Relegate the Historic Preservation Commission to History

It is a bureaucracy that can be absorbed by the P&Z Commission



[PERRY BOYLE](#)

APR 19, 2024

I appreciate it when people volunteer their time to contribute to the City of Ketchum. We have a scarce number of people who apply to City commissions. When what they are doing is a waste of their time and City/taxpayer resources, why do we persist in it?

We Have Scarce Resources; Let's Not Waste Them

I sat through the HPC meeting on April 2. That is ninety minutes of my life I can't get back. Once again, nothing was accomplished that could not have been done better (and a lot faster) in another forum.

The Planning staff presented the Ketchum Community Survey to the HPC. Then the commissioners asked a lot of questions that had little to do with their charter, like why can't we survey tourists and let them have a say in the Comp Plan. They commented that tourism is critical to the economy and that all the cities of the WRV are economically related. They want historic preservation to be more prominently mentioned in the Comp Plan values. You can see the Mayor's influence here—a commission that is supposed to preserve Ketchum has been co-opted into developing it.

I am all for historic preservation, but I am against waste and bad governance. Below, I will list a more effective approach than the one that the City is pursuing.

The City Planning Department is incredibly busy with processing development applications and city planning. To waste several hours of their time to inform the HPC about something they could have learned at a Council or P&Z meeting is a misuse of substantial taxpayer resources. In the last budget, the Planning Department ascribed 4% of its costs to the HPC. Is this the highest and best use of their scarce time?

Three Years Spent—For What?

Why would the HPC waste an hour on this? My answer is that they don't have much to do. The Mayor and Council set up the HPC almost three years ago (April 2021).²

In that time, here are its “achievements”;

- **created criteria for what defines a historic building** (done by a consultant; took three months). Adopted July 2021. The building has to be >50 years old, be of architectural significance, have some cultural significance and/or have been occupied by someone of historical interest. These criteria were actually created by a City Commission in 2005 (my mother-in-law was on that one). 15 years later, the Council took money out of the budget to pay for a consultant to reinvent the wheel.
- **approved the list of historic buildings** presented to them. October 2021. This also largely came from the 2005 Commission, but they re-litigated every structure. Of course, they didn't bother to inform all the owners of these buildings that their property rights were being curtailed.
- **approved the demolition of Formula Sports** in November 2021. They spent two hours trying to decide if it was historic and, if it was, whether they possessed the power to prevent demolition—they didn't think they did, but they did. In the end, they bought the developer's argument that the building would cost too much to repair (they didn't get any official estimate of that), so let them demo it. Guess whose campaign HQ it was?
- **approved moving A Taste of Thai log cabin** closer to the street so its back lot could be developed. October 2022. Yes, they saved the building, but look at what is going up behind it.
- **denied the movement of a historic building from Ketchum to Hailey**. October 2023. If you take a historic building out of Ketchum, you haven't preserved Ketchum's history in Ketchum. The owner appealed, and the Council recently re-

affirmed the HPC ruling. My guess is this ends in court now that the owner has exhausted the administrative remedies.

- ***draft of Ketchum HPC Handbook*** (done by a consultant). April 2024. Three years. Still a draft. And, to my reading of it, it is misleading to the property owner.

I estimate that the total list of accomplishments could have been achieved in less than an eight-hour day. Notice that they do something substantive only about once a year. Do we need a commission for that? Everything the HPC does can easily be done by the P&Z for less time and less money.

Non-Residents Shouldn't Dictate Resident Property Rights

The HPC is also bad governance. Its membership is not restricted to Ketchum residents, and the mayor can appoint anyone he wants to it. Yet the HPC can stop a Ketchum property owner from demolishing a building. It is bad governance for non-residents to tell locals what they can do. That's why serving on the P&Z Commission requires Ketchum residency.

A Better Approach: Carrot Rather than Stick

In my view, prevention of demolition is a "taking" of someone's property rights without compensation; that seems...wrong. This is Idaho, not New York or California. There is no eminent domain in Idaho, except for public safety. Yet, isn't that what the HPC is doing?

If the community wants a building preserved, they should provide incentives to the property owner rather than "taking" it from them. We do have some incentives for the owner of a historic property. They can get relief from setbacks and FAR if they move it on their lot (like A Taste of Thai). They can avoid providing parking. They can get unspecified relief from the building code. Would these be enough for you to preserve a building? Maybe you as a civic-minded person, but they weren't for the owner of Formula Sports or the owner of 180 Leadville.

The Idaho Statute governing historic preservation (Title 67 Chapter 46) specifically grants HPCs the power to buy a "transfer of development right" (TDR) for the purposes of historic preservation. Or the power to purchase a historical easement. The City could also sponsor a charitable trust, like the Wood River Land Trust, to bring private money to historic preservation and be able to offer tax breaks to property owners.

Ketchum does not offer any of these options. They have a big stick and a tiny carrot. That doesn't feel like Idaho to me.

1

No on-site parking seems to be offered to prospective tenants.

2

The HPC has no by-laws. They aren't required.