

From: [Participate](#)
To: [Maureen Puddicombe](#); [Suzanne Frick](#); [Suzanne Bathke](#)
Subject: FW: Public Comment to Historical Preservation Commission
Date: Friday, October 01, 2021 12:34:17 PM

Public comment.

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-----Original Message-----

From: H Boyle <Boylehp@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 28, 2021 6:42 PM
To: Participate <participate@ketchumidaho.org>
Subject: Public Comment to Historical Preservation Commission

If my comments have been interpreted by commissioners as anti-HPC, that is not correct. I support historic preservation. Ketchum has numerous current examples of losing its character for the profit of out of state developers who take advantage of our zoning code and inconsistent governance. That is one reason why we have an HPC to protect the historic nature of our town.

I recognize that the Historical Preservation Commission is still “working out the kinks” in its process, and I appreciate the public-minded and unpaid service of the commissioners. I also recognize that these are often difficult decisions to make.

My concern is not so much with particular buildings on the HPC list, but ensuring that City commissions operate to a high standard of governance and transparency in their deliberative process. After attending countless City meetings, it is my observation that, over at least the past four years, our City has created a number of governance issues throughout its administration, and that the City has not adapted well to creating transparency and encouraging public participation in the time of Covid. These are not HPC specific issues.

As noted by several commissioners, the Sept 28 meeting pointed out the opportunities for further refinement of the process in HPC determinations.

It might be helpful for the HPC to work out a written process not just for the criteria, but also for the information required from the applicant, from the staff, and what the commissioners' due diligence process is. The aim should be that the public, the commissioners, property owners, and prospective developers have a clear rule-set.

In particular:

- Commissioner visits: I would recommend a policy requirement that each commissioner visit the site in order to vote to enhance public confidence in the process. It seems like that occurs, but I suggest to enter into the public record for findings of facts that all the voting commissioners have examined the property.
- Cost of repairs: if the criteria for demolition is merely a requirement for “significant upgrades and repairs,” as Commissioner Holland remarked (at 5:18pm) this could be used to justify the demolition of almost any building. I propose that the HPC require a structural engineer report for a demolition application, and set some dollar or percentage of value threshold for repair/restoration costs to justify demolition, even when a building would otherwise be deemed by the Commission to be historic.
- Future use: in both of the presentations today, much was made of the future use of the projects. This is not in the ordinance and was not in the criteria adopted by the HPC. It seems irrelevant as to whether an existing building is historic or not. I was concerned an unidentified commissioner's statement that future use sways his vote (at 5:22pm). “Growth and progress” in Ketchum is the purview of the P&Z and Council, not the HPC. I suggest that Chairman Mead instruct the staff not to include future use in staff reports, and for the staff to make it clear to

applicants that future use is not a criteria for the HPC.

- Bias: no A-frame is architecturally worthy of historic preservation? On its face, that cannot be true, despite one unidentified commissioner's strong statement to the contrary. Indeed, the architect for the Formula Sports site disagreed with him, even though the vote went against his applicant's request.

- What happens after a denial vote? Ms. Frick noted that a tie is a denial. One unidentified commissioner was not happy with the vote outcome and wanted to re-open deliberations after a motion was made and a vote taken. He then tried to assert "facts" not in evidence to get his way. That approach could result in a terrible governance process and is patently unfair and disrespectful to the other commissioners. I suggest that, in the case of a denial, the HPC refers to the options set out by Ms Frick and inform the applicant of what the applicant's options are.

I applaud Chairman Mead for making the vote process clear to the commissioners. The applicant can always come back for a re-hearing. Given the current rule set, they could do that at every HPC meeting in the future, without limitation (maybe after a 3d denial there should be a cooling off period?).

Mr. Mead's points on health, safety and welfare as a demolition criteria were spot on and should be memorialized in the HPC process document. His comments that financial hardship might be taken into account in the determination process warrants further consideration by the Commission, as that could be an arbitrary determination.

My frustration with the governance of Ketchum has led me to run for Mayor. I have a plan for how we can provide financial incentives to property owners for historical preservation. I agree with Commissioner Holland's point that the carrot is preferable to the stick. Regardless of the outcome of the election, I will work with whomever is elected to generate an incentive plan.

I respect Chairman Mead's comment that everyone is entitled to their opinion, and public comments do not require a response from the commissioners. I did not expect a response in the meeting. The commissioners are empowered to make the decisions—this is not a referendum process. My position is that members of the public who wish to be decision makers should run for office, or submit their names for public service on a commission.

If any commissioner finds value in, or objects to, any of my public comments, I would be happy to discuss them. When comments do not pertain to a particular matter before the Commission, I do not think it be an ex-parte conversation. My personal email is boylehp@yahoo.com and my phone is 208-806-1305 (you may publish my contact info on the record).

Respectfully, your neighbor,

Perry Boyle
Ketchum