

2016 PORTLAND HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION STATE OF THE CITY PRESERVATION REPORT

IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO CITY COUNCIL, **PRINT** YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND EMAIL.

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**STATEMENT BY CONSTANCE BEAUMONT
ON
STATE OF THE CITY PRESERVATION REPORT
DECEMBER 7, 2016**

My name is Constance Beaumont and I live in Southeast Portland.

I'd like to endorse the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission's recommendations in its *State of the City Preservation Report*.

In particular, I hope the Council will seek repeal of the state's "owner consent" law, which effectively gives people the option of opting out of public laws they don't like. Property owners are not allowed to veto determinations that scenic or natural resources are so significant that they warrant protection; they should not be allowed to do so in the case of historic resources. All of the Goal 5 resources – scenic, natural, and historic – should be treated alike.

Thanks to the owner-consent law, cities in Oregon lack an option that cities in most other states enjoy: "conservation districts." These are a kind of "preservation lite." They allow cities elsewhere to ensure that new homes in historic areas are compatible with older ones, but the conservation district regulations are often less restrictive than those governing historic districts. Portland needs to bring back the conservation district option by getting rid of the owner-consent law.

My last point: Let's encourage not just more higher density – but better-designed higher density. There are exceptions, but much of Portland's new development is generic, nondescript, and often jarringly incompatible with what's around it. There would be less pushback against higher density if the city and the development community could devise strategies for encouraging better designed new buildings – ones that people will *want* to preserve 50 or 100 years hence.

Density is needed for lots of environmental reasons, but it can be done poorly or it can be done well.



December 7, 2016

City Council
City of Portland

Re. Testimony on State of Preservation in Portland

Restore Oregon endorses enthusiastically the State-of-the-City Preservation Report submitted by the Historic Landmarks Commission. And rather than restate the points of the report, I'm simply going to ask you to take them seriously and ACT on them.

Taking stock of, managing, protecting and actively incentivizing the adaptive reuse of the irreplaceable historic fabric of this city is not something to be brushed aside. Why? Because it is the historic homes, neighborhoods, churches, theaters, schools, fire stations, and storefronts that make Portland, PORTLAND, and NOT Any-old-place-else, USA.

It's what makes us so grateful to return home to Portland when we've visited some other city lacking the sense of *Place* and real *community* we often take for granted.

Our historic buildings represent perhaps the largest cache of renewable energy we have.

But more than this, our historic buildings and districts are enormous economic assets. This rich and authentic character is what attracts new businesses, jobs, and tourists. Where do companies moving to Portland want to locate? In a converted old warehouse. Where do people want to go out to dinner? The quirky old pub that used to be a fire station. Where do they want to shop? That boutique that used to be a garage.

If we lose our historic places, we don't just lose our heritage, we lose a huge economic advantage.

Portland's unique older neighborhoods and streetcar commercial corridors are under greater threat than at any time in 50 years. So in addition to echoing Landmark's call for a better RIPSAC proposal and updating our historic inventory, I urge the City to play a leadership role in state legislation that would throw some urgently-needed weight in the scale on the side of preservation. I urge that the City's legislative agenda include:

1. Fix Oregon's broken historic designation process – repeal or amend “owner consent” so that local jurisdictions have a say in what happens to historic properties and the cultural and economic benefits they bring to their communities. We are the only state in the Union for which the process of historic designation is completely one-sided, and that is very bad policy.
2. Introduce legislation for a Seismic Retrofitting Incentive as proposed in LC 1984. Given the current budget shortfall in Salem, this is our best bet for a meaningful new economic incentive for restoration and reuse of historic buildings. It would be hypocritical to claim that retaining historic resources is a priority, as our Comp Plan states, OR to mandate seismic upgrades, without meaningful financial tools to do so.

What you do in the next year will determine what Portland looks like and feels like for generations.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peggy Moretti". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Peggy Moretti
Executive Director

Comments by Jim Heuer in Support of the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission's Report on Historic Preservation before City Council

December 7, 2016

My name is Jim Heuer, and I'm here today representing the Portland Coalition for Historic Resources of which I'm the Chairperson.

We applaud the message provided by the Landmarks Commission, and we strongly support the concerns and recommendations that they have presented. We also want to commend them for their vigor in pursuing their responsibility for advising City Council and City bureaus on matters of historic preservation. We'd also like to second their comments about the work of Brandon Specer-Hartle who has hit the ground running as BPS Historic Preservation Planner.

Some comments on specifics:

Notably the Commission's recommendation for updating the Historic Resources Inventory has been repeated this year for what I believe is the 8th time in 8 years. Little has been done by the City to fulfill its duty to update the HRI, and the figleaf covering this extended period of neglect of the Inventory has been the confusion surrounding the Owner Consent law and the language in the State's Goal 5 rules which provide jurisdictions authority to perform such inventories. But the inventory is extremely important, in part because Portland is an old city. The percentage of our buildings constructed prior to 1920 is comparable to that of Philadelphia and other major eastern cities. If we are to continue to grow without destroying what makes Portland a great, livable, and yes, beautiful city, we will need to have a much clearer and more comprehensive understanding of what is important to be preserved and what is not.

The Commission's report mentioned the ongoing revisions of Goal 5 rules, and as a member of the Regulatory Advisory Committee working on those revisions, one of my personal objectives in our discussions has been to bring clarity to the Goal 5 rules to strip away that figleaf of confusion that has stymied Portland action on its Inventory. I believe that the RACs proposed new language will provide a degree of clarity that can allow all jurisdictions in the State to inventory and designate historic resources. I would urge the City leadership to become engaged in the process when the Land Conservation and Development Commission meets in January to consider these new rules. Mr. Spencer-Hartle is also a member of the RAC, and I expect he will be providing your staff guidance on how you can help move the LCDC in the right direction.

Finally, one area not touched on by the Commission's report, is the state of administration of Portland's protections for historic resources through Historic Resource Review by the Bureau of Development Services. It's been several years now since this Council adopted the Historic Resources Code Improvement Project recommendations. Lessons have been learned about how HRCIP works, and BDS has often struggled with achieving predictability and consistency in their rulings. This problem has been exacerbated by the obsolescence of most of the district-

specific Historic Design Guidelines and the vagueness of the fall-back guidelines applied in Irvington .

With several neighborhoods currently exploring National Register Historic District designations, and with the prospect that the Goal 5 rule changes may make locally designated Historic Conservation Districts practical again, we need another review of the Historic Resource Review process coupled with new thinking on how to update and expand our Historic Design Guidelines. The Portland Coalition for Historic Resources will be working with BDS, BPS, and the Landmarks Commission on this subject as one of its highest priorities in 2017, and we hope that this will result in proposals for code changes by the end of the year.

Parsons, Susan

From: Mh Kincaid <JAMASU88@msn.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 30, 2016 11:39 PM
To: Moore-Love, Karla; Parsons, Susan
Cc: Hales, Mayor; Commissioner Saltzman; Commissioner Fish; Commissioner Novick; Commissioner Fritz; Spencer-Hartle, Brandon
Subject: Testimony for report to Council on Historic Landmarks Commission Dec 7th
Attachments: Landmarks testimony 07dec16.pdf

All,

Attached please find my testimony in regard to the Historic Landmarks Commission annual report being presented to Council on Dec 7th.

I am sorry I couldn't be there in person to deliver this.

Maryhelen

Testimony for the Historic Landmark Commission report to Council
December 7, 2016

I am not able to deliver this testimony in person so am submitting it in writing.

I am not submitting this testimony as the chair of DRAC as we have not met formally to discuss or review this report. Rather I am submitting this testimony as a result of my involvement with DRAC's committee work on demolitions and deconstruction. I participated on both committees, and these comments reflect my experiences.

Deconstruction is a form of demolition. The Portland Historic Landmark Commission (PHLC) states in its report that it supports deconstruction "as it slows demolition and is far more sustainable than adding an entire house to the landfill." While the entire house doesn't go to the landfill, deconstruction *is* demolition. The house (or structure) is demolished by hand, not large machinery. This misleading statement about deconstruction and demolition needs to be made more truthfully and responsibly. I support deconstruction as a viable and sustainable way to demolish a house, but believe providing this misconception is a disservice to the general public by saying "deconstruction slows demolition", when the only "slow" part is the actual time it takes to demolish the house. The length of time to deconstruct in turn adds costs to the future development. I *do* believe there are ways to slow demolition and the following comments reflect those ideas.

In my role as DRAC chair I have been working to find ways to make the permitting process work for those developers wanting to do internal conversions and build "middle housing". Trying to find ways to make "affordable housing" really affordable not just deceptively descriptive. There are projects being pursued and they should be funded. The PHLRC mentions making the process for restoration, conversions and renovations more affordable for historic structures.

Council should absolutely fund the Historic Resources Inventory project and get it done as soon as possible. Being able to identify houses of importance will save houses. I have not found a single person who disagrees that an updated HRI is needed. How often does that happen? Everyone agrees on the need to fund a project? This is an easy decision.

Related to the HRI, and not mentioned in the PHLC report, is the need to fund a land bank that would support and assist in the purchase of historic houses so they could be converted or renovated. This suggestion will also come up in the report to Council on the demolition delay ordinance. Houses are not being saved because it is not equitable for a landowner/developer/neighborhood/agency to save them. With a funding source to support the process and a program to administer the sale and the transition to the future management of the house I (and many others) believe demolitions truly would decrease.

I believe "we" are trying to save houses, provide opportunities for those folks who have the skills and experience to use sustainable and cost effective ways to save the houses, with the end result being housing that is both truthfully affordable and provides the needed infill development.

I commend the work of the PHLC, and also a kudos to Brandon Spencer-Hartle who I believe is an excellent addition to BPS and their work on historic structures in Portland.

Maryhelen Kincaid
2030 NE Blue Heron Dr
Portland, OR 97211

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