



Courthouse Preservation Committee (CPC)

AGENDA

**Courthouse Preservation Committee
Courthouse Centennial Room**

October 21, 2021, at 4:45 pm

- I. INTRODUCTION AND VISITOR COMMENTS**
- II. AGENDA REVIEW**
- III. ADMINISTRATION**
 - Approval of Minutes
- IV. NEW BUSINESS**
 - Discussion on changes in building and affects to tours – Paul Wallsinger
 - Update on the Justice System Improvement Program Proposal – Paul
 - Miscellaneous updates
- V. NEXT MEETING**
 - TBD
- VI. ADJOURNMENT**



MINUTES

BENTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION COMMITTEE (CPC)

October 21, 2021
4:45 p.m. ~ 5:45 p.m.

Courthouse Centennial Room

Meeting was called to order at 4:46

Committee Members Present: Judy Juntunen, Peter Barnhisel, Scott McClure, Jill Van Buren

Staff Members Present: Paul Wallsinger, Levon Atwood

Recorder: Gabrielle Dibble, Public Works AA

- I. **Administration:** The minutes for April 15, 2021, were approved.
- II. After calling the meeting to order, Judy shared Judge Gardner's obituary with the committee in recognition and appreciation of his many years of service to the community.
- III. **New Business: Discussion of changes in Courthouse, Tours, and JSIP project:**
 - a. Christmas at the Courthouse: Paul and Levon shared that Christmas Décor is in the process of being acquired earlier this year to avoid a last minute rush for the holidays. Local schools will be contributing some decorations which will be supplemented with newer décor that is being purchased by the County. The goal

is to slowly add more high-quality decorations to our supply over the years and update/replace older items such as lights.

- b. District Attorney Remodel: The new Kalapuya Building is nearing completion of Phase I. Records and Elections will be vacating their space in the Courthouse to move to their new space in Kalapuya in the next six weeks or so (projections subject to change). The District Attorney plans to move into the basement after R&E vacates.
 - i. Vault doors will need removed and stored. The committee would like to find a safe place to stow the historical vault doors and any other historical fixtures that have been or will need removed to accommodate current needs until a time comes when the Courthouse needs to be vacated by the courts and restored to its original state.
 - ii. Historical records kept in the basement will need addressed when the DA moves into the space. Quantity of these files is unknown at the moment. Jill offered to speak with James Morales, Director of R&E, to discuss where these records can be safely moved. One idea was to offer them to the library repository but concerns were raised around regulations for certain types of records.
- c. State Court Remodel:
 - i. New electrical installed without the need for any wire molding
 - ii. New carpet installed
 - iii. New coat of paint
 - iv. Replaced old lighting with LED
 - v. New furniture solutions to offer a modern, functional space without having to permanently alter the interior of the courthouse.
- d. Updates on the Kalapuya Building remodel and the status of the Crisis Resource Center were discussed.
- e. Courthouse Tours: Once R&E moves out of the basement, the DA will occupy the 3rd and 4th floors as well as the basement. This may limit the tours to public hallways, the attic space, and stair case. Tours have been closed for a year and once they resume, care will need to be taken regarding DA area security. Judy and Jill offered to meet with and discuss tour details with Chris Westfall, Court Administrator, and Judge Williams.

IV. Old Business: Follow-up of JSIP Comments from October 13, 2021: The Justice System Improvement Project went out for public comment. There was a lot of concern from the public on the locations being vetted for the new jail. Some

comments suggested deconstructing the Courthouse to address the needs being addressed by the JSIP. The bond measure for this project will be pushed to Fall of 2023 in order to avoid competing with a school board levy.

- a. Citizens are most concerned with potential proximity of jail to neighborhoods but do not seem to recognize the critical state of the current jail and law enforcement buildings downtown – which were originally built in 1976 as temporary structures. The jail is difficult and expensive to maintain in a safe and functional manner, and seems in danger of condemnation.
- b. The committee noted how the needs of the courts and the status of the Courthouse were not mentioned in the public meeting. Selection of a site for a new jail was postponed. Options are limited for the county and a more holistic and creative approach may be needed to address the complex needs of the JSIP. A new Courthouse is supported by the community, while a new jail is not. The committee believes these two issues need to be addressed together and framed as a larger issue to the community – not just a jail problem.
 - i. Paul pointed out how the Courthouse was originally built for a county of 25,000 people and the cost/benefit analysis of bringing the building up to date with seismic upgrades. Details may be reviewed in April 15, 2021, meeting minutes under “Old Business”. A retrofit has been part of the discussion for many years with no action yet taken. Best case scenario with a retrofit would likely give the Courthouse another 30-40 years of use before another upgrade would be needed.
 - ii. The Committee discussed reaching out to other historical associations throughout the state and the nation to gather ideas on how to utilize the Courthouse if and when it is retired as the active County Courthouse. Judy offered to begin reaching out for ideas and possible funding opportunities.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m.