

KING COUNTY LANDMARKS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES*

*October 25, 2018
Tipping Floor Conference Room (#7255)
King Street Center, 201 S. Jackson
Seattle, Washington
(Approved 11/29/2018)*

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Poppi Handy, Chair; Caroline Lemay, Vice Chair; Cristy Lake, Ella Moore, Amber Earley, Rebecca Ossa, Amy Blue

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED: David Pilgrim

STAFF PRESENT: Jennifer Meisner, Todd Scott, Sarah Steen

GUESTS: (King County) Tom Minichillo, Susan Olive, Trinh Truong, Jessy Jose, Larry Jaramillo, Bob Milet, Katie Merrell. (Project Consultants, HNTB) Ellen Brenden, Tim Lane

CALL TO ORDER: Handy called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm. Introductions of new commissioners and staff were made.

Convene KING COUNTY LANDMARKS COMMISSION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Handy asked for any changes/corrections to the September 27, 2018 meeting minutes. There were none.

Moore/Lake moved to approve the September 27, 2018 minutes of the King County Landmarks Commission. The motion passed 4-0 (Earley, Blue and Ossa abstained as they was not present at that meeting).

OTHER BUSINESS: *Presentation on Baring Bridge Remediation Options.* General introductions were made by commissioners, KCHP program staff, KC Roads staff and project consultants. Minichillo explained that given the complexity and potential impact on the timber-trestle landmark bridge, the project team wanted to brief the commission on alternatives analysis for the Baring Bridge before a final design has been selected. He described the project location as well as the type and history of the bridge – it is a timber suspension bridge over the south fork of the Skykomish River, located near Baring, along Index Road off of Highway 2. Minichillo presented available historic photos of the bridge, and noted that the c.1930 iteration is the bridge form we have today, though the bulk of the material is newer due to all the repair and restoration work done on the bridge over the years. Minichillo noted the bridge was designated as a King County Landmark in 1999 for its association with regional history of logging and mining, and for its engineering importance as a rare example of a timber suspension bridge. There are no other vehicle timber suspension bridges remaining in the county historic structures inventory.

*May include minutes for cities who have interlocal historic preservation agreements with King County.

Mileti described the history and structure of the bridge, visually deconstructing the purpose, current condition, recurring issues and repair history of each structural element. He noted that one difficulty with bridge repair work is that the bridge is the sole access to the community on the south side of the river, so the work has to be scheduled to limit bridge closures to less than a day. Decay of wood members of the bridge structure is a constant problem, and most of the fixes are temporary ones. Truong outlined the key issues being considered in the project team's alternatives analysis. Aside from community access, safety is a significant concern, as emergency vehicles cannot cross the bridge due to load constraints. The level of ongoing maintenance required to keep the bridge functional is fairly excessive. Truong stated that the bridge is too narrow, is steadily deteriorating and is structurally insufficient under current engineering requirements.

Truong described the scope of the current project and the process to determine appropriate next steps. Following a typical King County project organization structure, the project team will prepare an analysis of the bridge type, size and location. Then they'll develop feasible alternatives, prepare engineering cost estimates and construction schedules for each; recommend the preferred alternative; develop the final design; and acquire necessary right-of ways. The project is currently in phase one. Construction will take two years, right-of-way acquisition will take 3+ years. Public access to the south side of the river must be maintained whatever the preferred alternative.

Lane described the form requirements of the new bridge, as it conformed to current (2016) design and engineering standards. The bridge will be widened to 20 feet, from ~8 feet currently. It will include a future potential of two vehicle lanes, with one vehicle lane and one pedestrian lane initially. The bridge length will be increased to 314 feet from 272 feet to pull the piers back from river's ordinary high water mark and above the 100 year flood level.

Lane also detailed the identified alternatives involved in project analysis, including: continuing the current levels of annual repair/maintenance; extensive rehabilitation of existing bridge; leaving the historic bridge in place as pedestrian bridge and building a new vehicle bridge adjoining; and demolishing the historic bridge to construct a new bridge in the same location. Lane included a comparative table of various bridge structures under consideration.

Brenden further detailed the differences between the bridge structures under consideration, as well as the next steps in analysis process. Public outreach and public meetings will be undertaken, as well as professional workshops to examine the options and solicit feedback. The project team will also revisit the commission when the preferred alternative is selected.

(End of presentation)

Moore asked why the right-of-way acquisition appears last in project phase schedule. Truong stated this was the convention for King County planning – the acquisition process will actually begin during the design phase of the project. Moore asked who owns the properties surrounding the bridge, Brenden stated there are private properties around the project site which will be affected regardless of option selected, but how many will depend on what alternative is chosen. Access for construction activities is a concern. If the historic bridge is removed, the team anticipates having to build temporary trestle to provide access during construction. Minichillo identified what properties were most likely to be impacted on a projected map of the area.

Earley asked the age of structures on south side of river. Minichillo answered that the buildings on the north side are likely older since they don't rely on bridge. He thinks structures on the south side of the river are all post-1930, when the modern bridge structure was built over the river.

Lake asked how wide a new bridge would be. Minichillo and Brenden answered between 20 and 24 feet, roughly 3x the current width of the bridge. Scott asked where the most likely locations for the new bridge would be if old bridge was to remain. Minichillo stated the new bridge would be parallel to the existing bridge on the downstream side. Lemay asked how close the two bridges could be, Brenden answered they expected to leave a gap of about 10-12 feet to allow for maintenance. Meisner asked Minichillo to estimate how much material in the existing bridge is original. He said none from 1899, and from 1930 only two of the suspension cables remain on either side of the deck. The cable towers were reconstructed in the 1950s, and pickets were a later pedestrian safety addition. Many pickets are damaged annually by vehicles due to the narrowness of the bridge. Minichillo thinks community residents are regularly exceeding the 10-ton load limit for septic services, construction material delivery, landscaping, etc.

Blue asked if bridge is retained as pedestrian bridge, would it still require repairs/improvements outlined in project alternative. Mileti said likely the same level rehabilitation work will be necessary even if the bridge is converted to pedestrian-only. Minichillo followed up, noting there was less stress on structure without vehicles, but some rehabilitation would still be necessary, and could likely be accomplished as part of the construction phase of a new bridge. Truong detailed the severe deterioration of the tower caps supporting the cables across the bridge, saying the construction crew can't get a crane to the far side of the river since it would exceed the load capacity of the bridge.

Minichillo notes that if you look at the history of the baring bridge, and other timber suspension bridges that once existed around King County, it becomes clear that the average life of this type of bridge is 20-30 years – wood suspension bridges either fall down or are completely rebuilt.

Moore asked what the floor (decking) material would be on the new suspension bridge. Minichillo answered concrete would be what a modern bridge would have. Lemay asked how the road/approach will connect with the new bridge. Brenden stated it depended on which bridge type is chosen, as suspension bridges have anchorages that extend inland well beyond the bridge structure. The anchorage points will be designed to not reroute existing roads.

Handy asked if the public had been informed of the expected bridge work. Minichillo said that previous repair work on the bridge involved community outreach because of the intermittent bridge closure, but that the commission was the first presentation given on the current plan outside of the internal project team. Scott commented that it was positive that the site has always been a suspension bridge, and it looks like the most likely alternative would be continuing that tradition. Minichillo stated that for more than 100 years a suspension bridge had been at this location.

Blue asked if the bridge was replaced would it lose its landmark status, and would any of it be salvaged as an in-situ monument. Minichillo said while the new modern bridge would not be a landmark, interpretive signage on the history of the site would be part of a replacement COA. Scott said typically when historic bridges were replaced components of the bridge were

incorporated into on-site interpretive exhibits or art, citing Tolt and South Park as examples. Minichillo said the 1930 cable would likely be kept from this bridge, accompanied by photos and interpretive signage about the history of timber suspension bridges on that site. Meisner asked if the bridge was listed on the National Register, Minichillo said it was not, and may not be eligible for the NR due to the extent of material replacement, which was known at the time the bridge became a King County Landmark. Regardless, the NHPA/Section 106 process will be undertaken, starting at the local level with a COA. Whatever conditions outlined in the COA will become part of the MOA at the federal level. Steen asked if the other replaced historic bridges were wood, and if this was the last wood bridge remaining in King County. Minichillo said there were other wooden bridges in the inventory, but this was the only timber suspension bridge left.

Handy asked when the commission would be briefed on the alternatives decision. Minichillo stated he expected the project team to be back before the commission in January/February.

Convene NORTH BEND LANDMARKS COMMISSION

SPECIAL COMMISSIONER ABSENT: Position vacant

CITY STAFF PRESENT: None

GUESTS: None

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: Sunset Garage (COA #1821) – request to paint building in blue/gray color.

Scott briefly described the project, reviewing previously approved COAs involving restoration work, including awning reconstruction and re-opening of the entryway drive through. There was general discussion of the evidence of different paint colors throughout the life of the building, and how the proposed color will look when actually on the structure. The color once applied is expected to differ from the submitted sample and photos. Scott stated that the owner strongly prefers the proposed color.

Scott highlighted the decorative terra-cotta column insets, which will be painted a mottled orange-cream to match what was historically there. Lemay pointed out that when you paint on a large surface the color comes across lighter. There as a general recognition by the commission of how subjective color choice can be. Scott recommended the commission allow staff to approve inset column color as part of this COA to avoid going through the full process again. Scott plans to discuss effective non-destructive methods address terra-cotta damage and treatment with owner.

Lake/Lemay moved to approve the proposal as presented – Type II request to repaint the Sunset Garage a blue/gray color, with the condition that paint color for the inset terra-cotta detail on columns be reviewed by staff prior to starting work. The motion passed 7-0.

OTHER BUSINESS: *Special Tax Valuation for Skykomish Theater.* Scott briefly described the history/timeline of the building including changes in its location and use, pointing out key

architectural features. The structure is contributing to both the Skykomish National Register district and local landmark district. Scott compared interior and exterior photos of before/during/after the SV project, again highlighting the retention of key architectural features. Scott noted that Skykomish has their own design review board, but they involve KC staff in their design review process and in preparing project staff reports. Scott described the ownership history of the building, noting the various failed efforts to rehabilitate it. When the current owner began to develop the project, Scott worked with the owner and the Skykomish design review board to bring the project into conformance with SOI Standards. Scott then presented the details of the final rehab, including the installation of a long shed dormer, a description of interior changes, and discussion on the current use of building.

Though the KC Landmarks Commission is not responsible for Skykomish design review, KCLC does approve proposals for Special Tax Valuation. Scott reviewed the thresholds and requirements for approval of special valuation. With \$445,000 in qualified rehabilitation expenses, staff is confident that this project meets the criteria. Handy asked if it was still considered contributing to the district with all the alterations, Scott replied that it remained a contributing structure. Moore asked the current assessed value of the property, Scott stated the latest assessment was about 160K, though it was likely assessed before project was completed. Meisner noted that because of the ratio of property value to rehabilitation investment, the owner's property taxes will be zeroed out for a number of years. Scott described the process for finalizing the special valuation agreement with the property owner, and the maintenance requirement for the duration of the special tax valuation. Lemay asked if submitted rehabilitation costs have been checked, Scott said the owner still needs to submit some invoices but most of them have been reviewed and verified.

Blue/Moore moved to approve the Special Tax Valuation for the Skykomish Theater. Motion passed 7-0.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER'S REPORT:

Meisner thanked the commissioners for attending the annual Spellman Awards, noting the high quality of attention and good feeling the awards generate. She also introduced Sarah Steen to the commission as the new Landmarks Coordinator. Meisner briefed the commission on the Vashon Hardware Store COA appeal, noting that it's the first appeal of a King County Landmarks Commission decision, and offered details of the overall process. The date of the hearing is set for November 20th, staff will attend to answer questions as necessary. Meisner will report the findings to the commission after the appeal process is complete.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Meisner announced Lorelea Hudson's farewell gathering will take place shortly after the commission meeting. Scott announced the next meeting will convene Nov. 29th in Enumclaw to consider the designation of the Enumclaw Masonic Hall. He suggested there might be an opportunity to tour the Reynolds Indian Agency on the way to Enumclaw that day.

OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned at 6:55pm.