

## **League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report**

**Note, there are hidden formatting areas which cause 2 large empty spaces in this report. I cannot eliminate them. Paul Sp.**

**Name of Agency:** Historic Preservation Commission

**Date:** 04/15/2024

**Observer Reporting:** Aly Welch

**Length of Meeting:** 1 hour

**Board Members Present:** RJ Lott, Ariel Medeiros, Jennifer Hamilton, Allison Munch-Rotolo, Matthew Root, John Anderson, Anita Hornback, Phil Gruen,

**Board Members Absent:** Ned Warnick - excused

**Others Present (e.g., staff, other agency representatives, media, public):** 2 City Hall staff, Roger Crawford (LWV), Aly Welch (LWV)

**Business Pertaining to League Positions or Topics of Interest:**

1) Issues discussed that relate to League priorities or positions.

- City Demolition Procedure changes - City and Regional Planning/City Government Positions
  - RJ Lott suggested an amendment to the current permit application instead of an entirely separate document for Demolition Applications. (Added a small checkbox for structures over 50 years old.)
  - The Commission is concerned about the lack of written regulations following this small amendment. City staff does have further instructions for applications, but Lott could not cite these procedures.
  - The Commission would like to see specific language and procedures for the checkbox of 50 years or older. Lott says, “a further conversation will happen with the applicant.” Lott says the further language and procedure is outlined in city code. He would/could not name the language or code.
  - The Commission asked if photographs for buildings 50 years older will be taken by specific staff, or if there is procedure in code. RJ Lott said we will go by code. Commission asked if code required building photos. Lott said they didn’t want code changes previously. **The Commission wants procedures put in place for historic buildings, whether that is through applications or code changes.**
  - **Specifically, the Commission wants photographs required of applications for buildings older than 50 years, whether through application or code changes.**
  - Federal Law defines Historic Properties as something older than 50 years, registered/listed or not.

- Walla Walla had a form that the Commission liked, and they had a 10 day waiting period for buildings 45 years or older for verification and approval. All are concerned this will take too long.
- Munch-Rotolo made a good point - she's not sure why there needs to be a change to city code to ensure building applicants follow the law and take/submit photographs. AND Another good idea: require applicants to take photos, but if they argue there is no code, the commission will take their photos themselves.
- Lott suggested a handout defining City and State codes and procedures for Historic Properties. The Commission asked for a webpage instead of paper, and Lott responded with no promises on a webpage. **LOTT WILL BE BACK IN MAY WITH THIS DOCUMENT.**
- Application for certificate of alteration to St. James Episcopal Church - new door on building listed as historic in 2014. There was a motion approved to postpone and ask for submission from the applicant regarding new and existing hardware.
- Medeiros addressed a potential change to the historic nominations process, and it will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

2) Issues/topics that you want the League to know about, for community awareness and the business of your agency.

- City Planning - the Commission is seeking a new form or adjustments to city code. RJ Lott did not want a new form, and did not come with a new form as he said he would in March. So, to keep this same form with an amendment, the Commission asked to update city code to ensure procedures.
  - City Code or the Building Application may be updated in the future to ensure procedures for historic building permits.
  - Gruen made a point that he wants the City and Commission to show its constituents that it cares about the culture, preservation, and quality of life in the city.

3) Links to further information on an issue, if available.

- <https://pullman.municipal.codes/Code/17.10.040> - Pullman City Code says, "the city planner shall review it and make any necessary field inspections to determine whether the proposed construction or addition complies with the Zoning Code."
- <https://pullman.municipal.codes/Code/16.60.060> - Certificate of Demolition - listed buildings only, not un-registered historic buildings

4) Local League Action Suggested:

- Position: City Government, City and Regional Planning
- Action Suggested: Be conscious of potential changes to building permits/City Code. Also be conscious of the lack of leadership/knowledge from the City Development government.

**Your additional comments/opinions:** *You can be outspoken here, I can always cut and paste them if they are for the League's eyes only and not the public.*

- I asked a question about which Demolition City Code the Commission and Lott were referring to, and received clarification that Code 16.60 only referred to listed buildings.
- <https://pullman.municipal.codes/Code/16.60.060> PHOTOGRAPHS ARE REQUIRED BY PULLMAN CITY CODE FOR ALL BUILDING DEMO APPLICATIONS.
- Once I asked about this SPECIFIC City Code, conversations moved forward. Both Lott and the Commission agreed that maybe language needs to be updated.

**Public Meetings of interest to League:** *Were there any public meetings announced that you think League members may be interested in attending and/or becoming involved with?*

- Potentially partnering with CCE to provide local historic courses. (No timeline)
- Next monthly meeting is May 13th, 2024 at Pullman City Hall.

**Process & Protocol:** *Observations about participants and procedures during the meeting. e.g., Did the members appear to have done their “homework”? Were members courteous to each other and the public? Was access to materials for agenda items available to you?*

- RJ Lott backtracked on a promise to bring in a draft document to instead suggest a new document for all city planning permits because the City does not see many demolition applications.
- Silence and small laughter from Commission after Lott’s presentation
- Lott does not understand the desires or asks of the Commission, even though their desires have been clearly communicated in both the past meetings.
- The Commission asked multiple times for specific City Code or procedures, which Lott could not provide.
- Lott did not know the definition of Historic Properties or the different laws regarding Federal, Pullman, etc code. He AGAIN asked, “What is the Commission asking for?” (4th or 5th time asking and receiving the same answer.)
- Lott kept saying they’re right back to where they started, but the Commission has definitely established that they need to change language or procedures slightly and has ideas to change both of these, whichever will be decided on.
- Lott was feisty and silent by the end. He needs to do his research and be more collaborative with this group. It feels like he doesn’t want to be here or help this commission.

**Attached Materials or Links:** *Please attach any materials, or links to such, received at the meeting that you feel are important to your report.*

- Root read a letter from Clark County regarding Historic Properties to show we need to make a change, whether in applications or city code.

**Reminders:** 😊 **An LWV Observer is impartial, silent, and respectful. It is, however, acceptable to ask questions for clarification following the meeting.**

**Remember to wear your awesome ID Badge!**

**New>>> \*\*Please submit your report to the LWVP email: [lwvpull@yahoo.com](mailto:lwvpull@yahoo.com) within one week of the meeting. (04/04/2023)**