

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Texas Statewide Preservation Plan Advisory Council Meeting

March 29, 2010; 10am-3pm
Texas Historical Commission Library

Present:

Brad Patterson, Doug Boyd, Amy Hammons, Sarah Tober, Terry Colley, Bruce McDougal, Paul Serff, Mark Wolf, Michael Holleran, Toni Turner, Rosemary Morrow, Steve Hoyt, Derek Satchell, Ruth Ann Rugg, Krista Schreiner Gebbia, Catherine Sak, Chris Dyer, Rebecca Orr, Tracey Silverman, Josh Lasserre

I. Progress

- Planning Timeline
 - The planning process is slightly behind schedule as we are still finishing up the preservation issues section
 - We will soon be moving into creating the missions and goals
 - We are starting to create more of a vision for the plan
- Public Meetings
 - Dates have been set up for the public planning forums to be held around the state between May and July
 - May 5th is going to be a trial meeting with THC staff
 - These meetings will help create vision and goals while gaining people's opinions and gaining more of their feedback
- August-December
 - This is the time where we will be putting all of the information that we have gathered and formatting it into a finished product
- Will stakeholders be able to find themselves and their place in this plan?
 - People will want to easily find themselves and hopefully we can clearly lay out how they can further specific goals
- How will the plan be managed?
 - The plan will be constantly updating and handling this is an issues we must still tackle
 - We need a plan for keeping up with the plan

I. The Survey

- Power Point presentation with survey results
 - Preservation Education and Economic Development stood out
- Where the responses different for different demographics?
 - Only small changes showed up—they were not significant enough to present
 - The changes were mainly present among the African American responses
- Was there anything about youth education in the survey?
 - Not strongly included in options but would have scored highly

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- Lots of open ended comments addressed the need for a stronger presence in education
- Interests—“Promoting my property investment”
 - The fact that this issue was low scoring is an interesting result
 - Could be a result of people only being allowed certain amount of responses—this caused broader options to be favored
 - The open ended questions supported it strongly—making preservation economically relevant
 - A lot of the responses were geared toward historic homeowners—these were not the people who took the survey
 - The people who this issue matters to did not take the survey
- “Stabilizing property rights”—also scored low
 - Why?—it may be that people are not educated enough on the subject to know what the status of this issue is
- The answers to the question about the 3 biggest challenges for preservation in your community
 - Did you sort this question for urban and rural?
 - With different demographics there was a change in the order but not actual change in the top 3
- Did rural buildings and farms jump up for rural responses?—no
- There were many open ended responses contradicting the fact that people wanted stronger laws
 - Many responses talked to the fact that people wanted more freedom
- Promoting Partnerships
 - This was an important topic for African Americans—half of all respondents picked it at the top of their lists
 - However it did not score that highly in general
- Interesting that communities can base a preservation plan on the Statewide Plan—this could become a very useful tool
 - Smaller communities can use this plan as a basic framework to customize their own preservation plan
 - Copycatting is much better than not having a plan at all
 - Would the plan be consistent??—who regulates this?
 - Statewide guidelines would help smaller communities who are becoming overwhelmed and have a lack of resources to create their own plan from scratch
 - Legally things must be done this way—there must be a framework and design guidelines must be tailor made for each area
 - The Statewide plan could become a clearing house resource—presenting pros and cons for local projects
 - Communities could grab ingredients for their own local plan that fits them

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- The statewide plan could have basic standards and then access to customize them
- There needs to be pros and cons
- Open ended questions look to encouraging survey and inventory but not in ranking questions
 - Survey and inventory is not looked at as part of the big picture
- Money was the typical answer for most questions
- There is a lack of understanding of ‘survey’
 - The need for it and the resource that it can become are both very important
 - There needs to be better education about it and its uses
 - Many people need further clarity on survey and inventory
- Taking a look at the survey from the involvement levels of respondents could show some interesting results—any specific differences?
 - Is there a difference between how professionals and interested citizens answered?
- Tackling the issue of education is complicated
 - Public interest levels have an effect on how much educational time is spent on things
- Most of the respondents are involved in preservation—what about other majority who own resources but don’t have a connection to preservation
 - Expanding educational opportunities and connections to HP with people in all walks of life is crucial
 - Tourist education
 - More activities for homeschoolers
 - Grandparents and parents need to be involved in passing on the message of HP
- Learning vacations

II. Website

- All agreed that having the plan be a web based tool is a great Idea
- The website is a participation mechanism that will become the PLAN
- How does the blog work over time?
 - History, progress, archives—all areas that must be addressed
 - How or is the content is controlled?
 - All of the comments posted on the blog will be moderated
 - There is a way to rate comments so that they sort themselves out
 - Relinquishing a small amount of control over the blog may be necessary to have it be continuously evolving
- Is there going to be paper copies of the plan when it is finished?
 - Is there a good place to house them across the state?

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- There are people to contact that are local resources—preservationist, ‘types’, libraries, churches
- Connect with librarians locally as a great way to bring access to plan
- There is an age, socio-economic background, connection and education component to internet access and the need for paper copies
- Is the plan going to be presented in other languages?
 - This is an important issue in Texas
 - Bilingual communities often tend to be the most important people to reach
 - Many speak English but do not write in English
 - Does not help to have blog in Spanish if no other languages are represented in the resources we suggest they use
- Local Meetings
 - Local person who is trusted should be presented as the host
 - This is a grass roots vs. top down approach
 - This is a great place to ask about how we engage others who do not or choose not to have internet access—get communities input
- The website is for the statewide plan but unfortunately cannot convey all information about preservation in Texas
 - There must be limitations to what can be on the website
 - This plan has a greater ambition
 - The website will show stuff that is already going on and link to more information but cannot provide it all
 - The website Cannot be all things to all people
- Need to make sure that searching on the blog easy

III. Working Themes

- We are still working on fleshing out the working themes—we are not at goal stage yet but just exploring and building the stories the go along with the issues
- Support for Historic Housing and Homeowners
 - Everyone agreed that this is an important theme
 - Why this specific group?
 - a. “owners” need help as there are not as many resources for this group so they are often not given as much help
- The themes must be tailored to be user friendly
 - “Support for Historic Property Owners”

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- “Support for Historic Properties”
- Either way of phrasing could be a better way to put it to encompass more people
- Neighborhoods, address other people through organization
- Do we need to cluster resources—rural, commercial, landscape
- Homeowners are looking out for themselves—not interested in preservation
- This theme limits who can find themselves in it
 - Can it be broader or evolving
- Awareness and Understanding of the tools and value of historic preservation
 - This theme speaks for itself
- Representing and engaging the state’s diverse residents
 - Race, ethnicity, age are all included in this theme
- Economic development incentives and/or programs that incorporate historic preservation
 - This theme presented itself as most important in the survey
 - There is economic potential that people are not aware of
- Preservation and historic buildings as part of the sustainability equation
- State and local historic preservation laws
 - Does this need to be its own category?
 - Laws=the tools to address the themes
- Information landscape
 - Access, quality, integrity, clearing house all need to be covered under this theme
- Preservation Education
 - Became an important theme on the survey and at the Preservation Texas Summit
- There are many connections between themes, such as:
 - 1/4/5
 - 2/3/8
 - 6/4
- Themes added at the Advisory Council meeting
 - Connections, Relationships, and Partnerships
 - Cultural Landscapes
- People want instruction from the plan
- Best practices and solutions can be applied to all people in all situations
- It would be good if each theme speaks to different stakeholders—this way everyone can find their place in the plan
- Where do attentions focus for the next couple of years?

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- What we want as an advisory council may not be the same as what the public wants or needs
- The plan needs to address users through its themes

The Advisory Council broke into smaller groups with each one of them tackling different themes and putting the meat on the bones to progress from.

IV. Preservation and Sustainability

- Sustainability trend and conflict
- Preservation and sustainability are actually the same thing—our problems are the same
- Sustainability issues are preservation issues
 - One and the same
- Opportunity to solve real problems of stewardship of places—we offer a great deal of perspective that could be used by people working in sustainability
- Preservation experience can partner with sustainability
 - Preservationists have been dealing with sustainability problems for a long time and could share their experience
 - Can both groups work together to better both areas?
- There are complex sides to both arguments
- The relationship between sustainability and preservation in the past has been full of conflict
- Sustainability is becoming the trend and so preservation needs to get on board with this in order to continue their success

V. Economic Development

- The story behind this theme
 - There are many different values of historic preservation
 - There is an ignorance of existing incentives and/or programs within the community
 - Preservation is seen as a luxury to the public
 - Conveying urgency relative to health and human issues
 - Individual projects don't have view toward longevity
 - Easy to preach the passion but harder to preach the practicality of preservation
- Challenge/Opportunity
 - Introducing people (again) to existing tools for preservation—find a new way to explain (previous way was unsuccessful)
 - We need to promote values of using historic property

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- The Statewide plan would be a great resource for getting individual/communities started down path to funding
- Perspectives
 - There are similar challenges but varying environments throughout the state
 - Urban areas can leverage partnerships—more difficult in rural areas to bring money and people in
 - There is much more competition for funding in urban areas
- Theme Plays out
 - Once preservationists get money they often see their problem as ‘solved’ when really they must maintain their project
 - No longevity to projects/plans
 - Not realizing that responsibility comes with garnering financial support
 - Diminishing state/federal funds
 - Smaller grant amounts and less of them
- Request and projects go up while money goes down
- Theme relevance
 - Everyone needs money
 - Money is required for maintenance
 - We have to be able to make the argument if we expect others to
- Preservationists need to communicate the economic value of historic preservation by improving existing resources and generating new sources of grants and incentives

VI. Preservation Law

- There is a lack of knowledge and confusion about too much and too little regulation
- Many have unrealistic expectations—those who think they are too strong vs. too weak
- There is no desire for authority
- Property rights are important—also the perception of property rights needs to change
- Misinformation—preservation struggles are not grounded in reality
 - There is a huge lack of understanding
- Lack of legal land use
- Counties don’t want to take on the responsibility of regulating preservation
- There is an issue with timing—local land laws need to be in place before the crisis
- There is a confusing crossroads between wanting control/being in control
- Rural/Urban
 - Issues are the same in both areas but their perspectives are different
 - There is a higher urban tolerance for regulation

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- Legal matters often have a negative impact on preservation
 - Reactive
 - Restrictive
- Preservation laws are not a theme but a tool—laws help to solve the problems that other themes bring up
 - Issue under others
- 106 is proactive if it is actually carried out
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VII. Information Landscape

- Story
 - There needs to be a match between the information and the appropriate audiences
 - Survey results supported this
- Challenge and Opportunity
 - “Diversity” of information types to match target audiences at appropriate level and technology
- Different Perspectives
 - Creating appropriate information, organization and context
 - Identify use of stakeholders—the information needs to be inclusive
 - Access to information plays a role in this theme
- Theme Plays out
 - Best case/worst case scenario
 - Facilitate loss of historic resources
 - Miscommunication and lack of communication
- Relevance
 - Addressed critical need abundantly
 - Identified in survey
- Quality and access to information to the support of historic preservation

VIII. Historic Housing and Homeowners

- Most people are unaware of the process and the process is not user friendly
- No state-wide incentive to own historic homes
- Cost and/or perception of the cost prohibitive for rehab
- Preservation not seen as mainline prerogative
- Historic homeowners are an untapped resource and audience
 - Empowering homeowners
 - The message of home energy is important

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- Historic low income neighborhoods not seen as viable
- Gentrification—this is a key issue when looking at historic housing
- Seek to connect green incentives with preservation work
- The ‘machine’ is the driving another message of replacement
 - Idea of ‘new being better’

IX. Preservation Education

- April 16th—The Social Studies Standards are being voted on in Texas
- On Texas register for public comment
 - Grades 4,5,7,8 and high school history—would be places to insert preservation education
- Make comment—ways that students can learn
- Teachers are always looking for information and resources—preservation could be a great way for them to enhance their learning environment
- Sally Hunters: Governors Manager in Austin
 - This house is your house—this is an elementary school project
- Service centers training for teachers—we must first educate the teachers before they can educate the children
- Address diversity issues through this as well—making sure that all groups are represented starts in schools
- List serves with Rosemary—GLO interacted with this and oral history
 - 2 hour block of time
- TPTF grant on architectural studies in Texas
- History fairs are good places to insert preservation as a subject
- TSHA—Texas History day, could be another way to insert preservation
- Educating outside of high school
 - Teachers post high school—they can then pass down to their students the importance of preservation
 - There must be more options and emphasis on preservation in higher learning institutes—college programs
- Continued education professional development—engage people already in the field
- Link to public official and staff
- Short format training education , economic development, managers, planners, enforcement code
- On line professional development
- TML, TAC—use their training opportunities
- Huge legislature staff

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