

Historic Districts Committee Final Report to Task Force
January 22, 2009

Members:

Yasmine DePagter, LJ Erspamer, June Kirk, Su Lum, Lisa Markalunas, Joe Myers, Bill Stirling and Bill Wiener

Historic District Subcommittee Goals:

1. Determine if existing historic districts should be expanded to cover other areas of the City of Aspen.
2. Determine if one or more historic districts are the appropriate preservation tool to address concerns about mass or scale or if there are other more appropriate methods.
3. Determine the legal requirements of historic districts.
4. Determine the impacts on the review process of expanding the historic districts.
5. Make a specific recommendation to the Historic Preservation Task Force regarding the possible expansion of historic districts within the City of Aspen.

See Attached Work Product and Summary of Discussions For More Details

Recommendations

The Historic District Subcommittee voted 6 to 1 to recommend to the Task Force that the Task Force recommend a new Historic District defined from the alley adjoining the north side of Main Street (the existing Main Street Historic District) to the River including the Aspen Institute Campus and the West End and to recommend a Conservation District for the South and East areas of the original townsite not included in the other two existing districts (Main Street and Commercial Core). A new Conservation District Board would review scale, context, mass & character with new guidelines.

The Historic District Subcommittee voted 6 to 1 to recommend to the Task Force that the Task Force Recommend a Conservation District Board which include five community members and two professionals.

Minority Opinion

LJ Erspamer dissented on the vote for the Historic District. He felt that those within the District carry the burden. Review area should be broader encompassing the entire city limits with larger and larger rings of review emanating to outer areas.

LJ Erspamer dissented on the vote on the conservation district board because of the burden of the commission.

Outstanding Issues:

Recommend to the Task Force and the City Council to further address issues of mass and scale and its impact on community character and the future of historic preservation.

Historic Districts Sub-Committee

Work Product to Date:

1. Reviewed possible historic districts within the City of Aspen.
2. Mapped possible historic districts, 19th Century and Post-WWII designated and potentially designated buildings.
3. Conducted discussions related to mass and scale in the context of a historic district.
4. Reviewed historic district information from Crested Butte and Telluride.
5. Met with Nore Winter, a historic preservation consultant responsible for developing historic preservation guidelines and standards for the City of Aspen and other municipalities.
6. Conference call with Dan Corson, Intergovernmental Services Director, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society to answer questions about historic districts, what other places in Colorado are doing and what is possible.
7. Discussion of TDRs, FAR Bonuses, Conversion of primary residences to second homes.
8. Further Discussion and determination of recommendations.

Summary of Discussions:

- Discussion of the history of existing districts and design standards.
- Discussion of whether Residential Design Standards are sufficient to control building type and scale or if historic districts are a better way to go.
- Discussion of whether historic districts are appropriate, and if they are not, if the Main Street and Commercial Core Districts should be continued.
- Discussion of the equal treatment of all properties within a historic district vs. singling out designated properties.
- Discussion of the use of overlays
- Discussion of Crested Butte Program; similarities and differences.
- Discussion of the possible need to expand definition of “contributing” to Post-WWII properties.
- Discussion of context and compatibility of new construction.
- Discussion of Telluride Program; similarities and differences.
- Discussion of a proposed historic district from river to river to base of mountain. (Straw Poll: 5 in favor, 0 against)
- Discussion of a proposed historic district covering the entire city limits (Straw Poll: 2 in favor, 3 against, motion withdrawn)
- Discussion of proposed historic district covering the original townsite.
- Discussion of landing TDR’s outside of a possible historic district covering the original townsite (Straw Poll: 5 in favor, 0 against)

Summary of Discussions (continued):

- Discussion of how to increase value of TDR so it is a more attractive option than maximum build-out. Suggestion of developing a central TDR clearinghouse.
- Discussion and motion by Bill Stirling to consider a new historic district from river to river to the base of Aspen Mountain with a newly appointed commission to review new construction and remodels based on modified design guidelines with the opportunity for final review and/or appeal to the City Council. Seconded by Su Lum.
(Straw Poll: 4 in favor, 1 against, 1 abstained awaiting additional data)
- Discussion to recommend Public Outreach committee begin work to facilitate outreach between the Task Force, the Task Force Sub-Committees and the public.
- Discussion on “owner consent” with Dan Corson that it is totally up to local government. The National Trust feels “owner consent” is illegal because it allows private citizens to determine their own zoning – hasn’t been tested.
- Discussion of varying review process if lower FAR is requested.
- Discussion of TDRs, FAR bonuses, conversion of primary residences to second homes.
- Discussion of city-wide conservation district wherein LJ moved to place entire city limits in conservation district with no specific criteria for review. Any property within city limits plus River to River to Base of Mountain would be in conservation district with no criteria – avoids density – Died for lack of a 2nd.