



Land Use & Environment Committee

Review of Proposed Change to Historic Inventory Regulations

Agenda Date: 2/26/2015
Agenda Item Number: 4.D
File Number: 15-0173

Type: discussion **Version:** 1 **Status:** Filed

Title

Review of Proposed Change to Historic Inventory Regulations

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

The Olympia Heritage Commission recommends the proposed change in Historic Inventory Regulations.

City Manager Recommendation:

The City Manager concurs with the Heritage Commission recommendation, and asked LUEC to recommend Council approval of the attached amendments to the Olympia Municipal Code, including removal of Section 18.12.100(B) related to Heritage Commission review of demolition permits for buildings that have been placed on the Olympia Historic Inventory (but not listed on a Heritage Register or within a historic district).

Report

Issue:

The Olympia Heritage Commission recommends the attached amendments to the Olympia Municipal Code, including removal of Section 18.12.100(B) related to Heritage Commission review of demolition permits for buildings that have been placed on the Olympia Historic Inventory (but not listed on a Heritage Register or within a historic district).

Staff Contact:

Michelle Sadlier, Historic Preservation Officer, Community Planning and Development, 360.753.8031

Presenter(s):

Michelle Sadlier, Historic Preservation Officer

Background and Analysis:

As part of the Heritage Commission's approved 2014 Work Plan, the Commission has been conducting heritage-related ordinance review. As a result of concerns identified in the regulation of Olympia Historic Inventory properties, the Commission recommends the removal of OMC 18.12.100 (B): Demolition of Property on the Historic Inventory from the Olympia Municipal Code. City staff will

provide a briefing to the Land Use and Environment Committee in preparation for presenting the recommendation to the full City Council at a future meeting.

Definitions:

As described in the code, the City maintains two lists of historic properties:

- the Olympia Historic Inventory (Inventory)
- the Olympia Heritage Register (Register)

The Inventory is the subject of this proposed code amendment. The Inventory is defined in OMC 18.02.180 as: *Buildings and property identified and listed by the Heritage Commission as having special historic significance and merit.*

This list of historic buildings is relatively informal. It typically results from information gained from a professional architectural survey of historic properties which is presented to the Heritage Commission for review. The Heritage Commission then determines which properties to place on the Inventory to note these properties as having historical significance to Olympia. There is minimal regulation associated with being on the Inventory (described below). There are also no preservation incentives, such as tax benefits, for Inventory properties.

The Olympia Heritage Register (Register) is defined in the code as: *The listing of properties having special historic significance and is listed on the Olympia Heritage Register, and including listings on the Washington Heritage Register, or National Register of Historic Places.*

In contrast to the Inventory, the Register has a formal application process that includes extensive historical research and documentation, assessment of the application by the Heritage Commission using pre-determined criteria, and a public process which includes a public hearing and consent by the owner of the property. Regulation of Register properties is addressed in the code through the heritage review process. Owners of Register properties have access to preservation tax incentives, such as Washington State's special valuation program, and receive a bronze plaque to mark their home as one of Olympia's designated historic properties.

Regulation of Inventory Properties:

The only regulation associated with Inventory properties relates to demolition. Current code requires that proposed demolition of a building on the Inventory go through a special review process with the Heritage Commission. This process considers whether the property is *eligible for* the Register, resulting in the following:

- 1) If the property is determined not to be eligible, the Heritage Commission documents the property and conveys a Waiver of Certificate of Appropriateness, the document submitted to the City of Olympia's Building Official to indicate the Heritage Commission's approval of an application on heritage grounds; or

- 2) If the property is determined eligible, the process of placing it on the Register begins.

However, in essence, whichever determination is made is unlikely to have a direct impact on the application to demolish. This is because a building cannot be placed on the Register without the owner's consent unless decided by City Council (OMC 18.12.085(B)(10), and the applicant-owner is unlikely to give consent to place a building they intend to demolish on the Register.

Olympia Heritage Commission Recommendation:

Following consideration of these factors, the Heritage Commission recommended at their May 28, 2014 meeting that regulation of Inventory properties be removed from the code. Doing so removes any regulation of these properties but retains the Inventory as an informational list of historically significant places.

The sections of the code which would be impacted by this proposed change (Attachments 1 and 2) are:

- 1) OMC 18.02.180 Definitions; and
- 2) OMC 18.12 Historic Preservation.

These proposed code amendments have completed the following formal review processes:

- 1) Planning Commission Public Hearing on October 6, 2014 - No comments made by the public;
- 2) Planning Commission Deliberation on October 20, 2014 - Motion to accept the Heritage Commission's recommendation passed unanimously;
- 3) City of Olympia SEPA Official Review - Notice of Exemption from SEPA Review received on October 27, 2014; and
- 4) Department of Commerce 60-Day Notice - Submitted on November 20, 2014; no comments received to date.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

General public interest in Olympia's historic character. No public comments were made at or following the Olympia Planning Commission's public hearing on October 6, 2014.

Options:

- 1) Recommend the attached amendments to the Olympia Municipal Code, including removal of Section 18.12.100(B) related to Heritage Commission review of demolition permits for buildings that have been placed on the Olympia Historic Inventory (but not listed on a Heritage Register or within a historic district).
- 2) Do not recommend the attached code amendments.
- 3) Recommend revised code amendments to OMC 18.02.180 Definitions and

OMC 18.12 Historic Preservation.

Financial Impact:

Staff time included in base budget.