



Heritage Commission

Preservation and Social Inclusion

Agenda Date: 9/22/2021
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Title

Preservation and Social Inclusion

Recommended Action

Information and discussion only. No action requested.

Report Issue:

Discussion of historic preservation and social inclusion in Olympia.

The Heritage Commission 2021 Work Plan includes actions to support Commission planning & development (1.e.) and for developing best practices in historic preservation (2.b.). The Commission has expressed a desire to support the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) goals of the City and City Council.

To further these goals, the commission is invited to read and discuss an article by Erica Avrami, Assistant Professor of Historic Preservation at Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. The article is titled *Preservation's Reckoning* and was written as an introduction to a series of essays that were the basis of a 2019 symposium, edited by Avrami and published in 2020 under the title *Preservation and Social Inclusion*. (Columbia University Press, 2020, cup.columbia.edu) A link to the article is attached.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Commission Chair Holly Davies

Background and Analysis:

Avrami's article offers provocative ideas, including:

"There is an increasing awareness in the preservation field of the ways in which narratives are reinforced by spatial encounters with the past, and thus there is greater scrutiny of whose narratives

are represented - or not - in the built environment.”

“Heritage and preservation are ...vehicles for positive change, to give voice and spatial recognition to the underrepresented and the disempowered, and to challenge hegemonic activities.”

“The built environment can serve as a conduit for inequality.”

She invited symposium participants to consider the following questions, which Commissioners are invited to consider relative to the city of Olympia:

- *How are diverse narratives and communities being represented or excluded through preservation?*
- *Who is participating in preservation processes, and how can preservation decision-making better engage multiple publics?*
- *What are the effects of preservation policies and processes on communities?*

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

All

Attachments:

Link to article by Erica Avrami