Collaborative Planning Approaches for Community Preservation Action

Dr. Rhonda Clark and Abigail Watson-Popescu
View of Main Street
Main Street Homes
The Citizens Bank Flatiron-style building demolished in 1966 to build a shopping complex.

The Colonel Drake Hotel, which was sold and torn down in 1998 to make way for a CVS Pharmacy.

The Odd Fellows Building in 2009, an anchor building on a corner torn down to make way for a parking lot.
Titusville Planning Commission Explores Ways to Protect Historic Properties
Current Protections for Historic Structures in Titusville

- No legal protections.
- Titusville has a historic district recognized by the National Park Service and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
Options for Enacting Legal Preservation Measures

- Create a HARB (Historic Architectural Review Board).

- Enact the Zoning Overlay District and pass Historic Preservation Zoning Ordinances.

- Create a Demo-only Ordinance, which would be enforced by a Demo Review Board.
2009: During editing of zoning ordinances there was discussion about adding an historical district overlay with voluntary adherence to the recommendations of a design review board. City Council was unwilling to move forward.

2009-2013: Titusville Planning Commission debated the merits of a HARB vs a Zoning Overlay.
Over 200 responses to the written and online survey (SurveyMonkey).

Survey revealed a strong concern about the loss of historic structures.

Citizens also expressed concern about the cost of upkeep and how funds could be obtained.

The survey revealed concern about blight.

Survey-takers showed both support and uneasiness about legally binding committees (HARB) for oversight.
How do you feel about the loss of historic homes and buildings in Titusville?
Should historic homes & buildings be afforded special protection in Titusville?

- Yes: 144
- No: 21
- Not Sure: 19
If so, what types of protections?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Demo restrictions downtown</th>
<th>Demo restrictions historic district</th>
<th>Demo restrictions everywhere</th>
<th>Committee legal powers</th>
<th>Committee with only recommendin g powers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
<td>109</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NO</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NOT SURE</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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[Chart showing bar graph with categories for different protection types and their respective counts]
2015: The 2013 survey, as well as the momentum gained from the devastating March 18, 2015 Towne Square fire, led to several public listening sessions at City Council meetings on the preservation of Titusville architecture. The results of the survey as well as the public discussions resulted in the Titusville Planning Commission recommending that City Council pursue the creation of professional design guidelines to inform our next step.
Early 2016: Discussions for and against historic preservation continued to play out at City Council meetings and in editorials published by the Titusville Herald newspaper.
February 2016: Pivotal moment for historic preservation in Titusville. A heated public debate ensued at the City Council voting meeting with regional news coverage.

City leadership felt negatively towards historic preservation grants due to misunderstandings from past grants.

February 2016: Titusville City Council votes 4-1 in favor of pursuing a Keystone Historic Preservation Grant to obtain design guidelines.
2016-2018: Grant was awarded to the City of Titusville and T&B Planning was hired to create the Design Guidelines.

October 2018: Design Guidelines completed and presented at a public meeting.
During the process, input was received from and local Economic Development Agencies were subsequently trained in the use of the Design Guidelines.

The Local Digital Portal is launching with the complete Design Guidelines. [https://titusvillepaheritageconnection.omeka.net/](https://titusvillepaheritageconnection.omeka.net/)


Design Guidelines are available at reference services at the local library and the heritage center.
Aiming For Success

- Recognize the context of preservation within your specific community.
- Education and developing a strong sense of collaboration between all of the stakeholders within the community is crucial to making preservation a success.
- Celebrate every small success!
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