

Gold Hill

Community Planning Initiative

April 20, 2009

Notes from Denise Grimm's education session on Historical Zoning from April 20, 2009

Denise Grimm is a County Long Range Planner, has been in the Land Use Department for 14 years, has worked on Historic Preservation issues for 10, and is the chief Historical Zoning person at the County.

Historical Zone legislation was proposed in 1968, adopted in '72, and the Gold Hill Historic Zone was created in the early '70's (we're the only one). Our local committee acts as a referral review body for the County. The County refers to us and listens to us. If someone goes to the County and hasn't been through Historical Zoning, they suggest they go through us first. The Code requires the County to notify the HZ Committee and immediate neighbors of any new building or additions. The Code reads:

Approval of Building and Structures

1. No person shall construct a new principal building or any structures accessory to a new principal building or change the principal use of a structure within the Historic zoning district unless that person has first received approval of the County Commissioners following a public hearing....(etc., etc.)

2. Approval of a new principal building or any structures accessory to a new principal building or change of principal use of a structure within the Historic zoning district shall receive approval only if the proposed building or structure meets the following standards and conditions:

a. The character of the proposed construction is in harmony with the established exterior architectural appeal of structures already located in the surrounding neighborhood.

b. The character of the proposed construction is in harmony with approved public plans for the surrounding area, so that existing and future land values within the historical area will not be depreciated.

So, this is what we have now for the platted townsite. We could decide be more rigorous about our guidelines, which are presently fairly general. Denise then outlined several other options for preservation of historic structures we could take either instead of or in conjunction with HZ. There is a Rural Community Overlay District and a Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District. We are on the National Register of Historic Places since 1989, but there are no regulations connected to that – it's just an honor. Specific buildings can pursue Local Landmark Designation where any alterations have to go to the County Historic Preservation Advisory Board. The St. James Chapel (our museum) and Marge McLellan's cabin are currently so designated. This designation provides access to a local grant program for rehabilitation, etc. And we could create a local Landmark

District (anything on the National Register would be eligible and then there are possible income tax credits available). We also have the opportunity to amend the Historical Zone although that would require approval of the County Commissioners.

As far as solar panels and alternative energy issues in the HZ, Denise recommended a fairly flexible approach, looking at it on a case-by-case basis (which is how we look at issues now). She suggested we might consider unobtrusiveness, whether they stick out or not, and if they were on an accessory structure or on the side or rear of a principal structure, which could all be decent solutions. Breckenridge, which has a Conservation District, has some pretty strict regulations, which Denise brought for our consideration.

For further information, contact Denise Grimm at 303-441-3930, email at dgrimm@co.boulder.co.us, see the website at <http://www.co.boulder.co.us/lu> as well as the Gold Hill Community Planning Initiative website at http://www.bouldercounty.org/lu/townsite_planning/GoldHill.htm

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