



Candidates Answer Preservation Questions

Historic Littleton Inc. sent a questionnaire to the six candidates for the Littleton City Council to determine their positions on historic preservation in Littleton. The questions and the responses offered by each candidate are printed in full beginning on the next page.

James Boone and Jerry Valdes are running for the District II seat. Debbie Brinkman is unopposed for the District IV position. In the At-Large race the candidates are Bruce Beckman, Peggy Cole, and David Novinger.

The election will be held November 1. Because of our 501c3 status, HLI is not permitted to endorse a candidate, but we urge members to read the candidates' responses and then vote!



HLI's 2011 annual meeting was held at the Field Officer's Quarters at Fort Logan on Saturday, Sept. 24. In the left photo HLI President Charlie Carroll speaks to the members. In the right, HLI board member Jack Ballard gives a tour of the interior of the building, built in 1889. Ballard also spoke on the history of ballooning at Fort Logan and led a walking tour of the historic Fort Logan complex. For more photos of this event, visit the HLI website at www.hline.org.

Historic Littleton Inc. is dedicated to preserving the historical and architectural Heritage of the greater Littleton area through advocacy and education.

1. What do you feel is the economic impact of historic preservation?

Historic preservation can add new life to a building(s) and the surrounding area. Preservation projects can ignite revitalization in an area, which may contribute to economic benefits for the entire community. The potential negative is the additional layer of bureaucracy that may encumber property owners.

2. What is the cultural or quality of life impact of historic preservation?

The Littleton community benefits from preservation of historic structures and the sense of history.

3. Are you familiar with the new Historic Preservation Design guidelines and the more general Downtown Design Guidelines?

Yes.

4. Please comment on the Planning Commission's new Downtown Neighborhood Plan.

My first impression is favorable. However, I have not yet spent enough time studying the plan to form a definitive opinion.

5. How do you reconcile the differences between private property rights and the greater community good, as relates to historic preservation?

The legal issues surrounding historic preservation can be complex. Each building and area has its own unique characteristic that may distinguish the property, including but not limited to architectural style. Property owners should not have to deal with undue bureaucracy.

6. The city council reduced funding for Main Street District grants from \$50,000 to \$25,000 this year. What is your position on this reduction?

I did not study the reasoning behind the reduction in funding. Preserving historically significant buildings is important; however, I do recognize that economic downturns require difficult decisions.

7. Should a historic district be opt-in or non-consensual? What percentage of property-owner approval do you think is necessary to form a historic district?

Forcing property owners into situations that encumber their ownership rights is not desirable. Preserving Littleton's heritage and historic structures is important. As property values increase in part due to historic significance, hold-outs will willfully opt-in.

8. Comment on historic preservation, specifically as it relates to Littleton.

Once a structure is razed, it is gone forever. It is paramount that Littleton's history and meaningful structures be saved. Littleton should develop policies that encourage historic preservation while respecting the rights of property owners.



From James Boone, District II candidate

1) I feel that historic preservation can save money in most cases, but sometimes it is not cost effective under certain circumstances.

2) I feel that the quality of life impact is very strong in the sense that it brings values up in areas and makes them more sought after, in return bringing the communities values up.

3) I'm not familiar with the guidelines at this time.

4) I have just received the downtown neighborhood plan and attended the last portion of the meeting, from what I have seen and heard it sounds like the committee did a wonderful job researching and coming up with a plan. I can't wait to hear more from the community, after all they should have the final say.

5) You must have open discussions and take input from everyone, and weigh the pros and cons.

6) I'm sure the council had a good reason for doing what they did, and I cannot comment on something like that without the facts.

7) Depending on the property status, meaning is it a great importance of history or just old should lead to the decision of being opt-in or non-consensual.

8) Every historic preservation is unique in its own way, It may be its beauty, or its historical significance, or its architectural integrity but one thing is for sure Littleton holds a lot of these gems. Some in the preservation and some not, one thing is for sure we need to make sure we hold on to what's important to us so we may show or future generations and enjoy what makes Littleton a special place to live.

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**From Debbie Brinkman, District IV Candidate**

**1. What do you feel is the economic impact of historic preservation?**

An HP district, such as we have downtown, attracts higher quality and more deeply-pocketed investors, as they have the security that incompatible development will not occur. The Bussard Motors developer said that at the council meeting where they applied for and were granted designation. Another example is the Tavern, which has had a very obvious economic impact. These more experienced developers have the financial strength to do a renovation well, and have the expertise to operate the business well (the Tavern) or to attract quality merchants (Bussard Motors), which in turn enhances both the cultural impact and sense of place for our citizens, and has a positive impact on the city's tax revenues through increased sales.

**2. What is the cultural or quality of life impact of historic preservation?**

When a community supports the preservation of the past the impact resonates across businesses, visitors, and residents. Discarding the old, tearing down history, remodeling with no regard to historical values sends a negative message. When a city respects its past the message sent enhances the cultural and quality of life values of the community.

**3. Are you familiar with the new Historic Preservation Design guidelines and the more general Downtown Design Guidelines?**

The Historic Preservation Design Guidelines have been developed as a direct result of citizen input during the True Grit forums hosted by HLI and the HPB a couple of years ago. They are designed to help owners of **designated** downtown buildings define renovation plans, and in turn reduce costs and renovation project timing while ensuring that the renovation pattern is consistent with Littleton's heritage.

By contrast, the Downtown Design Guidelines are designed for **non-designated or non-contributing buildings** in the downtown core. The similarity is that both sets of design guidelines help assure that downtown will retain its character and sense of place.

**4. Please comment on the Planning Commission's new Downtown Neighborhood Plan.**

The plan shows a lot of good thought by the Planning Commission in helping to identify the characteristics that make Littleton a Special Place that should be preserved, and at the same time identifying areas where future development may enhance our economic power while also encouraging cohesive community evolution over the longer term.

**5. How do you reconcile the differences between private property rights and the greater community good, as relates to historic preservation?**

It would be good to be clear on the moving line between private property rights and the greater community good. Our laws have many examples of that compromise, the most relevant being zoning and code enforcement. For example, code enforcement says you have to keep your weeds under a certain height. Tall weeds don't hurt neighbors economically, but this is a common law all over the land. One could argue that such laws are only meant to define the acceptable behavioral "box" among citizens, as with weeds the only true benefits are aesthetics or allergens impacting those who live off-site. These "boxes" are necessary for people to live successfully together. They recognizes property rights, but also that what we do on our property can have an impact on others. This becomes more important in denser areas, such as a downtown vs. rural land. In the case of HP, a key is continuity. This is illustrated by the Bussard Motors case, where the district attracted investors who are confident that incompatible development will not occur. Investors know that incompatible development would detract from their property values, as well as creating space voids where synergistic, revenue and human traffic producing assets would be developed if it was all in a district. Those are very real

economic and aesthetic impacts on all of the property owners.

**6. The city council reduced funding for Main Street District grants from \$50,000 to \$25,000 this year. What is your position on this reduction?**

The Community Development Department presented a budget to council with this reduction. Based on the director's assessment of his expenses and the city's revenue he had to make some tough decisions. I appreciate the painstaking work that goes into our budget the difficult trade-offs that directors face. It is regrettable that we cannot fund some of the cities programs the same way we could when we had double digit sales tax income. I am proud that we have not eliminated the program and that we are funding a portion of it. It may only be at half strength but it is funded. This will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the reduced funding and fortunately downtown remains a vibrant and active draw for many. In addition to the hard work of our Historic Preservation Board and Historic Littleton, Inc., my hat's off to the hardworking merchants along Main Street who through their passion for and love of Main Street have helped to create a true gem.

**7. Should a historic district be opt-in or non-consensual? What percentage of property-owner approval do you think is necessary to form a historic district?**

Non-consensual.

**8. Comment on historic preservation, specifically as it relates to Littleton.**

Littleton is lucky. There is a historic district here to protect and there are committed and determined citizens who want to protect it. Hence, we have one of the most charming, character filled, historic and beautiful main streets in Colorado (and maybe the country). Historic preservation is important because you often only get one chance. Littleton is a reflection of its citizens. Whether it's historic preservation, parks and open space, safe streets or good schools; Littleton is what it is because the citizen's care. Littleton has done it right. It shows.

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From Peggy Cole, At-Large Candidate

1. What do you feel is the economic impact of historic preservation?

There are several potential economic impacts of historic preservation (not all apply to every structure or landmark. I have focused all of my answers on Littleton, but the main points apply many places I have lived or visited). For example, historic preservation

- can contribute to a renaissance in historic areas, as it has done, for example, in downtown Littleton. It revitalizes neighborhoods and business areas (and, in a City the size of Littleton, the City as a whole), and promotes tourism, all of which generate revenue;
- can help create a community identity, which can strengthen the City's "brand" and increase demand for the City's business and residential properties, goods and services;
- can help leverage private and public investment in the historic area and the community at large;
- typically creates a wide range of jobs – short-time and long-term;
- enhances property values – not only of the preserved place but also other properties (business and residential) – and thus generates more property taxes;
- reduces construction costs (properly maintained buildings can last for centuries, thereby reducing costs of constructing new building. Please see last bullet in #2.)

2. What is the cultural or quality of life impact of historic preservation?

Historic preservation

- brings people together – e.g., at the Town Hall Arts Center and The Melting Pot, as well as Arapahoe Hills (this helps foster social networks, which often work together for the good of the community);
- helps connect the past, present and future in many ways. For example, the farms and schoolhouse at the Museum and the City Ditch trail provide enjoyment for people of all ages and backgrounds, but they also help residents and visitors understand Littleton's agricultural

heritage. Arapahoe Hills and the Sternberg building provide insight into other eras in Littleton's history. Elsewhere, preservation of sites and structures do the same; for example, Gettysburg Battlefield, Sand Creek, Mesa Verde, Constitution Hall, the US Capitol, and the Parthenon;

fosters sustainability, by reducing the need to consume more resources for new construction.

This reduces the impact on the environment (e.g., less pollution, more forests), thereby improving quality of life; it also has direct and indirect economic impacts.

3. Are you familiar with the new Historic Preservation Design guidelines and the more general Downtown Design Guidelines?

Yes. I attended a Historic Preservation Board meeting earlier this year when the last draft of the Historic Preservation Design guidelines was discussed; I asked a few questions and offered a few suggestions. I have a copy of the Downtown Design Guidelines, have read them, and have attended meetings of the City Development Review Committee when the Committee was applying the guidelines to projects.

4. Please comment on the Planning Commission's new Downtown Neighborhood Plan.

Since I am currently a Council Member and the plan will ultimately be submitted to the Council, it is inappropriate for me to comment at this time.

5. How do you reconcile the differences between private property rights and the greater community good, as relates to historic preservation?

Private property rights must be honored unless the health or safety of the greater community is endangered. But when someone explains the benefits of historic preservation to property owners and how it can accommodate their wishes as well as the greater good of the community, they often embrace preservation. (I learned some of the ways this can be done when I was City Council liaison to HPB and by attending the 2009 Savings Places conference and the True Grit sessions.)

6. The city council reduced funding for Main Street District grants from \$50,000 to \$25,000 this year. What is your position on this reduction?

The reduction was part of a \$2 million reduction of the City General Fund for 2011, necessitated by the recession; some positions and programs were eliminated or reduced. I believe reduction of the grants was necessary under the circumstances. When the economy fully recovers, I hope Council will restore the grants.

7. Should a historic district be opt-in or non-consensual? What percentage of property-owner approval do you think is necessary to form a historic district?

Current code has very clear criteria and procedures related to both questions. I believe a district should be opt-in. Based on what I learned at the 2009 Saving Places conference and the True Grit presentations, I believe there are ways to help property owners understand the many advantages of opting into a historic district. Trying to form a non-consensual district or trying to force owners into an existing district usually has long-lasting negative repercussions that affect the whole community.

8. Comment on historic preservation, specifically as it relates to Littleton.

Historic preservation has played a key role in the revitalization of downtown, which is contributing not only to City revenues, but also to the quality of life, and to property values downtown and in many neighborhoods. In the past four years, I have talked with many residents (including 1 family a few days ago) who moved to Littleton a year ago, in part because it has an "authentic historic downtown area within walking distance of [their] home" (near the Library). Also, please see previous answers.

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***From David S. Novinger, At-Large Candidate***

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinions on historic preservation. This subject is very near and dear to my heart. I have always thought of myself as a closet architect, and I hope that bringing my skills to council will allow us to make some great strides in this sensitive arena.

David S. Novinger

**1. What do you feel is the economic impact of historic preservation?**

A: There is no denying that historic preservation is both controversial and expensive. Preserving or restoring historic buildings/sites can cost more than new construction. However, we as a city need to make every effort to look at more than just the price tag on preserving and maintaining local history for future generations. Our heritage and style is much too important to dismiss.

**2. What is the cultural or quality of life impact of historic preservation?**

A: When old homes and buildings are turned into restaurants and streetside offices or shops, they bring a charming quality and that quaint feeling of comfort to the area. Particularly in Littleton, the effort to retain these properties is most always recognized and appreciated by our citizens with an element of pride.

**3. Are you familiar with the new Historic Preservation Design guidelines and the more general Downtown Design Guidelines?**

A: I am not yet familiar with the new historic/downtown design guidelines. However, I believe that everything must move forward and as time goes by and technology races in front of us it is good to look at policies and procedures and to update these practices in order to attain the goal set forth of preserving our past.

**4. Please comment on the Planning Commission's new Downtown Neighborhood Plan.**

A: As I understand, it has been a work in progress and many people have put tremendous time and effort into this plan so far. I think it is a great start. I like that it is a plan that has phases, and it approaches Littleton with options that can progress over time. As a new council member with business, construction, and real estate background, I would enjoy becoming a part of that committee and helping with implementation.

**5. How do you reconcile the differences between private property rights and the greater community good, as relates to historic preservation?**

A: This is a very difficult question, and I am not sure that a "one-size-fits-all" answer is possible. I believe that property owners have certain rights. However, depending upon the placement of their property there is an obligation to use that property for the betterment of the greater good.

**6. The city council reduced funding for Main Street District grants from \$50,000 to \$25,000 this year. What is your position on this reduction?**

A: It is unfortunate that we are in an economic downturn - nationally to locally. It is unfortunate that funding is being cut for all types of worthwhile causes. Although it is a harsh blow, it is a harsh reality. The good news is that it opens up the field for private grants.

**7. Should a historic district be opt-in or non-consensual? What percentage of property-owner approval do you think is necessary to form a historic district?**

A: I don't see an easy or numeric answer to this question. As far as opting in vs. non-consensual, that should be based on the strictness of the guidelines per preservation location. The percentage necessary to form a historic district should also be based on the guidelines, but in no case less than a majority of owners.

**8. Comment on historic preservation, specifically as it relates to Littleton.**

A: Just because a building is old doesn't necessarily mean it should be preserved. On the flip side, we in Littleton pride ourselves with our hometown history and flavor. Sometimes a well designed copy with the appearance of a historic building adds functionality as well as aesthetics and character, and can blend in seamlessly. Each building needs to be looked at on a case by case basis. We need to do what is necessary and makes fiscal sense while shielding ourselves from becoming a bland city without character. Historic preservation also needs to represent different generations and styles, because that is what creates dimension and depth to our city.

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Response from Bruce Beckman, At-Large Candidate

During my childhood in New Jersey, my hometown area had many historical structures from the Revolutionary War. I lived close to the Thomas Edison Labs, which is now a National Historic Park.

As a teenager, I lived on the outskirts of Washington DC, and regularly spent time in our Capitol. I went to college in Lexington Virginia, at a college campus founded by George Washington and whose most memorable President was Robert E Lee. The campus and the town were historic districts. When I came to Colorado, it was the "feel" of Littleton that attracted me to work and live. I was hired in the old Town Hall building, I worked in the Carnegie Library when it was the police station, and went to Court as a witness many times in the Arapahoe County Courthouse. I was in Geneva Lodge several times when it was a private retirement home. I am connected to Littleton's history and support the historical preservation efforts. My response to the Historic Littleton Questionnaire follows.

1. What do you feel is the economic impact of historic preservation?

Historic preservation in our Historic Downtown Littleton District adds positively to the economy. I have watched changes over the years in the character and look of downtown. It has always been a center for our community, but today, and in the future, we have a small town character that is unique in the Denver Metro Area. Downtown is doing well in these tough times. Downtown Littleton is not the most significant economic generator in the City, but it is an economic barometer. It is in our interest to support the preservation efforts of Historic Downtown businesses. Buildings and homes that are not part of the downtown area are moving toward historic designation. Littleton's program is a magnet to that. South Louthan Street and Arapaho Hills are the first neighborhoods. While walking neighborhoods I found the house on S Windermere that is historically designated. Perhaps these homes will retain higher value based on this attention given to them. Time will tell.

2. What is the cultural or quality of life impact of historic preservation?

An important part of growing up in a community, and staying in a community, is the sense of belonging. Historic preservation encourages a connection with your community. I have always lived in historically significant areas and my identification back to them is strong.

3. Are you familiar with the new Historic Preservation Design guidelines and the more general Downtown Design Guidelines?

I have reviewed both the Historic Preservation Code in the City Ordinances and the Historic Preservation Design Guidelines dated July 6, 2011.

4. Please comment on the Planning Commission's new Downtown Neighborhood Plan.

This plan was four years in the making. The plan was published in draft in late August/early September and placed on the web. The first public hearing on the plan was held on September 22. City Council will be formally briefed in early October. The Plan includes historic preservation as part of the vision for Downtown Littleton. It incorporates language throughout that reflects the significance of historic preservation of structures and the maintenance of the small town historic feel.

5. How do you reconcile the differences between private property rights and the greater community good, as relates to historic preservation?

Property Rights are the linchpin of our American freedoms. It is incumbent on government to tread softly and go forward carefully when proposing projects that conflict with property rights. The legal rights of the landowner must be honored. As the conflicts are resolved, all due process must be provided. The best, and least onerous path, is for government to negotiate with the property owner and to make all reasonable attempts to resolve the matter through agreement. This process requires expert legal assistance. Usually these acquisitions are for health, welfare, and safety purposes. Historic preservation in Littleton is guided by the Historic Preservation Code. If the situation is such that the structure is going to be destroyed and has historical significance, there is a provision in the Code to respond to that. Ultimately, we look to the courts to reconcile these differences.

6. The city council reduced funding for Main Street District grants from \$50,000 to \$25,000 this year. What is your position on this reduction?

I understand the intent of the Manager and Council as they have cut the budget and the size of City government in the tough years since 2005, but I would not have supported that cut. I believe these grants result in increased sales tax revenue. Funding stimulates improvements in the Down-

town area. It would be interesting, to support my position, to look at tax revenue generated out of downtown Littleton since the start of the grant program. Intuitively, it would seem to have increased. The membership of the Historic Downtown Littleton Merchants is at an all time high indicating new energy in downtown. New businesses are opening and, based on just the parking space issue, more people are coming into downtown to make purchases. Odds are that actual requests will fall somewhere between the two figures. The City budget shows actual expenditures were \$24,334 in 2008, \$46,348 in 2009, \$39,690 in 2010 and estimated to be about \$24,000 in 2011.

7. Should a historic district be opt-in or non-consensual? What percentage of property-owner approval do you think is necessary to form a historic district?

I support the opt-in. It is working in Littleton and it is a success story. In contrast with all the legal turmoil and possible negative backlash that might have occurred with a non-consensual option, opt-in seems to be accepted. The question concerning percentage of property owners in a given area is one that depends on the size of the neighborhood involved. If there were mix of old and new structures, the percentage would vary. Our code says structures that are 40 years old are eligible. The best answer also involves determination of which structures have historical significance. I do not know what the percentage would be that would apply in all cases.

8. Comment on historic preservation, specifically as it relates to Littleton.

It takes many successes to create a vibrant and viable community. Historic preservation is established in our community. We are surrounded on the south, east, and west, by communities that have not yet approached the issue as Littleton has done. People living in those communities associate with Littleton and find their sense of community within our City limits. Historic preservation adds to Littleton's desirability as a place to live, work, raise a family, and retire.

The Historic Littleton Inc. newsletter is published quarterly for members of HLI as part of their membership contribution. Send comments to P.O Box 1004, Littleton, 80160 or email: rebeccakast@earthlink.net.

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