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News Release

Forum planned Monday night to discuss downtown historic survey

Public meeting gives opportunity for property, business owners to ask questions

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (November 8, 2017) — The City of Arkansas City will be host to a special informational forum Monday at the Arkansas City Senior Citizens Center to discuss a historical survey.

This public meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. Nov. 13. The senior center is located at 320 South A St.

Business and property owners in the Downtown Historic District are encouraged to attend and learn more about the survey of the district, planned for the next six months. They will be able to ask questions.

In attendance will be Brenda Spencer, with Spencer Preservation, which has been retained by the City to conduct the survey, as well as Principal Planner Josh White and the Historic Preservation Board.

“This will be an opportunity for you to ask any questions you might have about the survey project and for me to introduce myself, as you will undoubtedly see me on the street when I am out surveying your buildings,” Spencer said in an Oct. 27 letter to downtown property owners.

Representatives of the Kansas State Historical Society also will attend and give a brief presentation about the benefits of the historic district designation, including the historic tax credits it makes available.

This meeting, which is free and open to the public, will serve as the kickoff for the survey project.

About the Downtown Historic District survey

The City Commission of Arkansas City voted unanimously Oct. 3 to enter into an agreement with Spencer Preservation to conduct a historical survey of the historic downtown commercial district.

This survey will be conducted in accordance with a previous project agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office and a grant that was awarded, for a contract amount not to exceed \$13,000.

For immediate release

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The City's cost share will consist of in-kind volunteer time and staff time. All matching funds are reimbursable through the Historic Preservation Fund Grant, administered by the National Park Service.

That grant was awarded in the amount of \$13,000 and accepted Feb. 7 by the City Commission.

This will be the first comprehensive survey of the Downtown Historic District since 1983, White said.

Since then, some buildings have been torn down and others have become newly eligible for possible inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places by virtue of being more than 50 years old.

"Additionally, we will be surveying areas surrounding the downtown district to determine if the district should be expanded and looking for any existing buildings that have gained historic significance to the district due to age," Spencer explained in her letter to downtown property owners.

The survey will ensure that all information concerning the district is up to date. It is informational only and will not by itself add or subtract any properties from the district, but some outlying properties will be surveyed in order to determine their eligibility for inclusion. That decision would have to be made later.

This survey is part of an overall process, laid out in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan, of ensuring that Arkansas City's historic resources are preserved to the fullest extent possible through proper planning.

It also may serve as the first step in determining the feasibility of rehabilitating and converting upper floor space in downtown buildings into living quarters, which could help to alleviate housing shortages.

For more information about this historical survey, contact Spencer at (785) 456-9857 or brenda@spencerpreservation.com, or contact White at (620) 441-4420 or jwhite@arkansascityks.gov.

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