

Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission

September 16, 2020

Agenda Item: 7a Information
Topic: Heritage Division Update
Presented by: Christine Curran, Deputy Director, Heritage Programs

Heritage Division Operation and Staffing Changes:

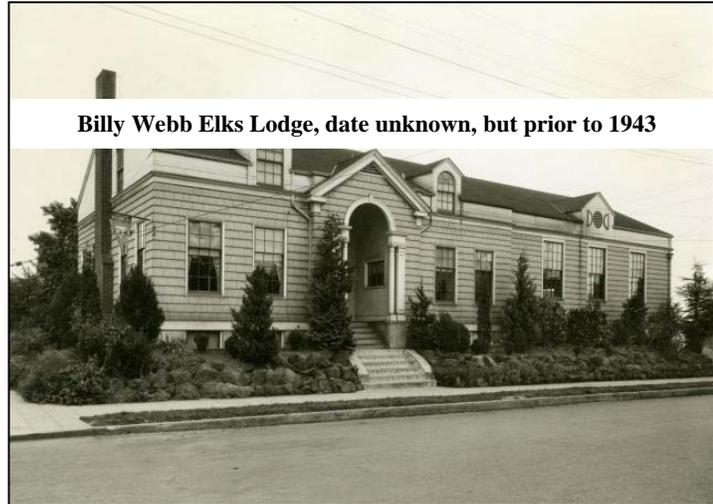
In June the agency implemented layoffs and budget reductions due to revenue reductions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. The Heritage Division laid off three positions, including the Heritage Outreach Coordinator, Rehabilitation and Tax Program Specialist, and an Archaeologist with the Environmental Compliance Program. The Historic Preservation Specialist position in the Environmental Compliance Program was previously vacant and will remain unfilled. The loss of staff and budget reductions will result in delayed response times, limited travel, virtual meetings, and canceled events across all programs. Staff in the Environmental Compliance Program will not respond to all requests for project consultation, creation of agreement documents, or attendance at meetings and site visits. Grant programs funded solely by Lottery dollars are on hold until at least next spring. These include the Diamonds in the Rough, Preserving Oregon, Veterans and War Memorials, and the Elisabeth Walton Potter Preservation Scholarship. The Main Street Revitalization Grant Fund will not receive the expected \$5 million in Lottery-bond-backed revenue in 2021. That said, the COVID-19 crisis will not divert the Heritage Division from its mission to administer federal preservation programs and to provide statewide leadership in the areas of historic preservation, archaeology, and cultural heritage. The Heritage Division will continue to focus on those activities best aligned with the Division's mission that reach the most people and do the most good. We will constantly re-evaluate our staff and funding resources to provide the best possible support for Oregon's important historic places and the Heritage Community.

Dennis Griffin, State Archaeologist, Retires after 18 Years of Service:

Dennis Griffin retired after 18 years of serving as the State Archaeologist with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office as of August 31. During his years of service, Dennis represented the Agency and Heritage Division across the state, serving as the liaison to Oregon's federally-recognized tribes, gubernatorial task forces and work groups, and federal, state, and local agencies. Dennis's approach to his daily work and agency partners reflected his personal passion for Oregon's important archaeological resources and collaborative, cooperative approach to cultural-resource management. While Dennis is stepping down from the 40-hr work week, he says, "I am in no way leaving the cultural resource field behind, for it remains too close to my heart." Dennis plans to continue to consult and complete several writing projects, and he looks forward to seeing his friends and colleagues in the field and at conferences in the future.

Billy Webb Elks Lodge, Portland Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

The Billy Webb Elks Lodge #1050 at 6 N. Tillamook St., has long been a dedicated place for the African American community. The early history of the property has a special association with African American women's history, as the site was developed by the African American branch of the YWCA. The Portland branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) located its offices in the basement of the building from 1956 through 1964, and the Oregon Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, Urban League of Portland, and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) also held gatherings in its meeting rooms, auditorium, and lounge. After more than nine decades of continuous association with Portland's African American community, the building remains owned and occupied by a historically African American organization (the Billy Webb Elks of the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks of the World, or IBPOEW). The project was the result of a partnership between lodge leaders, preservation professionals, volunteers, and the City of Portland. The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office provided funding and technical support for the effort. This project supports Oregon's Statewide Preservation Plan that seeks to diversify the properties listed in the National Register and continue to tell the stories and uplift the voices of those previously marginalized.



Prior Action by Commission: none

Action Requested: none

Attachments: Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Heritage Grant Program Descriptions

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