



Alicia Barber <alicia@storiesinplace.com>

Re: City historic register on the blockchain?

Alicia Barber <alicia@storiesinplace.com>

Thu, Sep 15, 2022 at 9:08 AM

To: Megan Berner <bernerm@reno.gov>

Cc: Nic Ciccone <cicconen@reno.gov>, Bradley Carlson <bradley.d.carlson@gmail.com>, DEBBIE HINMAN <paris652@nvtbell.net>, Jenny Brekhuis <brekhuisj@reno.gov>

I'm going to be very clear here, in hopes of persuading you to take this down and rethink this entire enterprise. Just fixing the obvious errors--the incorrect names, incorrect references to actions, etc., which are embarrassing enough--does not fix the overall problem that putting this information on this platform is useless without the accompanying records to demonstrate why these properties were added to the register and why, and precisely what changes were made to them.

Simple short descriptions of those changes, as currently appearing on the site, misrepresent the entire purpose of the COA process which is to delineate with precise drawings and plans how the proposed changes do not detract from the property's integrity. If the point of putting information related to these properties on a Blockchain ledger is to make such actions transparent and have a common place for the public and City staff to find relevant information about these processes, it completely fails. Will those documents be added? And not just the application materials but the nomination forms, the proceedings from the public hearings, and the specific directions to the applicants? Even when approved, the applications alone do not indicate what work was done. The plans were often modified through the course of the discussion with conditions added, etc.

There are so many other problems with this, just top to bottom, and I don't even want to delineate them if the entire platform isn't going to be fundamentally restructured. I am not exaggerating when I say that putting this out there is more damaging to the City's historic register than if the City had done nothing at all. It seems quite clear from this product that someone handed a bunch of files to this company and just told them to enter in the information they found there, without anyone acting on the City's part to help them understand what these documents and actions even are, or ascertaining that the information is even correct. I can't imagine the City doing this with any other kinds of records.

What you need to do right away is to sit down with a group of advisors who have actually worked with the register and the COA process and ask them what materials and information should be included on a public platform and why--and then determine whether a Blockchain ledger is even appropriate. From what I can tell, this kind of platform doesn't have the capability of presenting the materials in a usable format. What you have online now needs to be taken down until you can launch something that's accurate and functional and actually achieves what you're claiming it does.

I would be happy to help you do that, but not in a piecemeal fashion, and not without the full involvement of the HRC, whose volunteer efforts this is ostensibly supposed to be benefiting. Obviously you're in the process of hiring an assistant to work with the HRC right now, but you need to take action before that person gets in place. Just fixing a few things here and there is not going to solve the problem. Please show you take the City's historic register seriously and start over before more people see this, because it is truly a mess, and I guarantee that it's not going to give you the attention and acclaim that you're looking for.

Alicia

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On Wed, Sep 14, 2022 at 1:41 PM Megan Berner <bernerm@reno.gov> wrote:

Hi Alicia,

Thank you for bringing this to our attention. We will work on getting this fixed. I'll be in touch.

Best,
Megan

Megan Berner



(She/Her/Hers)

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bernerm@Reno.Gov
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On Tue, Sep 13, 2022 at 4:37 PM Alicia Barber <alicia@storiesinplace.com> wrote:

Nic, I'm not sure if you're the staff member overseeing the Blockchain ledger for the historic register, but there are quite a few errors on it some major (i.e., applications listed as approved that definitely were not, missing applications, incorrect property names, much more). How would you like to handle that?

Perhaps the link could be sent to the members of the Historical Resources Commission for corrections and I can send the errors I've noted to them? I'm not sure why they weren't consulted as the company was putting it together in the first place. They would also be able to advise on what fields to include, how to handle outdated info, how to deal with properties that are no longer on the register, etc., and you can explain to them what has yet to be added.

I have a whole list of corrections but feel they should go through the HRC as the City's advisory board and the authorities on the historic register and COA process.

Alicia

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On Jun 3, 2022, at 2:54 PM, Nic Ciccone <cicconen@reno.gov> wrote:

Hi Alicia,

This pilot project is still in production. Some of our media partners have been given the login information in order to take a look. More information for the public will come at a later date.

Thanks!

On Fri, Jun 3, 2022 at 2:25 PM Alicia Barber <alicia@storiesinplace.com> wrote:

Nic, how do we access it? I'd like to see what's on it.

Alicia

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On Jun 2, 2022, at 11:31 AM, Nic Ciccone <cicconen@reno.gov> wrote:

Good morning all,

Thank you for following up and providing some background information from Ben. The pilot project was free to the city and is simply a blockchain ledger for record keeping of our historic properties.

This project falls under 2 strategies identified in Goal F. (Arts, Parks, and Historical Resources) of the Strategic Plan:

- Identify actions the City could take to protect Reno's historic resources, including the Lear Theater.
- Create opportunities with the private sector and other agencies to develop Connected/Smart City initiatives that will improve public interaction with City services.

When the project is fully launched, this will be the first time residents can view all of this information by simply clicking on a property's name and looking at the changes that have been made or requested.

"Transactions" can be a misleading term, but it is merely talking about the transfer of information as (in this case) Certificates of Appropriateness are processed. It is not referring to monetary transactions.

The intent of the pilot project is to improve transparency and accountability in City processes. The rigidity of the smart contracts we've preprogrammed ensures that CoA applicants on the registry cannot advance without going through each of the 4 steps.

1. Development Services staff acknowledging they received an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness
2. Historic Resources Commission in approving or denying a request for a CoA
3. City Council accepting or denying the HRC's recommendation
4. City Clerk acknowledging the acceptance or denial of the application

As you'll note with Step 3, the intent is for the Historic Resources Commission to play an active role once the project progresses further along.

Warmly,



Nic Ciccone

Community Liaison
Office of the City Manager

City of Reno

775-433-4491(c)

[1 E. First St., Reno, NV 89501](#)

On Thu, Jun 2, 2022 at 11:10 AM Alicia Barber <alicia@storiesinplace.com> wrote:
Thanks. Ben Margiott has been providing more info on Twitter, where I've been asking questions.




Ben Margiott 
@BenMargiott

...

Replying to @aliciambarber @MayorSchieve and @CityofReno

Portal appears to have basic property information, building function, owner, etc. Looks like owners could also apply for a certificate of appropriateness here, though I'll note I'm told it's still being tinkered with before launching to the public



10:48 AM · Jun 2, 2022 · TweetDeck

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On Thu, Jun 2, 2022 at 11:07 AM Jenny Brekhus <brekhusj@reno.gov> wrote:
No idea at all. I was not even briefed on this and it did not come before Council, was not in the budget nor in the strategic work plan. You are the second person to reach out about this and I have asked Nic to find out more.

thanks,

jb

On Jun 2, 2022, at 10:26 AM, Alicia Barber
<alicia@storiesinplace.com> wrote:

What is this talking about, do any of you know?
<https://mynews4.com/news/local/reno-among-first-united-states-cities-to-experiment-with-blockchain-technology-launching-biggest-little-pilot-project>

What sorts of "transactions" are involved with the city's historic register? You could place the nomination forms online, but that's all there is. There aren't any more "transactions" after that. Someone already owns a property and at some point they agree to have it placed on the city's historic register.

Was anyone with the HRC informed about this?

Alicia

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Nic Ciccone

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