



CITY OF PACIFIC GROVE

300 FOREST AVENUE
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MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMITTEE

DATE & TIME: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2009 – 4:00 P.M.

LOCATION: CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 300 FOREST AVENUE

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Committee members present:

- Ken Hinshaw (Chair)
- Jeff Becom
- Steve Honegger
- James McCord
- Randy McKendry
- Rebecca Riddell

Staff present:

- Chief Planner Lynn Burgess
- Senior Planner Karen Vaughn

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Consider Draft Minutes of the March 11, 2009, HRC Regular Meeting

On a motion by Honegger, seconded by McKendry, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the minutes as presented.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

5. REGULAR AGENDA

a. Discuss CEQA Requirements Pertaining to Historic Preservation, Including Historic Assessment Process

CEQA Status: Not a project under CEQA

Chair Hinshaw welcomed Adam Weiland, previous President of the Heritage Society and co-author of the original Historic Preservation Ordinance, to the meeting. He also noted Kent Seavey, a local historian, and Darlene Billstom, previous HRC chair, in attendance.

Mr. Weiland discussed the history and origins of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Historic Preservation section of the General Plan, and the Historic Resources Inventory. He noted that the intention was to protect the collection of homes in Pacific Grove as a whole. All homes that met the age requirement and also met one or more of the City's criteria for listing were added to the HRI with the option to allow people to request removal from the HRI after the fact.

Mr. Seavey noted that no analysis of integrity was done at the time. He stated that we need to go back to the HRI and perform an analytical review of the properties currently listed. He also noted new laws, such as CEQA, that now come into play regarding historic resources.

Mr. Seavey also stated that there is no incentive to being on the HRI. Mr. Seavey discussed the Mills Act, which allows for tax benefits for historic structures, noting that the Mills Act covers national, state and locally listed properties.

The terms "inventory" and "register" were discussed. Chief Planner Burgess briefly discussed the draft Historic Preservation Ordinance update, and that the State Office of Historic Preservation had suggested using the term "register" as it is the standard terminology. Mr. Weiland noted that his group purposely avoided the term "register" as it conveys a certain level of professional analysis, which was not performed at the time that the HRI was created. Mr. Weiland suggested the possibility of having both an inventory and a register.

Committee Member Honegger expressed his uneasiness with the term "register", and noted that the process is difficult enough as it is without having two separate sets of standards for an inventory and a register. He also noted that the current process is driving work underground, and people are either not doing improvements, or are doing work without permits.

Committee Member McKendry asked if the owners of the properties currently listed on the HRI know that they are the list. Staff and Committee Members stated that property owners were not notified of their placement on the HRI. Chief Planner Burgess noted that realtors and buyers are notified via the Residential Zoning Records Requests that are required for a transfer of property.

Chair Hinshaw discussed the Phase 1 Historic Assessments that were included in the agenda package. The Committee reviewed the Assessments and made comments as to their form, "cookie cutter" information, and conclusions. The Committee agreed that they preferred the DPR form vs. letter form. Committee Members Riddell and Becom stated that they would rather have the Phase 1 Assessments discuss the history and criteria, but not reach a definitive conclusion as to whether or not a property is eligible to be listed on the HRI. They felt that, if the Committee were to disagree or overrule a Phase 1 conclusion, a lawsuit may ensue.

Committee Member Becom also stated that there is a problem in having applicants pay consultants for reports because the information may be skewed to favor the applicant's project. Mr. Seavey (from the audience) noted his offense to Member Becom's comments.

Chief Planner Burgess stated that the Phase 1 Historic Assessments are exactly the professional analysis that Mr. Seavey had mentioned earlier. If the City were to create a historic "register", these reports would act as the supporting documents for listing.

Committee Member Riddell expressed concern regarding the 50-year threshold for analyzing potentially historic properties. Chief Planner Burgess noted that 50-year threshold is not specified in CEQA, but referred to as the understood age of when a property may be considered potentially historic.

Committee Member McCord stated that the City has the leeway to customize what it considers potentially important as far as the age of structures. Chief Planner Burgess states that we need to have clear language for every project that is processed through the Community Development Department. Ms. Burgess explained that the City needs to treat all applicants fairly and consistently, and needs to properly implement CEQA.

Chief Planner Burgess discussed the Historic Assessment Guidelines, as amended on April 2, 2009, to allow certain exemptions from the Historic Assessment requirement. Ms. Burgess responded to several questions from the Committee and discussed the qualifications required for historic consultants to be placed on the City's approved list.

Committee Member McCord asked if the General Plan will need to be amended as part of the HPO update. Chief Planner Burgess stated that it will not need to be updated at this time, but that a full review will be performed when a comprehensive General Plan Update is underway. Member McCord asked if an EIR will be required. Ms. Burgess stated that the HPO update would qualify for a Class 8 Categorical Exemption as it is expanding protection to environmental and historical resources.

6. REPORTS OF HRC MEMBERS

Chair Hinshaw noted that he would like to agendize a discussion to add the Pt. Pinos Lighthouse to the HRI. The structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Chair Hinshaw also asked staff to report the status of 156 13th Street and 275 Spruce Avenue at the next meeting.

Committee Member Honegger asked about adding other properties to the HRI. Chief Planner Burgess stated that staff would need time to gather information and to properly notice individual projects.

7. REPORTS FROM STAFF

Chief Planner Lynn Burgess gave a brief history of the John Denver plaque and the ongoing efforts to have it restored to its original location.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.