

DRAFT

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA
HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 11, 2011

Large Conference Room, City Hall

3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, California 92262

BOARD MEMBERS:	Present This Meeting:	Present FY Year-to-Date:	FY: 2011/2012 Excused Absences:
John Gilmer, Chair	X	4	
Barbara Marshall, Vice Chair	X	3	1
Thomas DeLeeuw	X	4	
Sheila Grattan	X	4	
Roxann Ploss	X	4	
Brian Strahl	X	3	1
Leo Cohen	X	4	

Staff Representatives:

Craig A. Ewing, AICP,
Director of Planning Services

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Gilmer called the meeting to order at 8:18 a.m.
2. ROLL CALL: Present: Ploss, Grattan, DeLeeuw, Cohen, Vice-Chair Strahl, Chair Gilmer
Absent: none
3. POSTING OF AGENDA: The Agenda was available for public access at the City Hall exterior bulletin board (west side of Council Chamber), City Clerk's office and Planning Services' counter on or before 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 29, 2011.
4. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None reported.
5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: Motion by Cohen; second by Ploss; vote 6-0-1 (Strahl abstain), to approve the minutes of September 13, 2011.
6. PUBLIC HEARING: None
7. CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL REQUEST(S): None

8. OTHER BUSINESS:

- 8A Case HSPB 77 - An application by Tom O'Connell, owner, 1145 East Via Colusa, "The Frank Sinatra House", for a Mills Act Contract.

Director Ewing summarized the staff report. The Board asked questions about the number of Mills Act contracts previously approved and the potential fiscal impact on the City.

Tom O'Connell, property owner, reported on the request:

- Supports the Class One status regardless of the Mills Act benefits.
- Looking forward to restoring the building to its best historic condition.
- Identified some of the repairs and other work undertaken at the site.

The Board commented:

- The language of the draft contract notes that a marker must be "...adjacent to the public right-of-way, near the entry within one year of the completion date".

During the course of the Board's discussion, Board member Marshall indicated that she may have a conflict of interest regarding the matter and left the room.

Motion by Ploss; second by Strahl; vote 6-0-1 (Marshall abstain), to recommend to the City Council to direct the City Manager to execute a Mills Act Contract between the City of Palm Springs, California and Tom O'Connell, 1145 East Via Colusa, "The Frank Sinatra House, a Class 1 Historic Site.

The Board expressed its appreciation to the property owners for their stewardship of the house.

Board member Marshall returned to the room.

In response to a question from Board member Ploss, Chair Gilmer summarized the purpose and effect of a Mills Act contract.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS:

9.A Las Palmas Business Historic District Committee Update: No report.

9.B Public Outreach Committee – Update

The Chair Gilmer described the draft letter that could be used to invite owners of historically important properties to consider City designation. The Board discussed:

- The organization and order of certain elements of the letter;
- Recasting the letter as from the Board, instead of the Chair;
- Clarifications on references to the Mills Act and ADA;
- Adding contact information in the closing;
- Whether or not to reference “adaptability” or adaptive re-use; and
- Use of a larger “point” size, yet maintain one page.

The Board agreed that the Public Outreach Committee (Gilmer, Grattan, Marshall) will review a new draft based on these changes and develop two letters: One for commercial / non-residential properties and one for single family residential sites. These letters will be sent to a list of candidate properties in preparation for discussion of possible designation on the November Board agenda.

10. STAFF & OTHER REPORTS:

Director Ewing noted that the City Council will address the Board’s recommendation for Class One historic designation for the City Hall parking lot and grounds in late November or December.

11. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Board member Strahl confirmed the status of the Town & Country Center. Director Ewing noted that the question of historic status was decided by the City Council about two years ago. Mr. Strahl also asked about the markers for the Coachella Valley Savings and Loan and the Santa Fe Savings and Loan properties. Director Ewing noted that Chase Bank has not proceeded with work on the Coachella Valley Savings bank, and that the marker was installed at the Santa Fe Federal site. Mr. Ewing also noted that the Palm Springs Art Museum will have their application for rehabilitation of the Santa Fe Federal building submitted for Board’s November meeting.

Board member Grattan noted that determining the marker placement for different properties may need guidelines or a more clear decision making process. The Board discussed the steps taken by the marker committee to review potential marker locations. Director Ewing advised that different site circumstances will require different approaches when determining an appropriate location for historic markers.

Board member Marshall noted that she continues to investigate design guidelines for historic buildings, including publications from the Secretary of the Interior, as well as, guidelines from the cities of San Jose and Truckee. She asked that this topic be scheduled for the November Board meeting, and forwarded a disc of information to

staff. Chair Gilmer noted the potential advantages of design guidelines and thanked Board member Marshall for her work.

Board member Ploss shared an article from the New York Times about a growing movement in New York City to establish districts to recognize historic neighborhood identities. Ms. Ploss also expressed her concern regarding the condition of an older, Spanish Revival “mini-estate” at 535 Tamarisk Road. The property is owned by a bank and she believes that the Board should consider possible designation. The Chair will consider placing the matter before the Board in November. Ms. Ploss noted that another house had been so remodeled that only one wall remained. Director Ewing described the difficulties of regulating remodels versus demolition, especially when actual construction goes further than the permit’s work description.

Chair Gilmer shared some feedback from the community about the Liberace house, which has been significantly remodeled but not reviewed by the Board. He noted that the house is not designated by the City as historic and therefore not subject to Board review.

12. ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Grattan; second by DeLeeuw; vote 7-0, at 9:23 a.m. to adjourn the Board to its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, November 8, at 8:15 a.m., in the Large Conference Room at City Hall.

Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services