

HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

Large Conference Room, 3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, California 92262
www.palmspringsca.gov

MINUTES

JULY 14, 2015



9:00 AM
REGULAR MEETING

CALL TO ORDER: The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL: Chair Gary Johns, Vice-Chair Roxann Ploss (arrived 9:05 a.m.), Members Dick Burkett, Todd Hays, Bill La Voie, Linda Dixon

ABSENT: Member James Williamson (excused)

ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA: Agenda accepted as ordered.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

KITTY KIELEY HAYES thanked the board for their efforts, and spoke in favor of preserving the Tahquitz Plaza complex. Ms. Hayes also discussed the history of preservation in Palm Springs.

1. CONSENT CALENDAR:

1.A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES (the minutes were unavailable for review and the item was rescheduled for the next HSPB meeting).

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

2.A. A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL REQUEST BY THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS SEEKING APPROVAL OF A COMPREHENSIVE LANDSCAPE DESIGN FOR THE TRAM WAY VISITORS CENTER (EMCO GAS STATION; HSPB #33) LOCATED AT 2901 TRAM WAY, (ZONE ESA-SP PLANNING AREA 5A).

Staff member Mlaker summarized the staff report and noted the revisions that had been made to the drawings since the last time the board had reviewed the project.

MICHAEL BUCCINO, landscape architect for the project, described the proposed changes to the project.

Member Hays supported the addition of the “driveway” element, but preferred to see the larger inner wall removed while retaining the shorter outer wall.

Member Dixon questioned the budget for the project and requested additional information on the construction phasing.

Member Ploss verified the material for the former lawn area, and noted that the proposed trees behind the building blocked the view of the mountain. She also expressed concern that any tent structure at the rear of the structure be temporary in nature and only used for special events.

Member Burkett stated that the proposed benches should be more organic/natural in form, or should be more appropriate to the era in which the building was constructed. He also expressed concern regarding the phasing of the project and if the City would have the funds available to complete the future phases.

Member LaVoie noted that the revisions were an appropriate response to the historic resource, and supports the removal of the wall in front of the property; he also suggested that the recycled plastic material for the benches may be too hot and that the design of the benches should be more sensitive to the building.

Chair Johns stated that the outdoor furniture should be specific to the site, much like the furniture at The High Line Park in New York or the Rose Kennedy Greenway in Boston. Mr. Johns clarified the tree types to be used on the site, and requested that Palo Verde trees be added. He suggested that the project should come back with revised furniture, and supported the removal of the wall. He also requested additional information about the budget and phasing of the project, and details of the flagstone ledger used along the pathways.

M/S/C (Ploss/Hays) (6-0-1) to request that the applicant revise the project, noting the following comments and recommendations:

1. The landscape plan and “driveway” element are an appropriate response to the historic resource.
2. Retain the lower outer wall and remove the larger inner wall at the front of the property; investigate if there is adequate money in the budget to remove the larger wall in its entirety along the north property line.
3. Custom furniture should be designed specific to the site, citing the following examples:
 - The furniture designed for The High Line Park;

- Concrete poured-in-place furniture designed by Albert Frey; or
 - Furniture appropriate to the era in which the building was constructed.
4. The applicant shall provide details regarding the budget and timeline for the phasing, with a recommendation to complete the project in two phases if feasible.
 5. Include Palo Verde trees in addition to the other tree types proposed for the site.

3. NEW BUSINESS:

3.A. ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

Chair Johns opened the floor for nominations for Chair of the Historic Site Preservation Board.

Member Ploss nominated Gary Johns for Chair. No other nominations were received.

M/S/C (Ploss/Dixon) (6-0-1) to nominate Gary Johns as Chair.

Chair Johns opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair.

Member LaVoie nominated Roxann Ploss for Vice Chair. No other nominations were received.

M/S/C (LaVoie/Dixon) (6-0-1) to nominate Roxann Ploss as Vice Chair.

4. DISCUSSION:

4.A. FY 15/16 HSPB WORK PLAN.

A handout was provided by staff, summarizing the work plan recommendations provided by the subcommittee at their meeting of June 23, 2015.

The board recommended that the following sites be studied for Class 1 designation:

- Town & Country;
- Cody Gas Station;
- Parkview Mobile Home Court Sign.

It was noted that the Dollard Building, the Trina Turk Building, and the Backstrom-Reid Building would be evaluated for designation as part of the work on the Las Palmas Business Historic District. The board members also requested that staff maintain the list of potential sites for Class 1 designation as a reference for the board. Member Ploss voiced concern that no Spanish Revival buildings or bungalows were on the list for study and designation.

The board recommended that the following educational activities be planned for the coming fiscal year:

- Workshop on the Class 1 designation process for property owners (Subcommittee: Hays, Dixon, Johns);
- May National Preservation Month event;
- HSPB informational website;
- Recognition awards for outstanding preservation work (as part of the National Preservation Month event);

Board members also noted that a map of the Class 1 sites was being prepared by the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, and suggested that information and maps on historic resources be available at the airport.

As part of the work plan, staff noted the need to complete projects started during the previous fiscal year, including the updates to the Las Palmas Business Historic District, ordinance revisions to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code, amending the resolutions for the Class 1 City-owned buildings, and completing the city-wide historic resources survey.

4.B. UPDATE ON CORNELIA WHITE STABILIZATION/RESTORATION.

Director Fagg presented a memo summarizing the alternatives and approximate costs for stabilization of the Cornelia White house, noting the need for City Council to appropriate the funding. Board members voiced concern about the need for immediate repairs to preserve the structure and prevent further damage. Chair Johns agreed to write a letter to the City Manager, requesting immediate action regarding the historic structure.

4.C. UPDATE ON WEXLER STEEL HOUSE #4 UNPERMITTED WORK.

Director Fagg reported that the Building & Safety Department had sent notices to the owner to correct the unpermitted work, and that a Notice of Violation had been filed against the title of the property.

4.D. UPDATE ON LAS PALMAS BUSINESS HISTORIC DISTRICT

Director Fagg informed the board that a revision had been made to the contract with HRG to include work on the assessment of contributing and non-contributing buildings, as well as work on the design guidelines.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Member Burkett requested that the National Preservation Month event be placed on the agenda for the September meeting, and requested that Robert Safran be invited to the

meeting to discuss an alliance of preservation organizations within the Coachella Valley. Member Burkett also requested an update on the Orchid Tree Inn project.

Member Dixon requested that board revisit the issue of the threshold for Class 3 designations (45 years old vs. 1969), and to make the issue a priority.

Member LaVoie noted that City's preservation ordinance is outdated and needs to be updated as to how preservation is carried out currently.

Member Ploss stated that the 750 Lofts project is worthy of discussion again by HSPB. She requested that Spanish Revival and Mission Revival structures be given attention for historic designations and surveys, and questioned if a memorial plaque would be placed on the Port Lawrence site commemorating the buildings that were torn down.

Chair Johns made a motion to cancel the August HSPB meeting; the item was seconded by Member Dixon, and the board voted 5-1-1 (Ploss opposed, Williamson absent) to cancel the meeting.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Director Fagg shared a letter with the board from the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, requesting that the citywide historic resources survey be expanded to include all structures that meet the criteria listed in Chapter 8.05 of the municipal code. In addition, he provided a letter from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, outlining their historic preservation policy statement.

ADJOURNMENT: The Historic Site Preservation Board adjourned to its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, September 8, 2015, at 9:00 A.M, in the Large Conference Room at City Hall.