

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

SEPTEMBER 8, 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, Members Dick Burkett, Todd Hays, Bill La Voie, Linda Dixon, James Williamson

ABSENT: None

ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA: M/S/C (Dixon/Hays, 7-0) to accept the agenda with item 6a moved forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

FRANK TYSEN, spoke regarding concern about adverse impacts on the City caused by new development including the Aberdeen project and the Town & Country Center.

DONNA CHABAN, spoke in support of Class 1 historic designation of Tahquitz Plaza.

MARK DAVIS, spoke in support of the Citywide Historic Resources Inventory Survey, and in support of Class 1 historic designation of Tahquitz Plaza. He expressed concern about the Town & Country Center and stated he believes the Specific Plan needs to be changed to remove the road that is proposed in the location of the T & C.

DAVID KEENE, spoke in support of Class 1 historic designation of Tahquitz Plaza.

1. CONSENT CALENDAR:

1.A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: JULY 14, 2015 MEETING.

Minutes for June and July 2015 HSPB meetings were included in the paper copy of the board members' packets, but not included in the electronic copy.

M/S/C (LaVoie/Dixon, 6-1 Ploss opposed) to continue consideration of approval of the June HSPB meeting minutes to the October HSPB meeting.

M/S/C (La Voie/Hays, 7-0) to continue consideration of approval of the July 2015 HSPB meeting minutes to the October HSPB meeting.

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

2.A. AN APPLICATION BY THE PALM SPRINGS PRESERVATION FOUNDATION (PSPF) FOR CLASS 1 HISTORIC DESIGNATION OF 600 THROUGH 750 EAST TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY, "TAHQUITZ PLAZA", ZONE REO (CASE HSPB 97), (APN's: 508-055-003 and 508-055-006).

Staff member Lyon summarized the staff report.

Chair Johns asked about the lack of a staff recommendation. (Director Fagg noted the Historic Resources Report provides the recommendation and the Board make its recommendation based on the findings of PSMC 8.05).

Member Dixon noted lack of a staff recommendation was unusual.

Member Burkett asked for clarification on the stay of demolition (Director Fagg noted the board needed to take action today on whether to extend the stay of demolition.)

Chair Johns opened the public hearing.

ERIC ROSENOW, Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, summarized their nomination on Tahquitz Plaza and requested the Board recommend class 1 status to the City Council.

ROB ERES, Nexus Companies / O & M LLC, owner, spoke in opposition of the nomination, noting CEQA analysis from previous entitlements for development on the site did not identify the site as historically significant.

MARK DAVIS, resident spoke in support of the historic nomination of Tahquitz Plaza.

NIKKI MCLAUGHLIN, representing the PSModern Committee spoke in support of the nomination of Tahquitz Plaza.

ROBERT IMBER, Palm Springs Modern Tours, and Trustee of the California Preservation Foundation spoke in support of Class 1 designation, and noted the building has been neglected by the current owner.

TRACY BACHMAN, member of PSPF and owner of Hotel Lautner in Desert Hot Springs, spoke in support of the Class 1 designation.

DANNY HILLER, spoke in support of the Class 1 designation.

DONNA CHABAN, resident, spoke in support of the Class 1 designation.

Chair Johns closed the public hearing.

Director Fagg noted Hugh Kaptur, architect of Tahquitz Plaza, submitted an e-mail to staff which was provided to the board members noting his support of the Class 1 historic designation and that the hearing be rescheduled to October so he can attend and add professional evidence on the importance of the site.

Member Ploss noted the increased density of the downtown project has heightened the importance of preserving buildings like Tahquitz Plaza.

Member La Voie opined that the size, bulk, scale and relationship to Tahquitz Canyon Drive, the use of the finned wing walls that are characteristic of this period of architecture, the use of glue-lam beams for window trim, and the use of a solid wood screen and skylights to control sun and daylight should be added as character-defining features of the site.

Member Burkett noted the quote by Patrick McGrew in the historic resources report about the under-recognized significance of "pueblo-modern" architecture and stated he would support the Class 1 designation.

Member Dixon asked whether the previous HSPB was made aware of the 2008 project proposed for the site that would have demolished this building. She asked for greater notification of new development projects in general. (Staff Lyon noted a demo permit was never requested on the 2008 project entitlement and noted lists for active development projects are on the City website and at the Planning counter). She opined that the City should survey buildings built more recently than 1969.

Member Williamson noted passage of time often changes the awareness of the historic importance of a building and also the economics of ownership of a building. He asked what the City's proactive role should be in working with property owners on sites that are not yet designated but are important to the City in terms of the public benefit of preserving the building.

Member Ploss noted the City's "One PS" neighborhood organization receives reports on development projects on which decisions of approval by the City have already passed and that this does not aid board members in making recommendations or providing input.

Member Hays spoke in support of the Class 1 nomination and stressed the importance of the City providing assistance for building owners to preserve important historic sites. He noted the characteristics of the building are unlike anything that the board has recently seen. It is extremely unique and to lose it would be a loss for the entire community.

Chair Johns asked about site visits, noting he did not have an opportunity for a site visit accompanied by a City staff member. He noted Councilmember Mills comment at a recent City Council meeting about the importance of preserving and repurposing historic buildings. He noted the City should be more proactive in assisting property owners to find an economic solution to adaptive reuse of historic sites. He suggested a subcommittee of the Board and City Council could work with this building owner to arrive at a win-win solution on the building. He opined that Lois Anderson who operated The Anderson Travel Agency had occupied the building for many years, and should be considered a person of significance associated with the site and that the site meets Criteria 2 (persons of significance) also.

Member Burkett asked how the City could approve a demo permit when there is not a City-approved replacement building proposed? (Staff Lyon explained the City Council established a policy that prohibited demolition of buildings when an adverse economic condition could occur as a result of such demolition.) Member Burkett suggested the Board should submit a recommendation to City Council that demolitions on buildings in downtown and major thoroughfares like Tahquitz should not occur without prior City approval of a replacement building or development.

City Attorney Holland noted an agenda item for such a recommendation could be placed on a future HSPB agenda, but it was not on the current agenda.

City Attorney Holland advised that the Board first must take action on Tahquitz Plaza nomination request and then consider other matters regarding a stay of demolition extension as an addition to the agenda.

Chair Johns noted his copy of the agenda which was taken from the City website on Thursday did not match that which was handed out in paper. He noted he had not had an opportunity for a site visit, that the staff report lacked a recommendation, and Mr. Kaptur was not present, and for these reasons felt action today on the application should be continued.

M/S/C (Johns/Dixon, 6-1 Ploss opposed) to continue the matter to the October HSPB meeting.

Member Ploss asked for clarification of when the current stay of demolition expires. (October 6, 2015)

Mr. Holland advised the stay could be added to the agenda, noting that the motion to continue would necessitate the need to add the extension of the stay to the Board's agenda after the posting of the agenda.

M/S/C (La Voie/Dixon, 7-0) to amend the agenda based on advice provided by the City Attorney on the board's action to continue the item, to add extending the stay of demolition to the Board's agenda.

M/S/C (La Voie/Dixon, 7-0) to extend the stay of demolition on Tahquitz Plaza for 60 days as per PSMC 8.05. (The 120-day stay was initiated on June 9, 2015 and would have ended on October 6, 2015. The action extends the stay for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days from October 7, 2015 until December 5, 2015, pursuant to PSMC 8.05.170 to allow time for the City Council to conduct a public hearing to consider the HSPB's recommendation on the matter.)

The Board took a five minute recess.

5D. TOWN & COUNTRY CENTER, 174 NORTH PALM CANYON DRIVE, (Case HSPB #51)
(Taken out of order).

Director Fagg summarized that the subject site is part of the Museum Marketplace Specific Plan (SP) and that the City Attorney is present to answer questions by the board.

Chair Johns noted that roughly a year ago the Board expressed desire to revisit Class 1 nomination and at that time City Attorney Holland advised that the Specific Plan would need to be amended for the council to re-consider Class 1 designation. The Board at that time asked staff to bring forward instructions on how to request the Council to amend the specific plan. He noted the recent action by the State in determining the Town & County Center (T & C) eligible for listing on the State and National Register of Historic Places. He asked whether the State's action voided the City's current CEQA analysis in the SP on the T & C?

City Attorney Holland noted that the Planning Commission and the City Council are the two entities that can initiate a specific plan amendment. He opined that the State's recent action on the T & C could perhaps be the basis for the board to request the Council to amend the specific plan and CEQA analysis.

Chair Johns asked if the Board could create something to bring to the Council to initiate amendment to the Specific Plan that the T & C should be preserved for adaptive reuse.

Board member Ploss asked about recent past revisions and changes to the Specific Plan and whether they each required amendment to the Specific Plan; (Attorney Holland explained that those changes were approved by the Council making findings that the changes were consistent with the Specific Plan and thus no amendment was required).

Chair Johns asked the board to discuss making a recommendation to City Council to take the T & C out of the Specific Plan so it could be considered for Class 1 designation.

Member La Voie asked whether there was a CEQA document associated with the Specific Plan (Attorney Holland noted yes, he believed it was adopted in 2009 with the last amendment to the SP). La Voie asked that, in the event that a development proposal were to come forward for the T & C site, would a CEQA revision be required now that the status of the property had changed via the State's determination of eligibility. (Attorney Holland said he saw this as a rhetorical question and it would need to be evaluated at the time a development application came forward.) Member La Voie opined that the board should request the City Council to amend the SP and its CEQA.

Member Ploss asked whether the City had information from the Tribe about their redevelopment plans relative to the proposed new street on the T & C site. (no information has been received by Planning).

Member Burkett asked where a citizen could find information about the current Specific Plan. (the Specific Plan is available on line on the City website and at the Planning Department).

Chair Johns summarized that the board can make a proposal or recommendation to the City Council to request an amendment to the Specific Plan.

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

3.A. UPDATE ON THE CITYWIDE HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY – HISTORIC RESOURCES GROUP, INC.

Staff Lyon summarized the staff memo. The update included three options for making the survey accessible on line to the public. Lyon noted HRG will be at the October meeting with the final draft of the survey effort.

Member Williamson asked how staff might use the survey to proactively reach out to owners of sites with possible historic significance to assist them with adaptive reuse opportunities. (Staff Lyon noted the current 2004 survey is regularly referenced when staff response to questions from property owners, developers, realtors and others.)

Member Dixon asked if the current survey is available to the public (yes, via the City website and at the planning counter).

Member Ploss asked questions about how the Las Palmas Business Historic District work by HRG ties in to the overall survey and expressed frustration with lack of progress on that initiative.

Member Williamson asked how the linkages between the context statement and the individual data sheets would work and asked that there be an ability to

hyperlink between the context statement and the individual data sheets. (Lyon explained they will be linked by APN and address and would discuss with HRG the ability to hyperlink sites).

Chair Johns noted HRG would address the board at the October meeting.

4. NEW BUSINESS:

4.A. AN APPLICATION BY W.C. FORD, OWNER, TO DEMOLISH ALL STRUCTURES AT 1850 SMOKETREE LANE; ROCK 13, 1R, A CLASS 3 HISTORIC SITE, ZONE R-1-C (CASE 3.3899 MAA).

Staff member Lyon summarized the staff report.

JOHN WALSH, Architect, representing the owner further clarified the scope of the project.

TRACY CONRAD, Executive Director of Smoketree Ranch stated the HOA had reviewed the application and concluded the existing home lacks sufficient historic integrity. She noted that regardless of the HSPB's action today, the demolition may not occur until the HOA architectural committee approves a replacement structure.

Member Ploss asked about the size of the proposed replacement structure (roughly 5,500 square feet) and whether the pool would be demolished (yes).

M/S/C (Williamson/La Voie, 6-0-1 Hays abstained) to take no action and allow the demolition of the structures at the site.

5. DISCUSSION:

5.A. 2016 MAY NATIONAL PRESERVATION MONTH (Burkett)

Member Burkett was appointed the chair of the subcommittee working on the development and production of the event. Member Ploss and Hays were appointed to the subcommittee and Member La Voie will provide backup technical support to the event.

Member Burkett noted the emphasis of the event would be preservation education and awareness to local residents and others.

The subcommittee will come back at future meetings to recommend a date for the event as well as other details. (Late March or April 16th tentative date.)

5.B. HSPB PARTICIPATION IN THE OCTOBER 2015 MODERNISM WEEK PREVIEW SHOW AT THE PALM SPRINGS AIR MUSEUM (OCTOBER 8-12, 2015)

Staff requested direction whether the Board desires to have a non-staffed booth/presence at the show similar to the booth at the February 2015 Modernism Show. The Board concurred it would like a presence and staff will coordinate that activity.

5.C. COACHELLA VALLEY HISTORIC PRESERVATION ALLIANCE – ROBERT ZAFRAN, BOARD MEMBER, RANCHO MIRAGE HP BOARD.

ROBERT ZAFRAN and RAY KELLER from Rancho Mirage Preservation Commission summarized their effort in planning a proposed valley-wide meeting of a representative of each municipal government preservation organization to share information and discuss issues in common.

Member Burkett was appointed to be the Palm Springs representative to participate in any meeting that may be arranged and will report back to the Board. Member Ploss was appointed as an alternate.

5.D. THE TOWN & COUNTRY CENTER, 175 NORTH PALM CANYON DRIVE – CLASS 1 NOMINATION DISCUSSION (CASE HSPB #51 - (Johns). (discussed earlier in the meeting as noted.)

5.E. OCTOBER 14TH, 2015 LIBRARY LECTURE SERIES PRESENTATION (Lyon, Dixon, LaVoie, Hays (Class 1 education subcommittee)

Staff Lyon explained the library asked for creation of a presentation on historic preservation for October 14 at the Mizell Center. He asked members for their assistance in assembling the presentation materials (PowerPoint presentation).

5.F. PALM SPRINGS PRESERVATION FOUNDATION LETTER REGARDING EXPANSION OF CITYWIDE SURVEY (Fagg)

Director Fagg distributed a letter from PSPF recommending coverage dates of the citywide survey be expanded beyond 1969. He noted if a date were to be proposed HRG suggested 1979. He explained the limitations of available funding to expand the current survey inventory initiative.

Chair Johns asked if PSMC 8.05 should be revised to update Class 3 dates to those structures built before 1969 to those built before 1979.

Member La Voie suggested it would be more appropriate to establish a timeframe, for example buildings 40 years of age or older, so that as resources age, the date in the ordinance doesn't need to be continually revised.

Member Ploss suggested approaching PSPF to conduct the survey for sites from 1969 to 1979. Director Fagg noted integration of two separate entities might be complicated to coordinate databases.

The board requested staff to initiate amending the ordinance to define Class 3 sites as those with structures 40-years of age or older, and work with the City Manager for funding to expand the survey effort for HRG to include structures built prior to 1979.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Chair Johns requested Town & Country be on the next agenda.

Member Ploss passed out survey sheets she authored on defining historic characteristics on City-owned buildings and asked board members to review and forward any recommended edits.

Chair Johns requested an update on status of stabilization and restoration of the Cornelia White House.

Chair Johns emphasized the Board's request to staff to reach out to the building owner of the Tahquitz Plaza to see if there is a way to be proactive and explore adaptive reuse of the facility. He requested Mr. Kaptur be invited to attend the next HSPB meeting on the topic.

Director Fagg reminded the board that at site visits deliberation among members should be avoided and only held during the public hearings to avoid violation of the Brown Act.

Member Burkett suggested the Board reach out to an individual such as Leo Marmol of architectural firm Marmol/Radziner to discuss viewpoints on adaptive reuse.

Member La Voie opined that the Board's determination to recommend designation should only be based on its historic merit, not what possible adaptive reuse might be possible.

Member Hays opined that the Board should assist in creating an environment in which adaptive reuse could be considered.

Member La Voie asked staff to remind the Tahquitz Plaza owner of the Board's action to allow more intensified development on the remainder of the site in exchange for preserving and adapting the Community Church.

Member Ploss asked staff to request Cornelia White to be agendized by the City Council to discuss the urgency of stabilization effort.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Director Fagg reminded the board during public hearings to confine discussion to the agendized topic and in making a recommendation to the City Council on historic designation, for the Board to identify the criteria or findings upon which it is basing its recommendation.

ADJOURNMENT: The Historic Site Preservation Board adjourned to its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, October 13, 2015, at 9:00 A.M, in the Large Conference Room at City Hall.

DRAFT