

HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

Palm Springs Convention Center, 277 N. Avenida Caballeros, Palm Springs, California 92262
www.palmspringsca.gov

MINUTES

May 9, 2017



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 Dick Burkett, Members Todd Hays, Bill La Voie, Vincent Marsh, Dan Kiser, Linda Dixon.

ABSENT: (none)

ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA: The Board accepted the agenda as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

JADE NELSON, on behalf of the PSMODCOM spoke in opposition of the demolition of the bank building.

STEVEN KELON, board of PSPF, spoke in opposition of demolition of the bank building.

FELIPE CASTENEDA, owner of the Los Arboles Hotel, spoke in opposition of the 750 Lofts project that may be going back to City Council based on the Court determination on that project.

JUDY DEERTRACK, spoke in opposition of the 750 Lofts project that may be going back to City Council.

FRANK TYSEN, spoke in opposition of the 750 Lofts project.

TIM ERKINS, spoke in opposition of the 750 Lofts project.

GONZALO RODRIGUEZ, General Manager of the Triada Hotel, spoke in opposition of the 750 Lofts project and pedestrian safety concerns caused by that oversized project.

The chair closed the public comment period.

1. CONSENT CALENDAR:

1.A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: APRIL 11, 2017 MEETING.
M/S/C (Dixon/La Voie, 7-0 to approve as corrected).

Member La Voie recused himself from the next agenda item and left the room.

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

2.A. CONSIDERATION OF CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION FOR "THE RACQUET CLUB" LOCATED AT 2743 NORTH INDIAN CANYON DRIVE (APN #504-040-038 & 504-133-001 and 002), ZONE PD 313, CASE HSPB #83. (KL)

Staff member Lyon summarized the staff report.

Member Burkett asked when any City staff were last on the site? (Fire event 2014, but not Planning staff.)

Member Hays inquired about the tennis courts.

Member Marsh inquired whether staff had considered processing this as a historic district? (Yes, but it is essentially a single site, and thus was processed as such.)

Member Dixon inquired whether district status would be more protective than a site (no, contributing sites in a historic district are treated like a Class 1 site).

The Chair opened the public hearing.

MARGARET SCOTT, representing Parkwood Apartments, noted the property is very blighted/derelict and an unmaintained eyesore and fire hazard. She expressed concern that historic designation would hamper sale and redevelopment of the site.

NANCY SPEAR, property manager for Camino del Sol, noted the property's very deteriorated conditions and encouraged the board to conduct site visits.

EDWARD WITEK, Club Condos, expressed support for Class 1 designation.

JADE NELSON, on behalf of the Palm Springs Modern Committee expressed support for Class 1 designation. Mr. Nelson also spoke on behalf of himself in support of Class 1 historic designation.

FRANK TYSEN, spoke in support of the possible historic designation and noted many properties were in very deteriorated conditions that subsequently have achieved Class 1 historic designation. He urged that the City should help the owners find good buyers to redevelop the site.

JUDY DEERTRACK, noted the importance of the Racquet Club to the history of Palm Springs and stated support for possible designation. She opined ordinances should be strengthened to deal with lack of property maintenance.

Seeing no further speakers, the Chair closed the public testimony portion of the hearing.

Member Burkett proposed that the City meet and collaborate with prospective developer / owners to discuss the benefits/incentives of historic designation and help dispel misinformation about designation. (Staff member Lyon explained staff's outreach efforts to date on the Racquet Club).

Member Dixon suggested a one-on-one meeting with the property owner to further educate them on opportunities and constraints related to historic designation.

Chair Johns noted that in 2014 the past board respected the owners' wishes to not proceed with designation, and in two years, the site has had no maintenance and nothing has been done to forward the previous project, despite City staff's considerable outreach to the owner.

Member Kiser asked about the scope for the previously approved project. (staff Lyon summarized the scope of the project originally approved in 2005).

Member Dixon asked about eminent domain (staff Lyon noted the City is very cautious about pursuing eminent domain).

Chair Johns noted other sites have been designated that were more deteriorated than this one.

Member Dixon asked about status of pending ordinance revisions. (Chair Johns noted Mayor Moon at the recent HSPB symposium spoke about revisions in the vacant building ordinance).

Member Hays spoke in support of designation, and opined that the current condition reflects "demolition by neglect" by the current owner. He also noted the tax incentives as a historic site should actually benefit the redevelopment of the site.

Member Kiser noted the realtors don't seem to have a good marketing plan capitalizing on its rich history.

Member Marsh noted his HOA (Racquet Club Cottages West) over the past 13 years wrote numerous complaints to the Racquet Club owners about lack of maintenance. He noted his support for Class 1 designation. He asked that City staff be "proactive" with the site to work with the owner on opportunities and incentives. He also noted he has experience in national tax credit projects and they can be substantial. He volunteered to meet with the owner, staff and others to assist and noted it could be a great site and a terrific adaptive reuse project.

Member Burkett noted a recent e-mail of May 5, 2017 from the owner was an opportunity to invite the owner to have discussion with the City on how to market or create incentives for redevelopment or sale of the property. After 13 years, something must be done "as a team" and "think out of the box". (Staff Lyon noted he will review the recommendations of the Board with the Planning Director who in turn can review it with the City Manager).

ACTION: M/S/C: (Dixon/Hays) to (1) recommend Class 1 historic site designation with findings as outlined in the staff report; (2) for Planning Department staff to look into possibility of the City taking the property through eminent domain if nothing goes forward with redevelopment of the property; and (3) that a member of the HSPB, a representative of one or more of the other preservation organizations in the City, and/or a City Council member meet with property owner on how they could benefit financially from possible historic designation. (6-0-1, La Voie recused).

Member La Voie rejoined the meeting.

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: (none.)

4. NEW BUSINESS: (None)

4.A. A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL REQUEST BY DAVID C. HOEY, OWNER, PROPOSING CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW SWIMMING POOL AND CABANA AT 300 EAST MOLINO ROAD, HSPB #43. (KL)

Staff member Lyon summarized the staff report.

Robin Hayne, representing the owner, summarized the project.

Chair Johns expressed support for the proposal and felt the proposed cabana would enhance the usability of the home by creating a physical buffer from the prevailing winds and exposure to the homes behind.

M/S/C La Voie/Dixon (7-0) to approve as proposed

4.B TKG MANAGEMENT, INC, OWNER, TO DEMOLISH A 6,616-SQUARE FOOT COMMERCIAL BUILDING LOCATED AT 1711 EAST PALM CANYON DRIVE; A CLASS 3 HISTORIC SITE (APN #510-020-001), ZONE CSC; CASE 3.4022 MAJ. (GM)

Staff member Lyon summarized the staff report.

Member Hays asked about the future development (Staff member Lyon noted an application is pending for redevelopment for a commercial fast food restaurant). He asked about the process for the new development relative to HSPB review. (Staff member Lyon noted the proposed new development would not be under consideration by the HSPB.)

Chair Johns asked for clarification of noticing of the agenda for this item (Staff member Lyon noted it is routine for agendas to be distributed to adjacent neighborhood organizations within a half mile of the project site).

Chair Johns spoke about the growing interest in the work and career of Howard Lapham and compared him to Hugh Kaptur's recent rise in recognition and interest by the community. He felt this is a special building and would be in favor of staying the demolition for further study.

Member Dixon expressed that the building should be considered for adaptive reuse instead of demolition.

Member Hays noted that the existing structure and the proposed new structure are in roughly the same footprint. He too would prefer it to be adaptively re-used, not demolished.

Member La Voie opined that it is an exemplary building from its period, is a contributor to the adjacent shopping center and complementary to the adjacent residential community in Smoketree Ranch.

Chair Johns agreed that "repurposing" would be preferable over demolition and a corporate edifice. He asked if an outright denial was a possible action of the Board (Staff member Lyon stated it was not an action available to the Board). He asked if the City's Sustainability Commission would see a project like this (Staff member Lyon responded that it would not).

Member Hays asked if the Board could explore tax incentives available to the owner. (Staff member Lyon noted yes, a Board recommendation on this would be possible.)

Member Burkett asked if the Board were to stay the demolition would the Board's sentiment about adaptive reuse be required of the owner. (Staff member Lyon responded no.)

Chair Johns summarized that if the Board stays demolition, the application for redevelopment could continue in its processing but demolition of the building could not be executed until the Board took further action to terminate its study.

M/S/C, Burkett/Marsh (7-0) to stay the demolition and initiate study to inform the board of possible historic significance of the site.

4.C. AN APPLICATION BY WILLIAM F. STEWART, OWNER, FOR CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION OF "THE CARL HAYMOND RESIDENCE" LOCATED AT 1415 NORTH CAMINO CENTRO (HSPB #107).

Staff Lyon summarized the staff report.

M/S/C (Dixon/Burkett (7-0) to receive the report, direct staff to schedule site visits and schedule a public hearing to consider the site for Class 1 designation.

5. DISCUSSION:

5.A. 2017 NATIONAL PRESERVATION MONTH SYMPOSIUM (Subcommittee Burkett, Kiser, Marsh).

Member Burkett summarized the event thanking many individuals and groups who participated and noting it was an outstandingly successful event. Total 330 attendees (145 in 2014 at the first event), 384 registered, 54 "no-shows". He suggested a 15 to 20% "over booking" in subsequent years to assure "all seats are filled to the extent possible". Special recognition for Willy Rhine, proprietor of 849 Restaurant & Lounge, for his gracious and wonderful hosting of the after-event catering. The board extended a special thanks to Dick Burkett and the subcommittee for its work.

Staff member Lyon thanked the board members for their dedication and commitment to the event, which has become the HSPB's "signature event", and hosting at the Convention Center gave it a professional quality.

Chair Johns commended the Mayor on his supportive comments and commitment to improving the vacant buildings ordinance.

The tours were well received but the La Plaza tour ran a bit long.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Member Dixon asked about the 750 Lofts project, noting she was not familiar with the term "de novo" and what the Board could do to re-discuss the matter. (Staff Lyon noted he would have

to gather more information on the status and pending action on the project.) Member Dixon asked for staff to follow up and advise the board on what actions it could take in its "re-review".

Member Hays noted the California Preservation Foundation Conference begins this week and the presentation on historic preservation by the Pasadena Realty Board, that Palm Springs should be able to do something similar.

Member Dixon recommended staff recommend in the budget for City Council to allocate funds for members of the HSPB to attend conferences and not have to pay "out of pocket" to participate in such events. (Staff member Lyon stated he would clarify the City's policy.)

Member Marsh urged that staff should also be participating in this sort of conference. (Staff member Lyon noted it is a matter of workload and time commitments.)

Member La Voie opined that part of the role of the board is to inform property owners of the assets that they possess when owning a historic resource. Buildings remain, owners change, but the responsibility to inform building owners is an important role for the board.

Member Burkett noted the Robinson's Building Bevmo tenant's obnoxious lights glaring out of the clerestory windows. (Lyon noted Director Fagg did communicate with the owner / store operator who noted little could be done, also that the adjacent neighborhood had filed a code complaint, and staff will follow up on status and report back to the Board).

Member Burkett asked about proposals for the Plaza Theater being shared with the Board (Staff member Lyon noted he would follow up with the director, and pursue the status of the Plaza Theater structural drawings.)

Member Burkett asked if there were any updates on the tribal assertion on historic preservation authority on tribal reservation (Staff member Lyon noted it is still under review with the City Attorney).

Chair Johns asked for an update on the stabilization of the Cornelia White Residence and La Plaza Theater re-development.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Staff Lyon noted the outreach presentation to the local realty board was still on the "to do" list but had not been assembled yet.

Staff Lyon noted an application from the Racquet Club Cottages West to restore the flat fascia on the buildings had been received and would be processed at a staff level.

ADJOURNMENT: The Historic Site Preservation Board will adjourn to its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, June 13, 2017, at 9:00 A.M, in the Large Conference Room at City Hall.

Flinn Fagg, AICP
Director of Planning Services

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