

**MINUTES OF THE
REDONDO BEACH PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING
MAY 7, 2014**

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Preservation Commission was called to order at 7:05 p.m. at City Hall, 415 Diamond Street, by Commissioner Callahan.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Callahan, Freeman, Jackson, (arrived at 7:40 p.m.) Ritums, Matsuno

Commissioners Absent: Penner-More, Guevara

Officials Present: Alex Plascencia, Assistant Planner
Margareet Wood, Recording Secretary

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Ritums led the members in the salute to the flag.

APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Matsuno, seconded by Commissioner Ritums, to approve the order of agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- Approval of affidavit of posting for the May 7, 2014 regular Preservation Commission meeting agenda
- Approval of minutes of the March 5, 2014 regular Preservation Commission meeting
- Receive and file the April 15, 2014 Strategic Plan Update
- Receive and file written communications

Motion by Commissioner Ritums, seconded by Commissioner Matsuno, to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion carried unanimously.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

EXCLUDED CONSENT CALENDAR

None.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Robert DeJernett, resident, reviewed and submitted a letter from himself dated May 7, 2013 and a document: *Proposed Amendments to the Mills Act Procedures to Provide City Compliance with State Law CGC 50280-50290* outlining his recommendations to modify the City application, Mills Act contract, and Preservation Ordinance.

Motion by Chairperson Callahan, seconded by Commissioner Ritums, to extend Mr. DeJernett's speaking time. Motion carried.

Mr. DeJernett proposed requirements for historic homeowners to maintain their properties and for the City to perform inspections. He said the City is losing money from Mills Act property owners who pay reduced property taxes. He said historic homeowners should be notified they must have property inspections every 5 years. He requested to postpone the current agenda items until the property owners are aware of the responsibilities. He requested an agenda item to discuss his recommendations.

Chairperson Callahan advised that she is following the recently approved project on Francisca and she planned to view each home on the Landmark roster. She said many homes she sees are being improved and all are in good repair.

In response to Commissioner Matsuno, Mr. DeJernett said it is the City's responsibility to perform the inspections and the Commission should follow up.

Planner Plascencia said the topic is not agendized and can be addressed independently or as a future agenda item.

Motion by Commissioner Freeman, seconded by Commissioner Ritums, to receive and file the document from Mr. DeJernett. Motion carried unanimously.

EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public Hearing to Consider a Request for Removal of Property at 810-814 S. Catalina Avenue from the Potential Historic Resource List

Planner Plascencia recalled the request was denied by the Preservation Commission in November 2013; however he said it is necessary to reconsider because incomplete findings were made and all criteria were not considered. He also said it has been established that the Preservation Commission is authorized make the finding for CEQA exemption without an environmental review. He said staff believes the Commission can determine the property is not historic, and he recommended approval of the request.

Chairperson Callahan spoke against circumventing potential historic resource requirements.

Commissioner Freeman said the analysis is thorough and the additional criteria demonstrates the property was not a court when it was first built and did not have the characteristics; but rather a portion was added later to make it a court. He said the property appears asymmetrical.

Commissioner Matsuno said the additional criteria supports the fact that the property is in the characteristic style of a court. He said only 3 other courts remain. He said the architecture is a special element and the open feeling characteristic of that style and type and is being lost. He said this type of architecture is nearly gone and he did not support the demolition.

Commissioner Ritums said the property is modern, inviting, and open, and she did not support the demolition.

Commissioner Matsuno was not convinced the property was not designed as a court, adding that possibly the entire property was not available originally.

Chairperson Callahan was critical of owners who allow their properties to deteriorate in order to justify demolition.

Elizabeth Srour, agent for the property, clarified the owners did not intentionally allow the property to deteriorate. She said the construction occurred over a 12-year period, the property does not conform to zoning and building codes, and insufficient parking is available. She also said the property does not meet historic property criteria. She said properties are evaluated according to guidelines and it is unfair to compromise use based on nostalgia.

Dave Kaplan, Historic Architect, said the property was built by a number of owners over several years. He added the smooth exterior has been changed.

Kim Wooden, property owner, said her family purchased the property in 1980. She said the business partner who managed the property did not maintain it. She said her family did not inspect the property due to personal problems; therefore the existing deteriorated condition was not discovered until 2009.

At 7:40 p.m. Commissioner Jackson entered the meeting.

Paul Gordon Laughlin, property owner, said he was unaware the property was not being maintained, and he is currently in litigation with his business partner.

Marci Guillermo, resident, recommended postponing a decision until the litigation determines who is responsible for neglecting the facility.

Chairperson Callahan closed the public hearing.

Planner Plascencia pointed out the fact that preservation principles include preserving superior examples. He said the courtyard design was built over a period of time and the property was built out of the period of significance of this type of building and does not epitomize that architectural style. He said a decision cannot be based on rarity.

Commissioner Matsuno said the property is one of 5 top examples.

Motion by Commissioner Matsuno to deny the removal and demolition.

Motion failed for lack of a second.

Motion by Commissioner Freeman, seconded by Commissioner Jackson, to approve the request for demolition.

Motion failed by the following vote:

Freeman – Yes

Jackson – Yes

Matsuno – No

Ritums - No

Callahan - Abstain

At 7:57 p.m. Planner Plascencia requested a recess to research voting protocol.

The meeting was reconvened at 8:15 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Callahan, Freeman, Jackson (arrived at 7:40 p.m.), Ritums, Matsuno

Commissioners Absent: Penner-More, Guevara

Officials Present: Alex Plascencia, Assistant Planner
Margareet Wood, Recording Secretary

Planner Plascencia clarified that cases with no action are appealable to City Council. He recommended discussing the findings and considering a substitute motion in order to reach a decision. He said the findings support staff's recommendation to approve the request; and a motion to deny the request requires supporting findings.

Chairperson Callahan read the findings contained in the staff report.

Motion by Commissioner Ritums, seconded by Commissioner Jackson, to approve staff's recommendation to approve the request for demolition.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Freeman – Yes

Jackson - Yes

Ritums - Yes

Matsuno - No

Callahan - Abstain

Public Hearing to Consider a Request for Designation of the Building and Property at 211 Avenue E as a Local Historic Landmark

Planner Plascencia explained the property underwent a significant remodel during which termite and water damage necessitated extensive preservation and restoration work. He said the new exterior closely resembles the original, and he referred to the consultant determination that the property is unique and eligible for landmark designation. He recommended approval of the designation.

Allen Vick, property owner, said complete documentation of the restoration, including the portions damaged and replaced by termites and dry rot are available. He said the restored portion looks almost the same as the original structure and the second story is only visible from across the street. He said the building blends with the neighborhood.

He said his work also included interior renovation, earthquake retrofit, and a new foundation. He expressed his long-term plan to maintain the property.

In response to Commissioner Jackson, Mr. Vick said the restoration lasted 2 years.

Chairperson Callahan closed the public hearing.

Chairperson Callahan complimented the appearance of the property.

In response to Commissioner Callahan, Planner Plascencia said it is difficult to determine how much of the original structure remains because records are not kept longer than 3 years. He added that some parts were preserved and some were relocated. He said the new addition will be assessed at the market rate.

Commissioner Rltums asked about a minimum requirement for Mills Act applications.

Commissioner Matsuno commended the owner for his efforts to save the structure.

Mr. Vick said the preservation consultant recommends applying the Mills Act to the original 1,425 square feet. He said the front and side walls were maintained; and the floor joists and stucco were replaced with a duplicate texture.

In response to Commissioner Jackson regarding future maintenance, Planner Plascencia explained that Secretary of Interior standards require designated properties to keep within the spirit of the original in terms of scale and mass.

In response to Chairperson Callahan, Mr. Vick said the original 1,425 square feet remain and approximately 2,000 square feet have been added on top.

Chairperson Callahan said the Mills Act was meant to preserve old buildings in their original state and not 1/3 of a large new house. She agreed the new stucco matches perfectly. She said she has a problem not knowing how much of the original structure remains. She added that most of the properties of that era were 800 or 900 square feet.

Mr. Vick said the 1930 drawings show 1,474 feet. He said the front main portion has nothing over it; and the addition is located to the side and rear.

Commissioner Freeman supported the application. He said the property would not exist without the owner's efforts which have made a contribution to the community.

In response to Commissioner Matsuno, Planner Plascencia said a general policy shift regarding distinguishing additions from original structures can be discussed during subcommittee reports. He said he can work with the applicant to clarify square footage and consult the County Assessor about applying the Mills Act to a percentage of the reassessed building. He said the Commission can direct staff to continue researching before making a decision.

Motion by Commissioner Ritums, seconded by Commissioner Jackson, to approve the request. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing to Consider a Request for Designation of the Building and Property at 306 N. Gertruda Avenue as a Local Historic Landmark

Planner Plascencia said the Craftsman building was built in 1921 and is located within the Gertruda Avenue Historic District. He said the original wood siding, exposed beams and rafter tails, promenade, fireplace, and the majority of windows are still intact; and the bungalow is a hybrid because of its ornate porch. He recommended approval of the designation.

In response to Chairperson Callahan, Steve Bopp, property owner, said the rear building was previously a garage.

In response to Commissioner Ritums, Mr. Bopp said the front windows open like doors, the windows facing the driveway do not open, and the windows on the sides of the fireplace are sealed.

Commissioner Matsuno commented on the property's interesting historic background. He mentioned a Mills Act reference to significant historic figures. He said bungalows were built for the working class and it seems like unlikely that a historic figure lived there.

Chairperson Callahan closed the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Matusno, seconded by Commissioner Ritums, to approve the application. Motion carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Minor Alterations

Commissioner Matsuno reported the relocation of a stairway and the elimination of a window were approved for the property at 629 South Broadway. He also said the property on Catalina Avenue was discussed and the use of matching siding for the addition was approved.

Planner Plascencia said the policy of the previous Commission was to require a differentiation in siding size and texture on additions. Regarding the property on Catalina Avenue, he said the most visible element on the addition, the new pad, clearly distinguishes it from the original. He also said the wood sidings are different and he was comfortable with allowing the board-and-batten siding to remain. He explained the property owners hired a different architect who was unclear about Commission

recommendations; and the Minor Alterations subcommittee decision allowed them to proceed in a timely manner.

COMMISSION ITEMS AND REFERRALS TO STAFF

Chairperson Callahan requested an update on the project at 225 South Francisca Avenue.

In response to Chairperson Callahan, Planner Plascencia said the July Commission meeting is normally canceled unless an application is submitted.

ITEMS FROM STAFF

Planner Plascencia reminded the members to complete their ethics training and conflict of interest forms.

Planner Plascencia reported the historic variance for 519 South Catalina Avenue was approved by the Planning Commission and the next phase is construction documents.

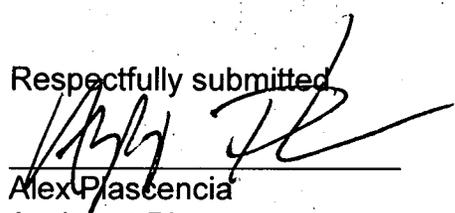
In response to Commissioner Matsuno, Planner Plascencia said the properties listed on the Planning Division memorandum include Planning Commission approvals and administrative entitlements; and the document is included to keep the Commission up to date. He said historic properties will be noted.

In response to Commissioner Freeman, Planner Plascencia explained that, within CEQA, categorically exempt is determined on routine applications or cases that do not warrant further environmental review.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Callahan adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m. to the next regular meeting on July 2, 2014.

Respectfully submitted,



Alex Plascencia
Assistant Planner