

Historical Landmarks & Records Advisory Commission

The regular meeting of the Historic Landmarks & Records Commission was held at the Fresno County Library, Central Library, Sarah McCardle Room, on November 20, 2008.

Members present: Steve Barile, David Berkey, Nancy Enloe, Judy Ganulin, James Kus, Ethan Kytle, Elizabeth Laval, Randy McFarland, Bud Olson, Penny Raven, Susan Pappas, Donald Shantz, Roger Taylor

Members absent: John Baltierra, Peggy Bos, Aileen Bos

Others present: Chris Johnson, Bill Secrest Jr., Celeste Brown, Elida Mendoza, Karen Bosch Cobb, Lauren MacDonald

AGENDA ITEMS

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Randy McFarland.
2. Welcome and Call to Order: Chairman McFarland called the meeting to order and welcomed all guests. Mrs. Bosch Cobb introduced Dr. Ethan Kytle the newest member of the Commission.
3. Adoption of Agenda: The L. C. Wesley Garage (Arco Garage) was moved to follow "Comments from the Public." There were no other changes, and the agenda was approved.
4. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of September 18, 2008 were approved with the following corrections/additions/clarifications:
 - Page 3 item 10 a) 3) d) Add (DeVaux Home) at end of sentence.
 - Page 4 item 11 b) 1) Change last sentence as follows: Commissioner Taylor has asked the Commission for assistance gathering information ~~from someone who has knowledge about a church in Del Rey.~~ on several other buildings. Susan Pappas volunteered to assist.
 - Page 4 item 11 d) Commissioner ~~Laval~~ Enloe
5. Comments from the Public: None.
6. Landmarks
 - a) L. C. Wesley Super Garage (Arco Garage): Mr. Chris Johnson and Mr. Bruce Owdom are co-owners of the garage. Mr. Johnson reported that the renovation project is well underway, and the priority right now is to stabilize the building. Work on the interior of the structure has included major structural repairs, work on the electrical system, re-roofing, reframing the roof, environmental cleanup and addressing health issues. Elevations and plans for the entire building are being reviewed, the building has passed the necessary fire inspection, and the address is back on the building. A lot of paperwork and historic research has been done, and a construction loan will be secured for the roof work. The goal is to put the building back to historic use as a parking garage

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on the ground floor, and maybe also on the second level. Retail space may also be added at some point.

Mr. Johnson and Mr. Owdom are interested in moving forward with the historic landmark application/nomination, as this is an important step in order to be able to use the historic building code for the project. During discussion it was noted that the Fresno City and County Historical Society owns the façade and historic easement. Since the Fresno County Board of Supervisors' policy requires owner concurrence, the Society must also give their approval to submit the application.

Commissioner Taylor will contact Mr. Johnson about any additional information needed on the application. Commissioners congratulated Mr. Johnson on the work done so far. Mr. Johnson has been involved in several downtown projects: the Santa Fe Depot, the Rowell Building, the Virginia Hotel, the TW Patterson Building, and a historic house near Community Hospital.

7. California History & Genealogy Room Acquisitions: Mr. Bill Secrest Jr. shared the 2009 Kingsburg Historical Society calendar which the Society has been printing for about 5 to 6 years. He also commented on the Vernacular Architecture Forum held in Fresno recently. In order to assist Commissioner Raven with a project, he researched historic preservation ordinances and found 44 ordinances throughout California. A set of these ordinances was sent to Mr. Bernard Jimenez in County Public Works.

8. Records: None.

9. Status report on placement of the first Centennial Communities on the Register of Centennial Communities: On September 23, 2008, the Board of Supervisors approved placement of the first 56 communities on the register. Distribution of the certificates was left to the Board of Supervisors per their request. Commissioners discussed the method to be used for adding future communities to the list and decided the best procedure would be to review the list of eligible communities each year in January.

10. Landmarks (continued from #6 above)

a) Inventory of Historic Sites in Fresno County

- 1) Pending Applications – None.
- 2) Applications Under Review

- a) Hall of Records: Mr. Secrest Jr. said the draft application is 44 pages long, and he expects it to move forward for consideration by the State Historic Preservation Commission.
- 3) Suggestions for other applications
 - a) Sierra Sky Park: Mr. Secrest Jr. said that at this time Mr. Darnell is thinking of suspending the National Register application and pursuing a County designation instead. The National Register requirement for a historic district is that all the structures in the designated area must be 50 years or older; it would be difficult for the Sky Park to meet this criteria since most of the construction took place after 1958. During discussion some of the Commissioners said that the 50 years or older requirement can be waived depending on the importance of the structures, and special consideration can be requested. Mr. Secrest Jr. spoke with Mr. John Powell about evaluating the structures in the Sky Park area, but that does not appear to be a good option due to the expense involved.
 - b) L. C. Wesley Super Garage: Discussed in item #6 above.
 - c) Inventory of Historic Sites in Fresno County: No discussion.
- b) Centennial Farms – None.
- c) Centennial Businesses – None.
- d) Courthouse Park grounds markers/memorials and sculptures – None.
- e) Discussion of threatened buildings in the City of Fresno: No discussion.
- f) Discussion of threatened buildings in the County of Fresno: Commissioner Taylor said it is important to preserve tankhouses; they are quickly disappearing.

11. Reports and Administrative Action Items

- a) Chairman's Report
 - 1) Begin tour planning for remainder of 2008 and 2009. During this discussion Chairman McFarland and the Commission talked about destinations for future tours and they mentioned the following :

- Next spring: Go back to Westside. Possible sites: Mercey Hot Springs, site of Fresno City. Mr. Bill Secrest Jr. suggested Mr. John Walker as a tour guide for Fresno City.
- Del Rey, New Idria
- Museum at Sierra High campus; powerhouse at Shaver, museum at Huntington Lake.
- Sierra Sky Park
- Repeat SJ & E
- Fresno City Firefighters Museum
- Join Archeological Society for their spring tour of Westside-Three Rocks.

b) Vice-Chairman's Report

- 1) Update on Del Rey historic properties: Commissioners Taylor and Pappas are progressing with research on the Del Rey properties, and they expect to submit some nominations after their research is completed. Commissioner Pappas said California State University, Fresno has been researching an important vacant building in Del Rey. She did not identify the building.

On another subject, Commissioner Taylor said an article published in the *Fresno Bee* referred to the Pinehurst Historic District. Chairman McFarland thought the area should have been referred to as a historic community. Commissioner Taylor will follow up to see if the reference is accurate. Commissioner Taylor distributed an article on historic preservation he read in a newspaper on a recent trip to Hawaii.

c) Secretary's Report

- 1) Attendance Report: Mrs. Bosch Cobb reminded Commissioners that per an ordinance of the Board of Supervisors ordinance members who miss in excess of two meetings in a calendar year are considered to have resigned.
- 2) Status of Vacancies: There is one vacancy remaining on the Commission, a Board of Supervisors appointed position in District 3. Mr. Gene Rose had been mentioned as a possible appointee; however, he declined for personal reasons. There is a waiver process available by petition to the Board.

- 3) Other: A meeting for the subcommittee on historic ordinances will be scheduled by Mrs. Bosch Cobb's office. The HLRC website has been updated with a picture of the Commission. Mrs. Bosch Cobb will look into Chairman McFarland's suggestion to have a direct link to the HLRC website from the County's page.

d) Commissioner's Reports

Commissioner Pappas said she enjoyed helping Commissioner Taylor with the Del Rey project. The area has changed a lot and there are many new immigrants.

Commissioner Ganulin announced she will not ask to be reappointed after her term expires in January. Chairman McFarland and fellow Commissioners thanked her for her service on the Commission.

Commissioner Kus will notify Chairman McFarland when a date is set for the archaeology trip to Cantua Creek.

Commissioner Laval said an application for historic designation for the Fig Garden Racket Club is being prepared and it will be submitted to the Commission at a future date.

Commissioner Enloe shared highlights of her trip to Central America last month. She talked about the construction of the Panama Canal.

Commissioner Shantz shared information about a postman who delivers mail in Del Rey. A book was written about the history of Del Rey, and Mr. Shantz said he would find out who wrote it.

Chairman McFarland wrote a paper on "Ghost Towns in Fresno County" for the Fowler Evening Club. Mrs. Bosch Cobb was interested in getting a copy for the library.

A signup sheet was circulated for the photographic floor tile. Commissioners are interested in purchasing to support the Pop Laval Gallery's scanning project. Members signed up on a volunteer basis. Mrs. Bosch Cobb will coordinate collection of the donated funds.

12. Announcements – The next meeting will be on January 15 in Fowler if the meeting room is available.
13. Adjournment – There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.