

Historical Landmarks & Records Advisory Commission

The regular meeting of the Historic Landmarks & records Commission was held at the Sunnyside Regional Library on March 13, 2008.

Members present: Randy McFarland, Elizabeth Laval, Nancy Enloe, John Baltierra, Susan Pappas, Aileen Bos, Jim Kus, Don Shantz, Roger Taylor
Members absent: Bud Olson, Steve Barile, Penny Raven, Judy Ganulin, Peggy Bos
Others present: Dan Martin, Esther Martin, Bill Secrest Jr., Consuelo Velasco, Sharon Hiigel, Nancy Marquez, Bill Darnell, Karen Bosch Cobb, Elida Mendoza

AGENDA ITEMS

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Randy McFarland.
2. Welcome and Call to Order: Chairman McFarland welcomed all guests and Commission members. Ms. Elizabeth Laval was introduced as the newest member of the Commission.
3. Adoption of Agenda: The agenda was approved with the order of the items rearranged to accommodate guests who had to leave early. Item 10. a) 3) a) was corrected to *Sierra Sky Park* (not Fresno Sky Park).
4. Comments from the Public: None.
5. Approval of Minutes of January 18, 2008: Mr. Bill Secrest Jr. was added to the list of people present. The minutes were approved as corrected.
6. California History & Genealogy Room Acquisitions: Mr. Bill Secrest Jr. shared some of the postcards recently acquired. There were postcards of the Crescent Ranch in Trimmer, the Big Creek Hotel, the Sanger business district, the lumber company in Kingsburg, a July 4th parade in Reedley, and the riverboat in Firebaugh.
7. Cultural Arts District: Mrs. Nancy Marquez secretary for the Fresno's Cultural Arts District Association (CADA) spoke about the properties in the area that comprises the district. Some of the businesses in the area are the Fresno Metropolitan Museum, the Trade Center, KVPT, the Warnors, the African American Museum, Arte Americas, lofts built by Reza Assemi, and several churches. Many of the buildings are being converted to office space. Mrs. Marquez said CADA is very supportive of Fresno County Library's plans for a new library in the area. One of CADA's primary goals is to draw art/artists to the area.

Mrs. Bosch Cobb spoke briefly about Fresno County Library's plans for a new Central Library. A poll will be conducted in March or April this year to determine if there is community support for this project.
8. Records: Commissioner Aileen Bos commented that there is a lack of documentation of the stories of veterans in Clovis and Fresno, and she is personally working on a project to record their memories.

9. Report from Subcommittee to consider establishing a Centennial Cities or Communities component: Commissioners reviewed an updated list prepared by Commissioner Pappas, and they suggested a few additional changes. Commissioners thanked her for taking the lead role to research the information for this project. There was some discussion about Three Rocks and Jose Basin and whether they are 100 years old. Commissioner Baltierra will research Three Rocks.

It was moved by Commissioner Kus, seconded by Commissioner Enloe and carried to ask the subcommittee to bring a list of communities that have been in existence for 100 years or more continuously to the next meeting for a vote by the Commission.

The newly designed certificates for historic designation were circulated for the Commissioner's review.

10. Landmarks

a) Inventory of Historic Sites in Fresno County

- 1) Pending Applications – Update from subcommittee appointed to review the application

a) Velasco House: At the last meeting the Commission asked that more work be done to strengthen this application. Mr. Secrest, Jr. and Commissioners McFarland and Barile worked as a subcommittee to review the application. After their review they recommended to Mrs. Bosch Cobb that the Commission withdraw its previous approval, and they encouraged Mrs. Velasco to submit a new application. Since the house was moved from its original location and there were questions related to historical significance, the subcommittee's recommendation was that the new application focus on the architectural structure. Mrs. Velasco did not object, and she gave an update on the status of the house. She said the exterior is being painted the original color.

There was no further discussion and it was moved by Commissioner Enloe, seconded by Commissioner Taylor, and carried to withdraw the Commission's approval for the first application, and to encourage Mrs. Velasco to submit a new application. Mrs. Velasco will contact Mr. Secrest, Jr. for assistance with the new application.

2) Applications Under Review

a) Hall of Records: The next step in the application process is a preliminary review of the application by someone at the state office before it moves on to a full review by the State Office of Historic Preservation board. Mr. Secrest, Jr. estimates that the preliminary review will occur in April or May, and he expects the board will meet in June.

b) Gefvert Residence (Sheldon Family Residence): The combined application to place this property on the County's List of Historic Places and Centennial Farms was approved by the Board of Supervisors on March 11, 2008.

3) Suggestions for Other Applications

a) Sierra Sky Park: Mr. Bill Darnell a resident of Sierra Sky Park gave a historical overview of Sierra Sky Park and its founders William V. and Doris Smilie. The project began in 1946 with 130 acres that include an airport landing field and residential housing. It has a privately-owned public-use 30 acre landing area. The airport permits are issued by Caltrans, and Caltrans conducts inspections every two years. The homeowners pay the insurance and the maintenance for the runway. Mr. Darnell is interested in historic designation for this community, and in 2002 he contacted the State of California to begin this process. At that time he was unable to obtain property owner concurrence from Herndon-Doolittle Associates the owner of the runway property. The runway is owned by Herndon-Doolittle and leased by the homeowners.

Chairman McFarland and members of the Commission said they consider the property worthy of local, state, and national historic designation, and they discussed a possible historic district designation. Commissioner Taylor said they only need 80% of the property owners for a historic district application. Mrs. Bosch Cobb wondered if the homeowner's association could represent the property owners.

After further discussion, Chairman McFarland encouraged Mr. Darnell to get together with the property owners association to complete an application using the state forms. He also suggested that Mr. Darnell notify all property owners, and that the Commission notify the City of Fresno Historic Preservation Commission once the application is received. The property is located in the city and the county. He also recommended notifying Fresno County Supervisor Susan Anderson since this property is in her district. Mr. Darnell will contact Mrs. Bosch Cobb and Mr. Secrest, Jr. for assistance with the application.

b) Arco Garage: Escrow has closed, and Mr. Chris Johnson and Mr. Bruce Owdom are now the owners of the building, and as discussed at a previous meeting, the Fresno City and County Historical Society owns the façade. They hope to submit an application for historic designation by the next meeting.

c) Inventory

1) Discuss how to get applications for new historic sites – No discussion.

b) Centennial Farms

1) Gefvert Ranch (Sheldon Family Residence): The dual application to place this property on the County's List of Historic Places and Centennial Farms was approved by the Board of Supervisors on March 11, 2008.

c) Centennial Businesses – None.

d) Courthouse Park grounds/markers/memorials and sculptures – None.

- e) Discussion of threatened buildings in the City of Fresno – None.
- f) Discussion of threatened buildings in the County of Fresno – Commissioner Baltierra mentioned the Miller & Lux building in Firebaugh is in poor condition. One of the problems is mold in the basement.

11. Reports and Administrative Action Items

a) Chairman's report

1) Field Trips

a) Report on March 8 field trip to the Firebaugh area: Chairman McFarland reported that the group enjoyed a great field trip and a "tremendous" feast. Others who attended said they were very impressed and enjoyed themselves very much. They all thanked Commissioner Baltierra for his enthusiasm in organizing the events of the day. They also extended their appreciation to Mr. Baltierra's mother for helping prepare the food and to everyone else who contributed. Mercey Hot Springs, Fresno City, and Mendota were suggested as destinations for a future trip.

b) Leland Stanford Museum, Sacramento: On February 21 Commissioners traveled to Sacramento to tour the Leland Stanford Museum and the capitol. The trip was organized by Commissioner Raven, and those who attended said it was wonderful, and they greatly enjoyed it. They were grateful for all of the time Commissioner Raven spent planning every detail, including the luncheon. - add Lt Gov gave certificate to Randy

c) Election of Officers: To be held in May.

b) Vice-Chairman's Report: Commissioner Taylor said he discovered a tankhouse at a house at 3805 E. Butler in Fresno. He added that the tankhouse is of a unique style unlike others previously identified in this area.

c) Secretary's Report:

1) Attendance Report: Distributed. No discussion.

2) Status of Vacancies: There are two Commission appointed vacancies, and one Board of Supervisors appointed vacancy in Board of Supervisors District 3 (Supervisor Henry Perea). Mr. David Berkey submitted an application to Supervisor Perea's office for consideration.

Mrs. Bosch Cobb reported that Commissioner Bud Olson appealed his absences, and the Board of Supervisors reinstated his appointment.

Ms. Sharon Hiigel is interested in joining the Commission, and she is in the process of submitting an application. Mrs. Bosch Cobb was notified by Commissioner Kus that a CSUF staff member was also sending a membership application for consideration.

d) Commissioners' Reports:

Commissioner Laval offered copies of photos from her archives if they are needed for applications.

Commissioner Kus announced an upcoming archaeology program featuring a speaker from Bulgaria.

10. Announcements

The next meeting will be held on May 15. The date was changed because of Easter. The location will depend on meeting room availability. Commissioners want to go to Sanger or Selma in the spring.