

Heritage Preservation Board
Special Meeting of the Larkspur Heritage Preservation Board
Proposed Amendment of the Historic Resources Inventory

May 10, 2007

Call to Order

Chair Grayson Marshall called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Present: Boardmembers Sallyanne Wilson, Helen Heitkamp, Nancy Curley, Marilyn River, Kathie Kearley-Green, Consultant Dan Peterson, Planning Director Nancy Kaufman, Planner Kristin Teiche and Recording Secretary Nathalie Bamatter.

Absent: Boardmember(s) Jim Adams

Note: See the minutes for April 5, 2007 as the format was the same. The only substantive difference is Item 4, Open Forum.

- 1. Chair Welcome – Grayson Marshall.**
- 2. History of Larkspur’s Preservation Effort – Nancy Curley, Vice-Chair.**
- 3. Benefits and Restrictions of being listed on the Historic Inventory – Planning Staff.**
- 4. Power Point Presentation – Dan Peterson, Consulting Historic Architect**
- 5. Open Forum – Q&A – Chair Marshall opened the meeting to the public.**

James Neto, 409 Holcomb, said his house was built prior to 1920 but was in such poor repair when he bought it he made substantial repairs. He did not agree with the claim that the Heritage designation would add to the value of his home. He expressed concern about possible resale values for his property if it is added to the Inventory. He had potential buyers interested in his property but he believed that they probably would want to tear the existing home down.

Boardmember Heitkamp said that the house was quite large in comparison to the lot and that if it was torn down it might not be able to be rebuilt as large.

Mr. Neto thought the only value of his property was land value and asked what he needed to do to prevent having his property added to the inventory. Planner Teiche said he needed to send a letter to the Planning Department.

Robert Stewart, 116 William, said

- he had attended the previous meeting and he agreed with the previous owner that he did not want his property added to the Inventory. He was very angry that this process was occurring. He had read past Heritage

Preservation Board minutes and he felt the Board was not forthcoming with full disclosure of their intentions.

- Said he was angry at the previous meeting and is still angry
- He did not agree with Consultant Peterson that preserving a home was a form of “green” building. He said there was no comparison between an older building and a modern one built with contemporary materials.
- He said a seismic upgrade to old homes was expensive.
- He said the peer review required for Heritage was expensive
- He noted in the Board’s minutes that they wanted to create Heritage Districts

Christine, 437 Holcomb,

- shared the same concerns as Mr. Stewart.
- said the notice was misleading as it said that her address was “proposed” to be added.
- questioned how six Boardmembers and one consultant would be allowed to make this change.
- had read Heritage Preservation Board minutes from March 20, 2006 and said that the next step would be an H overlay and a zoning change to a heritage designation
- thought the process was similar to eminent domain
- did not see any positive aspects
- said the Mills Act won’t benefit most people
- said the designation would add additional review and costs
- said the designation would possibly require an (Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and would have to follow the Secretary of the Interiors Standards just because you have an old house
- wants the Board to reconsider proposal and wants no part of the process.

Planning Director Kaufman said that the recommendations would be given to the City Council. The purpose of these meetings was to get each homeowner’s history. If permits are not in the file and you have additional information then please provide it. She further clarified that CEQA required identification of properties over 50 years old and the eligibility for a list. She said that even if properties are not formally identified on a list they are still subject to CEQA.

Rebecca Archey, 63 Madrone, said if she sold her home would the resale report require her to meet current codes. Planner Teiche clarified that the resale reports were primarily for health and safety issues. The reports notes if electrical service needs updating, water heater regulations and any illegal construction.

Chris Tilley, 53 Olive, asked if the City was willing to pick up the additional fees required for review. Planning Director Kaufman said she did not think that would happen.

Planner Teiche also clarified that a previous speaker (Christine Main) had given

incorrect information. The zoning of the properties added to the inventory list would not change. If your property is zoned R1 it would remain R1. She also said that the Heritage Board has only spoken of an H-overlay in general terms. Currently only downtown Larkspur and a portion of the Escalle Winery are part of an H-overlay and there is no intention at this time to create Historic Districts for R-1 neighborhoods.

Douglas Main, 437 Holcomb, asked who qualified for a Mills Act contract. Planner Teiche said that A rated properties qualified and briefly explained that the Mills Act was a contract between the owner of the historic property and the City which allowed for improvements to the historic structure in exchange for tax savings. Boardmember Wilson also said that historic building codes can be applied to historic homes.

James Holmes, 217 Madrone, said that having a home designated as historic would prevent monster homes and that assurance would offset any loss of property value.

Josie and Mike Pometto, 144 Magnolia asked if the City would be willing to help maintain their palm tree. Planning Director Kaufman said it was unlikely.

Boardmember River said that the Heritage Preservation Board is directed by the Historic Elements of the General Plan to compile the historic inventory and make recommendations for inclusion.

As there were no additional questions or comments Chair Marshall thanked the participants and closed the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathalie Bamatter
Recording Secretary