

Heritage Preservation Board

Regular Meeting

April 21, 2008

Miscellaneous Business

A. Call to Order

Nancy Curley, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Present: Board Members Marilyn River, Sallyanne Wilson, Helen Heitkamp, Grayson Marshall, Kathleen Kearley-Green, Planning Director Nancy Kaufman, Planner Kristin Teiche

Guests: Mayor Kathy Hartzell

Absent: James Adams, Recording Secretary Nathalie Bamatter

Staff Report – Kristin Teiche: Planning Director Nancy Kaufman announced that the tentative date for the next public hearing on the preliminary development plan for the Niven Nursery site is May 6, 2008.

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Regular Business Items

1. Amendment of Larkspur's Inventory of Historic Resources.

Planner Teiche announced that she has received the final list of buildings proposed for addition to the inventory from consultant Dan Peterson. She will complete the transfer of the board's research on each building into the database so the completed inventory forms are available to support the Board's recommendations. A public hearing to formalize the Board's recommendations is tentatively scheduled for May 19, 2008. Staff will work with the City Manager to schedule a joint meeting of the Board and City Council to formally present the recommendations. The Board generally discussed how much background on the inventory should be provided at the hearings given the previous workshops. Staff was asked to prepare a brief handout that could be distributed at the hearings.

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2. Items for Board Review and/or Comment and Action:

Request for Heritage Board Participation during the Food and Flower Festival

Mayor Kathy Hartzell announced that the Centennial Committee has been offered a free booth at the upcoming Food and Flower Festival on Sunday June 1, (11:00 am to 6:00 pm). The Fire Department has also offered the use of the firehouse for a display of Larkspur's history and artifacts. She has free use of easels to display pictures and other items.

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In addition, they have been offered a large canvas camp tent similar to what would have been used in the historic Madrone Canyon camp grounds. The tent could be setup with a typical camping scene from the past. The scene could be based on historic pictures of Madrone Canyon campsites.

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The Board was asked to volunteer to man the booth, select pictures for the display in the fire house and assist in setting up the displays.

- Boardmember River offered to assist in selection and scanning of historic photographs for the display.
- Boardmember Heitkamp offered to assist with mounting the displays.
- Boardmembers to follow up with confirmations on availability to volunteer at the booth.

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Board review of City Council discussion on April 16, 2008 concerning the Mills Act program in Larkspur.

-- Planning Director Kaufman provided a brief synopsis of the Council discussion and stated concerns. She noted the property owners for several historic properties, including 234 Hawthorne, a Mills Act contract home, 55 Walnut and 105 King Street were present and spoke to the Council. She noted that the Council was generally supportive of the Mills Act program but is requesting the Board consider their discussion and prepare a set of criteria to assist in the review and approval of a contract. The Council requests that the Board present the criteria within the next six months.

Planning Director Kaufman also noted the Council suggested that the Board consider the following:

- Allowing B rated properties to qualify as some of these properties may be able to improve their historic ranking once repairs and renovation are complete.
- Better define who should qualify for a Mills Act contract. For example, it may be appropriate to limit the program availability with respect to more expensive homes as it is unlikely that the owners could not afford the necessary care and restoration associated with a historic home.

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Planning Director Kaufman affirmed that the current request for a Mills Act contract by the owners of 55 Walnut Avenue has been tabled to allow time for the Board to prepare their criteria. The Board asked if they could reconsider their recommendation for 55 Walnut after the criteria have been approved. Planning Director Kaufman noted that they could do so.

Boardmember Heitkamp provided a synopsis of her concerns regarding the Mills Act program and the Council discussion. She suggested that the Board members each contact a northern California City with experience handling Mills Act contracts to discuss their experience with the program and request an estimate of the tax loss for their City as a result of the contracts. She had a list of questions she could provide. Planning

Director Kaufman noted that she has previously been in contact with Berkeley on this matter and had some information from Berkeley regarding their program.

Boardmember Heitkamp opined that when considering the criteria for approval of a Mills Act contract, the noted improvements, repairs and restoration proposed by the property owner to qualify for the contract should specifically focus on work that impacts the historic aspects of the home, or structural repairs and new foundations necessary to maintain its overall integrity. She also supported the idea of specifying a time limit on the contract. There was general agreement on these ideas by the other Boardmembers.

Boardmember Wilson recapped the City Manager's report that was presented to the Council and noted that the current Mills Act contract for 234 Hawthorne Avenue used less than one-half of the yearly \$10,000.00 tax loss allowed by the ordinance approving the Mills Act program. She noted that City Manager Bonander's report noted that if preservation is important to the community, the community must evaluate what it is willing to offer in return

Boardmember Wilson provided some ideas on how to approach the Council when the Board return with the criteria as requested. She noted that preservation efforts are required and supported by the General Plan and it is always valuable to remind the Council of these General Plan directives so they better understand the motivation behind the Boards efforts and recommendations.

Planning staff and the Board discussed the possible time line for creation and presentation of criteria before the Council. It was determined that the Board would begin to address the criteria during the June meeting. Staff will confirm possible dates for a follow up meeting on this matter with the Council.

Heritage Preservation Board Accession of donated items

Boardmember River announced that she has reviewed the existing accession records and process to learn how to use the system and what work needs to be done. Additionally, she has met with volunteers who are willing to help maintain the accession system and catalog donated items. She provided the Boardmembers with a list of donated items and noted that some do not relate directly to Larkspur heritage, and should likely be returned or passed on to a more appropriate recipient.

Planning Teiche suggested that all donated items and photographs that are to be kept should be accessioned under the current system so there is a record of it.

The Board generally discussed the existing system and noted that they would like to pursue modernizing to a digital format. However, it was generally agreed that this will have to be addressed at a later date pending completion of the heritage book update and adoption of the historic inventory.

Boardmember River asked staff member Teiche to copy and mail the "Registration and Catalog Procedures" to all members for their review and future discussion.

Creation of a Heritage Preservation Award Program

Boardmember Wilson reminded the Board that they wanted to begin a Preservation Award Program to acknowledge and thank property owner's for their efforts to restore and preserve their historic building(s). The Board discussed potential awardees and generally agreed that Bill Howard, owner of 465-471 Magnolia Avenue should be considered for the first award. Planner Teiche suggested they ask the Council to issue the award to Mr. Howard during the future joint hearing on the board's proposal to update and amend the historic inventory. Staff will discuss the creation of this program with the Planning Director and City Manager.

3. Announcements and Attachments:

Film of Centennial Birthday Celebration

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Mayor Hartzell announced that Beth Sly who previously assisted with the Larkspur Past and Present video for the Heritage Board filmed the events of the Centennial Birthday Celebration. The footage is unedited and includes the arrival of the historic vehicles, scenes of the booths, displays, events and public speakers within the middle school gymnasium.

The boardmembers requested, and Mayor Hartzell agreed, that this film should be shown at the display within the firehouse during the Food and Flower Festival. No editing would be required; it could simply be run continuously so the public could watch at will.

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Donation

--Boardmember Wilson announced that resident Francis Davis has sent a \$100.00 donation to the Heritage Preservation Board to support their efforts. Ms. Davis has been very supportive in the past over heritage matters.

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It was determined that Planning staff would draft and send a thank you on City letterhead in case Ms. Davis intended to use the donation as a tax write-off. Planner Teiche would see that the check is deposited into the Heritage Board's bank account.

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4. Approval of January 28 and February 25, 2008 minutes.

Boardmembers Wilson/Heitkamp moved to approve January 28, 2008 minutes subject to the requested revisions. All aye except Boardmember Marshall who abstained due to his absence during this meeting.

Boardmembers River/Heitkamp moved to approve the February 25, 2008 minutes subject to the requested revisions. All aye except Boardmember Wilson who abstained due to her absence during this meeting.

5. Next Meeting: May 19, 2008.

Adjournment

Board Member Wilson/Heitkamp moved to adjourn the April 21, 2008 meeting of the Heritage Preservation Board at 8:05 pm. Board Members unanimously approved this motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin Teiche
Planning Staff on behalf of Recording Secretary Nathalie Bamatter