



HISTORICAL COMMISSION MINUTES

7:00 p.m., Monday, January 26, 2004
Los Altos Community Meeting Chambers, City Hall
One North San Antonio Road, Los Altos, California 94022

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL: Valorie Cook Carpenter, Chair; Randall Hull, Vice Chair; Commissioners-- George Dai, Justin Drewes, Paul Foerster, Gillian Humphries, and Lee Schink.

Absent: Commissioner Humphries

MINUTES

The minutes of the December 18, 2003 special meeting were approved with one correction: the assignment to try to research "Hale Ranch Barn" and pass along the information to the County Historical Heritage Commission and their Historic Resources Inventory belongs with Vice-Chair Hull.

Commissioner Foerster requested a further correction to the minutes of the October 27, 2003 regular meeting related to recording the verbal approval of one additional resident. Due to the City's privacy obligations, the number of residents signing the letter and sending verbal support for the letter will be corrected. Resident names are no longer being associated in the official minutes with property addresses, to respect residents' privacy rights. (The paper public comment slips are retained instead for the record and file.)

Commissioner Foerster moved approval of both sets of minutes with the requested corrections. Seconded by Commissioner Schink. Approved by six present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Members of the audience may bring to the attention of the commission any item that is not on the agenda. Speakers are given up to three (3 minutes). State law prohibits the Commission from acting on items that do not appear on the agenda.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. 208 Paso Robles Avenue – Vice Chair Hull and Commissioners Drewes and Schink were appointed to review and evaluate 208 Paso Robles for possible inclusion on the City's Historic Resources Inventory (of buildings) at the request of a neighbor.

2. Commission Discussion and Reports
 - a. Rinconada Court Heritage Tree Designation Review by Council—Council will consider the Historical Commission’s recommendation on January 27, 2004.
 - b. Essay Contest – Commissioner Humphries had sent a reminder via Commissioner Schink that up to sixteen judges can be used for the Essay Contest jurying. The two plan to schedule the judging during the last two weeks in March. Commissioners should indicate their interest in judging essays and/or bring their calendars to the next Commission meeting.
 - c. Historic Barn Reports—No action taken. Commissioners are still conducting their research.
 - d. HRI Database Recommendation – Chair Carpenter and Vice-Chair Hull asked Commissioner Drewes to draft the “side by side” comparison of the Filemaker Pro software and HRI template versus the State’s Access-based template (versus using the old “Word” based template). Drewes will interview various people including staff at the State Office of Historic Preservation.
 - e. Realtor Presentations on HRI –Vice-Chair Hull will take the lead on contacting realtor organizations or associations as well as contacting individual companies or offices to schedule the presentation(s).
 - f. Historic Bike Tour Brochure –A discussion of how to provide privacy for residents of neighborhoods that might be “bike-tour worthy.” The Commission’s consensus was that the difficulties are surmountable. The North Los Altos draft tour proposed by former Commissioner McDonald and former Los Altos History Museum docent Kate Disney could be a starting point for working with the Traffic Advisory Committee/Commission.
 - g. Heritage Tree Consideration for Local Landmarks –Chair Carpenter suggested that it would be pro-active and logical for the Commission to build on Foerster’s work and approach the Landmark designated properties to voluntarily have their established trees included in their Landmark designation. Or it would be logical for the owners to request Heritage Tree designation via the Council with the support of the Historical Commission. Commissioner Foerster moved that the Historical Commission begin an active investigation of heritage and/or “landmark eligible trees,” associated with “Landmark Designated” properties. Motion seconded by Vice-Chair Hull. Motion passed unanimously 6-0 (One absent).
3. Chairperson Report – Chair Carpenter was thanked by the Historical Commission for her work this past year and congratulated on running an effective race for Council. Chair Carpenter will be traveling a lot for work this month and next. Vice-Chair Hull will keep things moving.

HISTORY MUSEUM REPORT/STAFF REPORT

1. Status of Revised Historic Preservation Ordinance – Currently scheduled for February 24, 2004 Council Agenda.
2. MS Access Template for HRI from State Office of Historic Preservation – Arrived and was “read only,” which was not Staff’s understanding of the process. More to follow.
3. The Staff Liaison had included a copy of the Operating Agreement between the City of Los Altos (under the Recreation Department)

and the Association of the Los Altos Historical Museum. The agreement spells out how the museum is currently operated and how museum programs are developed. Chair Carpenter recommended that the museum staff (either the director or the Collections and Exhibits Manager) train Commissioner Drewes to work as a Collections volunteer dedicated to the Historical Commission's projects. The staff liaison/museum director mentioned that this represented a change in policy as well as practice and that the museum team needed to consider the offer and respond to it. Chair Carpenter offered to contact the museum board or board president directly: Staff responded that an appropriate first step is for the director to bring the idea to the museum's Collections' group. (The Collections' team has a board liaison appointed or renewed annually as well as the paid staff and volunteers who work as unpaid but dedicated staff.) A written report will be included in the Historical Commission's next packet.

The staff liaison had included a copy of the operating agreement between the City of Los Altos (under the Recreation Department) and the Association of the Los Altos Historical Museum. The agreement spells out how the museum is currently operated and how museum programs are developed. Chair Carpenter recommended that the museum staff (either the museum director or the Collections and Exhibits Manager) train Commissioner Drewes to work as a collections volunteer dedicated to the Historical Commission's projects. Vice-Chair Hull pointed out that the staff's current practice of using the museum's indexing program is not working, as the system does not have all of the cities' collection indexed. Commissioner Drewes pointed out that the indexing system does not have names and information found within documents (such as newspapers) and that the system is not cross-referenced. Commissioner Drewes reminded staff that on several occasions, the Cities' collection has been found to have had valuable information that could have swayed the Commission's past decisions, but the information was undetected by the museum's indexing system. The Commission has a need to see and utilize this information. Commissioner Drewes went on to explain that much of the Cities' collection was acquired by and for the use of the Historical Commission. Commissioner Foerster expressed concern that it seemed that Commissioner Drewes was the only person not allowed access to the Cities' collection. Chair Carpenter pointed out that many volunteers are allowed to go through the Cities' collection in preparation for an exhibit (Chair Carpenter having previously been one of these volunteers.). Chair Carpenter and Vice-Chair Hull inquired if it was necessary to take this matter directly to the City Council: Staff responded that an appropriate first step is for the director to bring the idea to the museum's Collections' group. Commissioner Foerster made the point that the Commission is trying to aid staff by supplying their own volunteer researcher. The staff liaison/museum director expressed the view that this represents a change in policy as well as practice and that the museum team needed to reflect and come up with a solution. Chair Carpenter confirmed that staff will be better prepared to discuss the issue and have a proposal for a solution at the next Commission meeting on February twenty-third.

WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE

None.

OTHER MATTERS/NEW BUSINESS

Future Agenda Items: Already noted above; Heritage or Landmark trees associated with Landmark and/or Landmark Eligible properties.

Next Meeting: **7 PM MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2004**, Los Altos Community Meeting Chambers, City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

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