

HERITAGE PRESERVATION BOARD

February 12, 2015

ROLL CALL

Chair Cunningham called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Board Members: Scott Morgan, Dirk Mueller, Vice Chair Hillary Culhane, Sallyanne Wilson, Chair Richard Cunningham,

Absent: Board Members: Lelia Lanctot

Guest: Helen Heitkamp, Ex-Board Member

Staff: Planner/Recording Secretary Kristin Teiche, Jerri Holan Consulting Historic Architect

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

PLANNING STAFF'S ORAL REPORT

Staff Planner Teiche informed the Board of the following:

- 143 Madrone Avenue. Applicant has refiled revised plans and is under review. Even if several minor issues remain unresolved with DPW, in the interest of moving things forward, this project should be presented to the Board during the March 12, 2015 meeting.
- Housing Element. Staff informed the Board that the City Council will be hearing the updated draft housing element for the General Plan on February 18, 2015. It was clarified that when the City identifies sites that can accommodate future housing units, it is at the discretion of the property owner to pursue any development. There is no mandate that forces construction of new units.

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

Update of Larkspur's Historic Resources Inventory. Chair Cunningham opened the discussion by acknowledging the materials that were provided to the Board Members to prepare for the discussion. He noted that Planning Director Neal Toft had urged the Board to provide staff with reliable information regarding the historic status of unlisted structures.

The Board then continued with a general discussion regarding the methods available to create a list of homes to be evaluated. Consulting historic architect Holan asked if the Board has started a preliminary list of properties that you would like to be evaluated. It was clarified that this has not been done since the last inventory update adopted in 2008.

Sallyanne Wilson introduced Helen Heitkamp and noted she was involved in establishing the original 1979 Inventory and in spearheading the 2008 update. Board Member Wilson also noted that to create the prior lists they walked the town and took pictures of structures that appeared to have historic merit. In creating future list, it will be helpful to utilize Google Earth and Marin Map for the future update. She also acknowledged that much of the cost of the Phase II update for the 2008 inventory was covered by a \$15,000 grant from Supervisor Hal Brown.

Guest Helen Heitkamp stated that there some urgency to proceed as some homes have been lost, particularly in the Baltimore Park neighborhood. She showed the Board several binders of pictures she has taken over the years of homes throughout Larkspur. These pictures can be compared with the current condition to identify if any changes that may have occurred. She advocated walking all the neighborhoods to insure the Board complete a thorough investigation.

Chair Cunningham stated he wished to discuss the steps that are required to get from start to finish.

Jerri Holan noted most Historic Boards or Committee's start at a grass roots level where volunteers walk or drive the neighborhoods and creates a master list. The list is then provided to a historic architect to take a closer look and provide a rating.

Board Member Morgan noted that he wanted property owners to be advised in advance if they are under consideration to be added to a historic inventory.

Consultant Jeri Holan discussed the system in use in Walnut Creek. They did not create a formal list due to political and budget issues. They rely on CEQA and a preliminary list. If any structure proposed for alteration is over 50 years in age it requires an evaluation by the Historic Architect to determine if it has historic merit before the project can proceed.

Ms. Holan recommended that this would be a simple and easy method that applies to all potential resources. Staff and the Board can simply create a list of all structures 50 years or older. If alterations are proposed to any of these structures, the applicant pays a fee and the historic architect is called out to evaluate the building.

The Board agreed Ms. Holan's suggestion is a good option, however, a more formal update would be preferred, if possible. The Board then proceeded to discuss how a master list of structures at least 50 years old would be created, and what categories or information would be included in the data base for the list.

Board Member Morgan asked Consultant Jerri Holan if the rating program, created and employed by previous historic architect Dan Peterson, remains applicable. Ms. Holan indicated she found it to be based on the State criteria and that it meets a commonly acceptable standard that could still be utilized today.

During the on-going discussion it was agreed that once each property is evaluated by the historic architect, and property research is completed, the Board will have a final list for potential inclusion on the inventory. At this point, it will be necessary to complete public outreach and allow property owners to participate and weigh in. It was noted that during the last update some owners provided information that changed the rating and cause a structure to be removed/added from the list.

Planner Teiche asked the Board and historic consultant if certain newer neighborhoods could simply be eliminated from future consideration because it is determined they are not architecturally important to the history of Larkspur. This would narrow down the areas to consider for future updates. There was general consensus that this should not be done as historic significance can be created over time for a variety of reasons.

The Board then considered methods for completing an initial review of each structure to determine if it should be evaluated by the consulting historic architect. One suggestion is that Board members and/or volunteers could then walk each neighborhood and complete a checklist of each home on the list. Those that appear to have merit could then be followed up on by the historic architect for additional review and scoring.

The Board adjourned for a 5 minute break to allow Sallyanne Wilson and Helen Heitkamp to leave the meeting.

Upon reconvening, Chair Cunningham indicated he wanted to return to the earlier discussion regarding the list staff will create. It was agreed that the data base would include the following categories:

Street Address, Assessor Number, Date of Construction, Evaluated, On Inventory, Not on Inventory, Score, Notes

Historic Architect Holan synopsised the general discussion and noted that staff would complete the following to start things off:

- Create an Uber list of all structures 50 years or older.
- Break down list into the agreed categories.

Chair Cunningham inquired about using graduate students from Berkeley to assist in the preliminary site evaluations? Consultant Holan noted it can be a good method, however, there can be some inconsistency in how they apply the criteria.

ONGOING BUSINESS ITEMS

Volunteer Awards.

Chair Cunningham asked Vice Chair Culhane about the preparation of a Certificate for the volunteer award. Board Member Culhane acknowledged she will work with prior Board Member Marshall to create the certificate. He also suggested that prior Chair Lelia Lanctot prepare a letter to Susan thanking her for her service and requesting her presence at the March meeting. The Board Members agreed that this would be appropriate.

Upcoming March Agenda

Chair Cunningham discussed the upcoming agenda and noted it will depend largely on whether Planner Teiche will be bringing any projects forward for hearing. He asked if any Board Members will not be present at that meeting. Board Member Morgan indicated he could not attend.

Board Member Retreat

Chair Cunningham asked the Board if they would be interested in holding a retreat, similar to that held by the City Council, to allow a more thorough vetting of heritage and philosophical issues. He acknowledged this would be time consuming. He suggested it may be best to meet on a Saturday, or alternatively, a separate week night outside of the regular meeting time.

There was general consensus that this could be helpful. Board Member Mueller asked if the retreat could include a tour of historic properties and neighborhoods. He also noted both he and Board Member Morgan are generally not available on weekends due to work and their children's sports events. They suggested it just be scheduled and they will attend if possible. After further discussion, Board Members Morgan and Mueller both agreed that a weekday afternoon may be possible.

Vacant Board Member Position

Vice Chair Culhane asked staff about the progress in filling the vacant Board Member position. Planner Teiche stated that recruitment was the responsibility of the City Clerk. She believed that there has been a limited response to advertisements for this position so far.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

M/s Morgan/Culhane moved, and the Board approved 5-1-0 (Lanctot absent) to approve the January 8, 2015 minutes as amended by the Board.

Adjourn

Meeting ended at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin Teiche, Senior Planner
Acting Recording Secretary