

## CORONADO HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION

### MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

April 7, 2004

A regular meeting of the Coronado Historic Resource Commission was called to order at 3:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 7, 2004, at the Coronado Police Department Emergency Operations Center, 700 Orange Avenue, Coronado, California by Chairman Keith.

#### ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Keith, MacCartee, Wilson, and Herron

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner Draper

STAFF PRESENT: Ann McCaull, Associate Planner  
John Swanson, Assistant Planner  
Linda Hascup, Administrative Secretary

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 3, 2004 were approved as amended.

#### DIRECTOR'S REPORT

There was no separate report.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

#### ORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS

Paige Harrington, Executive Director of Coronado Historical Association (CHA), provided information on upcoming activities for May and June.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:  
APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW

**HRPA 2-04 Gary Isley and Deanna Merrill.** - Request for a Historic Resource Preservation Agreement for the single family residence located at 526 A Avenue and located in the R-1A(E) (Single Family Residential) Zone.

Mr. Swanson, Assistant Planner, introduced the item as outlined in the agenda. He said the home was designated as the City's 26<sup>th</sup> historic resource by the City of Coronado on January 7, 2004 and is now eligible to apply for a Historic Resource Preservation (Mills Act) Agreement with the City of Coronado. A Mills Act Agreement requires the property owner to preserve the home for minimum period of 10 years, and in exchange there is some property tax reduction. He explained that the HRC's role is to review the "list of improvements" that will be attached to the Mills Act application going to the City Council. Due to the condition of the home the applicant is not proposing any improvements to the property other than routine maintenance over the 10-year term of the contract. Mr. Swanson explained that the applicant has been advised that there is currently a backlog of Mills Act applications and this application would be added to the queue.

He indicated that the applicants Gary Isley and Deanna Merrill were present to answer questions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public wishing to speak at this time.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Commissioner Herron said the Isley's home is an extremely fitting historic home. Chairman Keith agreed. Commissioner MacCartee asked for confirmation that the Isley's home would be added at the end of the list of houses waiting for Mills Act contracts. Ms. McCaull said because there is such small impact to the City and its redevelopment agency this application, along with 520 B Avenue, might possibly be accommodated within the fiscal cap next year if the impact is considered as well as the order of application.

COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSIONER MacCARTEE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE LIST OF IMPROVEMENTS CONSISTING OF THE ROUTINE MAINTENANCE OF THE PROPERTY FOR 526 A AVENUE (HRPA 2-04) AND FORWARD IT TO THE CITY

COUNCIL WITH THE HISTORIC RESOURCE PRESERVATION AGREEMENT APPLICATION.

COMMISSIONER WILSON SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Commissioners Keith, MacCartee, Wilson, and Herron

NAYS:

ABSENT: Commissioner Draper

ABSTAIN:

The motion passed 4-0 with one Commissioner absent.

**HR 13-02**     City of Coronado – Review of Application of Historic Designation of City Parks and Recommendation to the City Council. (TO BE CONTINUED)

Chairman Keith announced the continuation of the item. She spoke with Bill Putnam who said he is hoping that as soon as the local Time Warner finishes putting together the School Foundation Telethon, his plan is to come over here and get what is left of the video and start working on it again; he hopes before a couple of months. Commissioner MacCartee asked what would happen if it isn't done within the next four or five months. The Commission members decided to wait and see.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**Commission Discussion Regarding the Public Outreach Program**

**Plaques:** Chairman Keith said the plaques will be distributed at the May 4 City Council meeting. She asked if Ms. MacCartee could represent the Commission. Chairman Keith said she has already picked up her plaque and put it on her house in case anyone wants to see what it looks like. Commissioner MacCartee said an article in the Eagle with a close-up of a plaque would be wonderful. Ms. McCaull said she would be letting Vicki Raun from the Eagle know about the presentation, with a list of the properties and the proclamation regarding Historic Preservation Month, so there will be some publicity about it. Commissioner MacCartee said she would write up an article ready to submit.

**Articles in Eagle & Journal:** Commissioner MacCartee submitted an article featuring 625 and 629 A Avenue. Ms. Keith suggested that the term "Secret Service" that was used in the article might be changed to something more accurate such as, "presidential security". She was pretty sure that this was a typo in the applicant's designation narrative and she wouldn't want to continue the mistake. Chairman Keith said that since there would be an article in the Eagle next month on the presentation of the

plaques another article wouldn't be needed until June. Commissioner Herron said she would be able to write one after graduation.

**Flower Show:** Ms. Wilson said she would still be able to find volunteers to staff the booth at the Flower Show. Ms. Keith pointed out that CHA would still have a booth so if there weren't enough volunteers perhaps they would be willing to put the City's Historic Resource Preservation brochures on their table.

**Use of Volunteers:** Ms. MacCartee said that the real reason for the use of volunteers is to draw more people into the program regarding historic preservation in the community. She said that since so many people are currently involved in the CHA tour of homes the Commission could hold off on the effort to attract volunteers just now but she would like to keep the topic on the list for future discussion.

**Archival Project of City Records:** Ms. McCaull said there would be a meeting on April 28th at City Hall. She requested that Commission members let her know how many were planning to attend so that an agenda could be prepared if there would be a quorum.

**Newsletter:** Ms. McCaull said that based on the City Council's comments at the last meeting it appears there is an opportunity for some space in the City newsletter. The Commission might want to take advantage of that and/or request Council for newsletter funding. Ms. McCaull suggested that HRC let the Council know what they are requesting, such as one page of the City newsletter dedicated to historic preservation one quarter per year. Or if they want to do their own newsletter, let them know how often they would like to publish it, etc. Commissioner MacCartee said she thought they should make a mockup of the first newsletter and submit it to the Council with the request for funding. It could have a feature article; tell what is going on with historic preservation in Coronado, and list demo permits, etc. Ms. McCaull cautioned that it would be good to point out the positives of preservation, rather than starting with a negative issue.

Chairman Keith said they might have more success if they ask the Eagle to run a box every other month, pointing out that it would be free. She asked if any of the other Commissioners had a relationship and could approach the Eagle. Commissioner Herron said she could talk to them and she thinks the Eagle would be willing as they have been extremely helpful regarding other public projects such as the library. Ms. MacCartee said she would work with Ms. Herron. Ms. Herron suggested a monthly feature, maybe a Historic Designation of the month, would be a good idea. If it was published on a certain page in a certain corner then people would get used to seeing it and look forward to the next feature.

Commissioner MacCartee reminded that the idea of a slogan for the newsletter came up in past conversation and maybe the Commissioners should discuss it. One idea is the

slogan, "preserving for the future". Chairman Keith said she agrees a slogan, and a symbol, would be important because the more people see it then, the more they identify with them. Commissioner MacCartee asked if everyone could come back to the next meeting with ideas. Commissioner Wilson agreed it is a good idea that the message is consistent and it would be a good idea to discuss.

**Miscellaneous** - Chairman Keith asked if Commissioner MacCartee would see if she could talk Nancy Cobb into doing another slide show. Ms. MacCartee said she was pretty sure she could.

Commissioner Herron said that she has been talking to people regarding her poster idea. She said she was thinking of the design as a serigraph, where you take a negative and impose it onto a poster. She is looking for someone to underwrite the cost. Commissioner MacCartee said she liked the idea of the poster because it will be something to put Historic Preservation out there in the public eye.

### **Commission Discussion Regarding the Historic Preservation Ordinance and "Mills Act" Program**

Chairman Keith said she the meeting with the Council was very helpful. She said she came away with the impression that Council may be willing to give HRC a little more money for the program. Mr. Tierney's suggestion of \$20,000 seemed like more than could be done, but Mr. Monroe talked about \$10,000. She said perhaps that would be a good amount to request. She suggested the Commission put together a written proposal asking for that amount and delineate what the money will be spent on, such as a newsletter, or creating an information area on the City's website. Ms. McCaull suggested that HRC outline their request and then fill in the specifics, for instance how often a newsletter would be published. Ms. Keith said that they should put together a list of requests for the Council and then discuss it over the next few meetings.

Commissioner Keith said it also sounded as if the Council supported the idea of HRC soliciting applications for historic designation. She said each Commissioner could canvas their own neighborhood, determine how many of the homes might be eligible, and hand deliver applications. The thought there might be around 200 houses. She said there is still the list of CHA plaque homes to start with.

Regarding the Mills Act Program, Ms. McCaull said it seemed clear that the City Council would prefer help from the Historic Resource Commission in prioritizing applications. Chairman Keith asked if this topic could be discussed as a separate agenda item because the Commissioners would need to give some thought on how they would approach prioritization.

Commissioner MacCartee said it would be very difficult to decide which deserved a higher priority - a small cottage or a large mansion. She said she doesn't think she could put one above the other because they are both equally important to what Coronado is. She said she would suggest that large, important applications be handled as a separate funding item if there was sufficient justification. Commissioner Herron reminded the Commission of the earlier suggestion that perhaps homes that fit within the budget be handled first. There was general agreement among the Commissioners that the way the program was currently being done was as good as any other method. Commissioner Herron said she thinks the system works very well the way it is and the large homes should be put in a special category. Commissioner Wilson also agreed. She said that if the home is important enough to be designated then it is as important as all the others.

Ms. McCaull said it was pretty clear that the Council wants HRC to come up with a method of prioritization. Ms. McCaull added that it could happen that there might be several homes applying for the Mills Act at the same time. They all appear to have the same significance and each has the same fiscal impact to the City, but there is only enough funding for one of them. Which one should receive a contract?

Chairman Keith said there is another issue regarding homes that are modified. What she heard Council saying was that the homes that are modified in some way don't rate a Mills Act contract, even though it is still historic. Ms. McCaull pointed out that the argument was made that if a home doesn't meet the Secretary of the Interior's standards it isn't eligible for Mills Act benefits. However, there are guidelines that leave room for interpretation of whether or not those standards are met. She gave the examples of two homes that were remodeled with additions in the rear, done out of sight and in keeping with the historic style, and in both cases the historic quality of the homes was not damaged and they were found to be eligible for Mills Act contracts. One of those homeowners, Mrs. Moore, pointed out at the Council meeting that people don't realize how expensive it is to preserve a home and this is a valuable incentive to retain the home by allowing the owner the ability to make it livable. Ms. MacCartee offered that there was an applicant who withdrew an application recently because they knew they didn't have a chance for a Mills Act Contract any time soon.

Paige Harrington of Coronado Historical Association (CHA) said she also talked to the same people. Their reason hinged on not having the money to do the upgrade that Mills Act would give them. She added that the Secretary of the Interior says there can be a remodel and even a big addition. In most cases if it is on the side or the back you aren't going to see it from the street, which is perfectly fine with them. She said perhaps it would be helpful to have someone from the Secretary's office come address the Commission to go over the guidelines that can be incorporated into the program.

Ms. Harrington said there seems to be some momentum regarding historic designation now and she would hate to see this become a stumbling block. The process could be made clearer to applicants and more information on how to qualify for the Mills Act made available to them. CHA's Preservation Committee, chaired by Doug St. Denis and with Casey Tanaka as another member, has also been looking at the issue of prioritization. Their idea is that maybe a something like a flow chart could be used instead of an actual prioritization. It isn't a matter of saying which property is more important to the community, but the Mills Act applications could be evaluated by means of measurable criteria of their historic significance, such as the prominence of the architects, etc. Each of the categories could be rated (excellent, good, fair) and when you get to the bottom of the checklist of criteria there would be a certain number of "excellents", a certain number of "fairs", etc. This chart might also give information to prospective applicants regarding how to qualify for the Mills Act. The process needs to be easy to understand up front, not complicated. Chairman Keith said there are some studies from the past that have ranked the houses in town. That might be helpful to this discussion. Ms. Harrington volunteered that CHA would be willing to put together a criteria list.

Chairman Keith said she thinks that perhaps the City Council might want the Commission to manage all the various portions of their own budget. She said she was hearing that they might even want to get Mills Act decisions off their to-do list and might prefer HRC to make those decisions. They would then consider the larger and very significant homes, similar to the Crown Manor.

Ms. McCaull brought up the additional incentive ideas that the City's Director of Finance mentioned, such as a revolving loan program or historic preservation grants for the restoration of historic homes. Chairman Keith said she likes those ideas, but would rather that they not be in lieu of an expansion of the Mills Act program.

Ms. Harrington said that CHA's Preservation Committee also had some suggestions regarding demolition process, such as increase of the demolition fee and more due process. She said they would like to add a requirement of the publication of an "intent to demolish" in the newspaper. If there was a 30-day formal notification in advance of demolition it would give CHA or a similar organization a chance to document the home and claim pieces of history from the home to be saved or even the chance to move the house to another location instead of demolish it.

The Commissioners decided that they could work on one big report titled "Report to Council" and discuss it over the next few meetings. The report would include the request to increase funding, prioritization of Mills Act applications, use of the City website and newsletter, an HRC newsletter and newspaper articles, slide show, demolition permits, etc.

**Commission Discussion Regarding Public Structures and Miscellaneous Civic Improvements that may be Worthy of Designation as Local Historic Resources**

Ms. Keith provided some background saying that the Commission came up with a list of historic city structures and decided to break it into smaller pieces for the City Council to consider. Maybe it is time to begin the process for the seawall since the park designation is on hold. Commissioner MacCartee said she would like to get started and her preference would be to include Ocean Boulevard along with the seawall as being historic. All agreed that they should at least begin by filling out the application. Ms. McCaull cautioned that there was a lot of discussion in the Commission over which item should be first, and that they chose the parks because they wanted something that was less controversial, that had a good chance of being approved. She had some concern about moving on with something else before the parks. The sea wall might be more of a concern to the Council, but there is no reason why they couldn't start doing the research. Commissioner MacCartee said she would put together an outline and begin to find out who was there, the events, etc. over time.

MISCELLANEOUS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

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Tony A. Peña