

CORONADO HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

January 7, 2004

A regular meeting of the Coronado Historic Resource Commission was called to order at 3:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 4, 2004, at the Coronado Police Department Emergency Operations Center, 700 Orange Avenue, California, by Florence Draper, Chair of the Historic Resource Commission.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Draper, MacCartee, Keith, Ryan, and Walsh

MEMBERS ABSENT:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 3, 2003 were approved as submitted.

ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chairperson Draper explained that the municipal code provides that at the beginning of each year City Commissions will hold elections for the purpose of electing officers. She asked if there were any nominations.

Commissioner MacCartee nominated Susan Keith as Chair. Commissioner Draper seconded the nomination. The motion passed 4-0, with Commissioner Keith abstaining.

Commissioner Ryan nominated Commissioner MacCartee as Vice Chair. Commissioner Draper seconded the nomination. The motion passed 4-0, with Commissioner MacCartee abstaining.

Commissioner Draper turned the meeting over to new Chairperson Keith.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. McCaull informed the Commission members that the City Council requested staff to set up a joint special meeting between the City Council and the Historic Resource Commission at a meeting other than a regular City Council meeting.

Commissioner Ryan said that he would not be available for meetings from January 24 through February 4. The Commission members agreed that they preferred to postpone the joint meeting until Commissioner Ryan is available, perhaps the first meeting in March, or a special meeting date.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS

Paige Harrington, Coronado Historical Association, 1100 Orange Avenue said she had compiled a list of archival materials that might be helpful to preserve the historic materials from the city vault. She provided a list of ideas for the Commission in this effort and offered CHA's help with the process.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW

HR 11-03 **Gary Isley & Deanna Merrill** – Request for Historic Designation of the single family residence located at 526 A Avenue, in the R-1A(E) (Single Family Residential) Zone.

Mr. Swanson, Assistant Planner, introduced the item as outlined in the agenda. He said a building permit was issued for this residence in 1925. The property owner was Mrs. M. H. Richards and the contractor was O. W. Dorman, a very well known contractor/builder in Coronado between 1920 and 1930. The cost of construction for this English Revival style home was \$7,000.

Applicant, Gary Isley, 526 A Avenue, said he thought the home's style was very interesting and indicative of the style in the City. Mr. O.W. Dorman built many of the homes Coronado which had an immense impact on the village style. Mr. Isley said he would like to see this example of craftsmanship preserved for the future.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

There was no further discussion.

COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSIONER DRAPER MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE HR 11-03 REQUEST FOR HISTORIC DESIGNATION OF 526 A AVENUE, WITH THE ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION STATING THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- A. THE PROPERTY MEETS THE 75-YEAR AGE REQUIREMENT;
- B. IT DOES EXEMPLIFY OR REFLECT SPECIAL ELEMENTS OF THE CITY'S CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY;
- C. IT IS ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING EXAMPLES IN THE CITY POSSESSING DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENGLISH REVIVAL ARCHITECTURAL STYLE, WOULD BE VALUABLE FOR THE STUDY OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION, AND HAS NOT BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY ALTERED; AND,
- D. IT IS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WORK OF A NOTABLE BUILDER (O.W. DORMAN).

COMMISSIONER RYAN SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Commissioners Keith, MacCartee, Draper, Walsh, and Ryan

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

The motion passed 5-0. Chairperson Keith announced that Mr. Isley's property is now the 26th approved historic property.

HR 12-03 **Elledge, Carolyn** - Request for Historic Designation of the single family residence located at 1244 Alameda Boulevard, in the R-1A (Single Family Residential) Zone.

Ms. McCaull, Associate Planner, introduced the item as outlined in the agenda. She said the property is on the corner of Alameda and Ocean Boulevards. A building

permit was issued in 1925 for construction of the dwelling and a garage, which was built for \$27,300; however the records don't list the developer. The Bernhardt family owned the property until 1971. Subsequent to that the Ellidge's have owned it. A gazebo was constructed on the property in 1972. The architectural style of the home is Eclectic English Tudor. In her research the applicant found a set of building plans for the home showing that it was designed by the notable architects Requa and Jackson, who are very well known for their many contributions to Coronado's and San Diego's historic and architectural heritage. Ms. McCaull indicated that there had been significant restoration of the home and it remains largely intact as it was originally constructed.

Applicant, Caroline Elledge, 1244 Alameda Boulevard said she wants to preserve the home and keep it for the history of Coronado.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Commissioner Ryan thanked the applicant for having her home designated. He said it is a wonderful home to add to the collection.

COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSIONER MACCARTEE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE HR 12-03 REQUEST FOR HISTORIC DESIGNATION OF 1244 ALAMEDA AVENUE, WITH THE ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION STATING THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- A. THE PROPERTY MEETS THE 75-YEAR AGE REQUIREMENT;
- B. IT DOES EXEMPLIFY OR REFLECT SPECIAL ELEMENTS OF THE CITY'S ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY REPRESENTING THE ENGLISH TUDOR ECLECTIC ARCHITECTURAL STYLE;
- C. IT IS IDENTIFIED WITH PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN LOCAL AND STATE HISTORY AS THE ARCHITECTS WHO DESIGNED THE STRUCTURE ARE NOTED FOR THEIR ARCHITECTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY AND THROUGHOUT THE STATE;
- D. IT IS ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING EXAMPLES IN THE CITY POSSESSING DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ECLECTIC ENGLISH TUDOR ARCHITECTURAL STYLE, AND IS VALUABLE FOR THE STUDY OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION, AND HAS NOT BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY ALTERED; AND,

E. IT IS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PROMINENT ARCHITECTS REQUA AND JACKSON WHO DESIGNED MANY NOTEWORTHY BUILDINGS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AS WELL AS IN BALBOA PARK.

COMMISSIONER DRAPER SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Commissioners Keith, MacCartee, Draper, Walsh, and Ryan

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

The motion passed 5-0. Ms. McCaull said that this is the 27th historically designated home.

HAP 2-03 **Splinter, Nancye and R.J. "Chip"** - Request for Historic Alteration Permit to allow the reconstruction of a pergola that previously existed over the driveway and adjoining the side property line located at 1027 G Avenue located in the R-1A (Single Family Residential) Zone

Ms. McCaull, Associate Planner, introduced the item as outlined in the agenda. She said the property is approximately 60 ft. wide and 165 ft. deep. The applicants spent the last few years renovating the home after designation and an alteration permit was previously approved by the Commission for other modifications. The current application is for the restoration of a pergola that was destroyed several years ago. The applicant had described the way the pergola would be reconstructed and has made a good argument for how it would be appropriate. Ms. McCaull explained that the Commission has some discretion in applying the zoning code due to the historic designation and may give relief from the code regarding setback requirements if there isn't a large enough setback to reconstruct the pergola.

Applicant, Chip Splinter, 1027 G Avenue, said he and his wife Nancye own the house. He said they are avid historical preservationists. He also enjoys doing the renovation work himself. He said the reason for the application is due to an unusual sequence of events. Mr. Splinter explained that when they bought the house the pergola existed. There are photos from 1950's showing the home with the pergola and it is possible to see in the construction of the home that the supports were built in place when it was originally built. The termite condition in the home was horrendous, so they hired an exterminator to correct the situation. Without his knowledge, the termite exterminator, in order to tent the house, removed the pergola, which was admittedly heavily affected by termite damage. He said they couldn't replace it at the time because of the zoning set-back requirements. Now that the house is designated as historic and there is some flexibility in the zoning code he is requesting that the Commission agree that the

pergola could be replaced as it previously existed. He said that SOHO wants to feature Coronado in their next historical tour and they would like to include his home on the tour. Mr. Splinter said it would be nice if the home looked the way it used to with the pergola. He had always intended to get it replaced, but now has the impetus to get it taken care of.

Commissioner Ryan asked if it would be made out of red wood. Dr. Splinter said that not only will it be redwood, but it will be 100 year old redwood.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Gilliland, 1030 G Avenue, said that she lives across the street and does remember the pergola as it existed in 1996. She said she fully supports the Splinter's request to restore the pergola and feels the house is not complete without it.

Toni Stewart, 1041 G Avenue, said she lives two doors down from the Splinters and that the pergola is missed and it will look a lot better when it is replaced.

Chairperson Keith said that a letter was received from Capt. Don Christensen in support of the Splinter's request.

Alice Taylor, 437 G Avenue, said her parents own the property at 1021 G Avenue. She was concerned with the size and the placement of the pergola and wondered if there has been a recent survey for where the property line is placed. She asked if there was a plan for the pergola she could take a look at because it appears that the new footings for the pergola are spaced wider than the footprint of the original cement footings which are no longer in the ground. It also appears the pergola will be twice as deep as the original.

Chairperson Keith shared her drawing from the agenda packet with Ms. Taylor and asked Dr. Splinter about the survey. Dr. Splinter said the survey markers are there on the sidewalk. The brick wall that he reconstructed is directly on the property line with the permission of the previous owner of the neighboring property.

Ms. Taylor asked for clarification on the description "adjoining the property line". Commissioner Ryan said the drawing shows an elevation of the brick wall and the footing for the pergola is inside of the wall, which would make it 4 or 5 inches in from the property line. Ms. McCaull said the applicant has described that the pergola would be 10' long.

Ms. Taylor said she now understands that the pergola will not touch the property line. She asked if there would be a grapevine over it like Mrs. Wilson had and if it would grow over the fence onto her property. Mrs. Keith explained that anything planted on

the pergola that grows over onto the neighboring yard side she is entitled to cut the overhanging portion off.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Commissioner Ryan commented that the 1922 photo shows the old structure as square and slanted just as the applicant has described for its replacement. He added that this type of relaxation of the zoning code is just one of the advantages to historic preservation.

COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSIONER WALSH MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE HISTORIC ALTERATION PERMIT FOR 1027 G AVENUE (HAP 2-03) AS SUBMITTED.

COMMISSIONER MACCARTEE SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Commissioners Keith, MacCartee, Draper, Walsh, and Ryan

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

The motion passed 5-0.

HR 13-03 **Murphy, John** – Request for Historic Designation of the apartment complex addressed as 721-727½ D Avenue, in the R-3 (Multiple Family Residential) Zone.

Mc. McCaull, Associate Planner explained that the tour of the item needs to be a part of the public hearing, so staff would give a brief description of the application, and then the commission would recess to the site.

She said that Mr. Murphy recently acquired this property. It is a two-story apartment complex with 6 units and a 5-car garage in the rear. He has applied for designation with the intention of converting the apartments to condominiums according to the recent change in the municipal code to allow condominium conversions for historic properties.

Ms. McCaull explained that Mr. Murphy intends to do some major restoration and renovation work which will require a historic alteration permit. As part of the condo

conversion map, there are typically parking and storage requirements that Mr. Murphy will be requesting some flexibility on which the commission may allow.

Because the apartment is built in 1939 it is not 75 years old, however it could be considered to have reached historic significance to meet the requirements of historic designation. These French Chateau, garden style apartments were originally owned by Regina Cohen and her son Arthur L. Cohen, Jr. Paul Hathaway, Sr. provided the architectural drawings and Walter Vestal was the contractor who constructed them. Dr. Ray Brandes submitted a detailed report with the application regarding the property's significant history. He said that Mr. Hathaway was arguably Coronado's best homegrown architect who designed several homes in Coronado. Walter Vestal served as a Councilmember and Mayor of Coronado. The builder was also on record for the other apartment building that was recently designated. Also the La Avenida hotel, restaurant, and Villa Capri.

Ms. McCaull said that the Commission would recess to view the property and cautioned that they keep questions to the minimum. Public comment and discussion would take place after reconvening.

At 3:40 p.m. the Commission recessed to tour the subject property, 721-727½ D Avenue.

Applicant's representative, Ann Keyser, led the way across the alley to the property. The following information was obtained during the tour: Ms. Keyser pointed out the decorative plaster castings that were found in the basement. They will be restored and replaced on the exterior of the structure above the windows. There were decorative faux fireplaces with ornate mantels in the living rooms that were never working fireplaces. She said they hoped to find that the hardwood floors underneath the worn carpeting would be restorable without too much replacement. She pointed out the unusual curved multi-paned windows on the front corner of the apartment building.

The Commission reconvened at the regular meeting location, 700 Orange Avenue at 4:00 p.m.

Dr. Ray Brandes, 230 West Laurel Street, Ste. 406, San Diego, provided additional information on the contractor, architect, and owners. He said that Walter Vestal was involved in the construction of many structures in the period prior to 1940 when architects didn't need to have licenses. Mr. Vestal worked in a group of architects including Cliff May, a world-famous architect who was recognized in Sunset Magazine for his California Ranch homes, and Mr. O.W. Dorman. Dr. Brandes said he has been in touch with Mr. Hathaway's son and has learned there is currently a nephew here in town. The Cohen family was responsible for several apartments here in Coronado, primarily in the English and Dutch Colonial style.

Dr. Brandes said he believes there is not another apartment building remaining in Coronado of this French Chateau Normandy style, which is a critical factor in consideration of its historic importance. Dr. Brandes said that he has been bothered by the encroachment of utilities and commercial structures on the residential and green space in Coronado, particularly around the library area. He sees this town as mainly residential and hates to see the encroachment. He said this apartment building will be very important for the future.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ann Keyser, 271 Alameda Boulevard, said she represents Mr. Murphy on the project. She says this apartment complex, with its decorative elements, fleur de lis on doors, dentals, etc., exemplifies a style that isn't found anywhere else in Coronado. It is important to Coronado's diverse architectural style. It is a unique design, even for Mr. Hathaway. She said she went through piles of plans and papers at the Coronado Historical Association (CHA) and couldn't find the plans. Ms. Keyser said that retaining this building will continue to enhance the village quality in Coronado, helps to maintain a lower floor area ratio and larger setbacks than are allowed with current standards. She wants to restore it to the original condition, uncover the architectural details that are covered up with the stucco coating, restore the plaster castings, and paint it in the original French blue color. The roof needs to be replaced. There are currently three roofs on it that are all leaking. Regarding landscaping, she plans to get rid of the giant Bird of Paradise and Yucca plants, keep cypress and put in a boxwood hedge along the front. The last owner had the property for 30 years so it generally needs a lot of work and to be cleaned up.

In response to Commission questions Ms. Keyser said there would be no additions made to the apartment complex, however in order to do the condo conversion they would be required to provide more storage space. She said they could add about 100 feet if some were provided between the house and garage. Current code also says that they would need to provide 12 spaces for the 6 units, but she will be requesting that they provide only the existing 5 spaces. She said there is no additional room on site to make room for more parking and it would be prohibitive to go underground. She said they would be changing the interior of the parking structure somewhat in order to provide more storage space inside.

Commissioner Draper asked why there are faux fireplaces instead of real ones. Ms. Keyser said she wasn't aware of why that was the case, but they are so charming.

Commissioner Ryan asked why Ms. Keyser wouldn't want to try to keep the garages intact rather than using a carport concept. She said the doors are only 14' 8" wide. She said the garage is right on the property line of a 50 foot wide lot and there isn't any way to build it wider to accommodate more doors.

Paige Harrington, Coronado Historical Association, 1100 Orange Avenue, said she supports this application whole-heartedly. It is what Coronado wants and needs right now. She said that CHA has been pursuing several blueprint collections and just received Hathaway's collection. She personally went through boxes with Ann Keyser and even though they couldn't find the blueprints for this property, you could see how wonderful Mr. Hathaway's designs were and how unique this property is.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Commissioner MacCartee said this application is a gift - exactly what this Commission is here for. She said she has no problem with the age of the property because it has other attributes to outweigh the age requirement.

Commissioner Ryan agreed, but pointed out that the garage permit was 10 years earlier (75 years ago). He is wholly in support of this type of restoration and preservation. There is integrity in this application. He said that even though you hope to get perfection - this is definitely in the spirit. He said he hoped the Commission would not be criticized for not being "perfect".

Commissioner Draper commented that she loves this project and the age is not the key factor on this application, only the significance. The Chateau apartments are fabulous and she is happy to hear the exterior will not be changed, only made better. She doesn't see how anyone could criticize the designation.

Commissioner Walsh said this property should be designated. It is a splendid example of this French style, and the only one in town. He seconded Dr. Brandes' comments regarding the phone building.

Chairperson Keith said she was so excited to see this application coming before the Commission. She had always wanted to see the inside. It will be wonderful to see it brought back to what it was. She believes the intent of the option to allow designation for a property less than 75 years old if it has reached historic significance is met with this property.

COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSIONER MACCARTEE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE HR 13-03 REQUEST FOR HISTORIC DESIGNATION OF 721-727½ D AVENUE, WITH THE ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION STATING THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- A. THE PROPERTY HAS REACHED HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE WITHIN THE LAST 75-YEARS;

- B. IT DOES EXEMPLIFY OR REFLECT SPECIAL ELEMENTS OF THE CITY'S ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY;
- C. IT IS IDENTIFIED WITH PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN LOCAL HISTORY IN THAT THE CONTRACTOR WALTER A. VESTAL CONSTRUCTED SEVERAL HOMES AND APARTMENTS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AS WELL AS SERVING AS MAYOR AND AS A MEMBER OF THE CITY COUNCIL. THE DESIGNER, MR. HATHAWAY, AND CONTRACTOR, MR. VESTAL, WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR DESIGNING AND CONSTRUCTING THE NOTEWORTHY LA AVENIDA HOTEL AND RESTAURANT AND THE VILLA CAPRI ;
- D. IT IS ONE OF THE FEW, IF NOT THE ONLY, REMAINING EXAMPLE IN THE CITY POSSESSING DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FRENCH NORMANDY ARCHITECTURAL STYLE, AND IS VALUABLE FOR THE STUDY OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION, AND HAS NOT BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY ALTERED; AND,
- E. IT DOES REPRESENT THE WORK OF A DESIGNER AND CONTRACTOR SIGNIFICANT TO LOCAL COMMUNITY AS DESCRIBED IN (C).

COMMISSIONER DRAPER SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Commissioners Keith, MacCartee, Draper, Walsh, and Ryan

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

The motion passed 5-0. Chairperson Keith announced that this is the 28th historically designated property.

HR 13-02 **City of Coronado** – Review of Application of Historic Designation of City Parks and Recommendation to the City Council. (CONTINUED FROM DECEMBER 3, 2003 MEETING)

Ms. McCaull, Associate Planner, said this item had been continued at the last two meetings while waiting for the completion of the parks video. She spoke with Bill Putnam of Coronado Cablevision who explained that the relocation of the local Time-Warner offices from Coronado to San Diego has delayed the project, however he is still committed to its completion. She asked if the commission would like to take action and have the video follow or wait to view the video.

Commissioner Draper said she would hate to go forward without seeing the video as it is an integral part of the application. Commissioner Ryan strongly agreed. He said that the City Council likes pictures. Commissioner MacCartee asked why Rotary and

Prospect Parks are still on the list on Page 169 of the agenda. She would like the list to reflect exactly which parks the Commission wants to have approved; not the ones that are not worthy of historic designation. Chairperson Keith agreed. She said the list on Page 159 also includes Rotary Park. She stated that it should be eliminated from that list because it not a park.

Commissioner Draper pointed out that Rotary and Prospect Parks are not among the list of parks on the request for designation application on Page 156. She said the list they are on is the report that was written to show all of the research done on all park lands in Coronado. The report also includes a grouping of "Additional Parks" which includes Centennial, Cays, etc. that are clearly not historic, but the report provides background material the Commission has used to determine the historicity of the parks. She added that the application should be checked thoroughly for typos, duplications and missing pages before it is submitted.

Chairperson Keith countered that she doesn't think they need to include old reports or list parks that are not historic.

Ms. McCaull said that technically Rotary Park is identified as a park area in Coronado. The list on Page 159 is from the City's Master Environmental Assessment. Commissioner MacCartee said she didn't want to give the City Council a list that confuses the issue.

Commissioner Ryan said that perhaps there should be two separate lists. One list of the parks the Commission is recommending as historic and the list of "Others" that are not historic. He also wanted to make sure that the criteria the Commission is using for designation is up front in the report so they see that first - to promote more clear communication. Chairperson Keith said the criteria is on page two of the staff report, which is about as up front as you can get.

Chairperson Keith suggested that the application be continued to the next hearing and hope the video will be done in time. All agreed.

MISCELLANEOUS

Commissioner MacCartee requested a discussion of historic designation of the seawall on Ocean Boulevard on a future agenda item.

Commissioner MacCartee said she feels strongly that the word isn't getting out into the public well enough. The newspaper articles don't seem to be reaching enough people. She suggested that the Commission consider putting out a newsletter that gets your attention (graphics) and tells the story about what is being lost (a demolition report),

plaques on houses, history lessons on what used to exist, etc. She said people need to learn what the work of the Commission is. They need to know the philosophy of why history contributes to the charm and desirability of the City the desirable place it is. She thought that a monthly newsletter would be wonderful, but even every couple of months would be better than nothing, or better than the infrequent articles in the paper.

Commissioner MacCartee said that perhaps the Commission needs to enlist some volunteers as part of outreach program. She thinks there are a lot of interested people who would do it because they care and the Commission needs to take advantage of that.

Commissioner Ryan said he would also like to discuss doing a video show or digital pictures on the local TV cable channel. A slide show could show all the City's historic buildings, including ones designated by CHA.

The Commission recessed at 4:50p.m. and reconvened at 5:00 for a Time Certain with Coronado Historic Association at 5:00 p.m.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Joint Discussion with Executive Committee of the Coronado Historical Association Board of Directors Regarding the City of Coronado Historic Preservation "Mills Act" Program and matters of mutual interest.

The HRC Commissioners and the CHA Preservation Committee members sat in a roundtable formation to discuss the direction of historic preservation in Coronado.

Roll Call:

For the Historic Resource Commission:

Susan Keith, Chair
Jerry MacCartee, Vice Chair
Florence Draper
Jon Ryan
George Walsh

Staff: Ann McCaull, Associate Planner
Linda Hascup, Secretary

For the Coronado Historical Association:

Barbara DeMichele, President
Paige Harrington, Executive Director
Doug St. Denis, Chair of CHA Preservation Committee
Casey Tanaka, Councilperson
Chris Ackerman
Nancye Splinter

Ms. McCaull said it might be helpful to discuss what each group is working on and find ways to work together. The Commission members had previously discussed that they were interested in getting CHA's support in convincing the City Council of the need to increase funding for the Mills Act program.

Chairperson Keith began by outlining how the Mills Act program works in Coronado. She gave a brief description of how the Historic Resource Commission (HRC) designates a property and becomes eligible to apply for a Mills Act contract with the City. She said the Mills Act is one of the important benefits offered to entice homeowners to have their homes designated. She said the City Council is the body to approve Mills Act contracts because of the fiscal considerations to the City in the form of reduced property tax income.

Chairperson Keith and Ms. McCaull explained that a Mills Act contract is a revolving 10 year contract with the homeowner where they receive a reduction in their property tax in exchange for maintaining their historic property. The HRC recommends a list of improvements and maintenance items that will be carried out over the first 10 years and the City Council decides whether to approve the contract. She said there is a cap on the total amount of revenue loss to the City allowed each year, with a small annual increase. However the amount has now been exceeded and it will be many years before all of the properties that have applied for the Mills Act will be able to receive the benefit. One of the problems is that some historically designated homes have a much lower tax base than others so the loss of property tax to the City can vary widely. Chairman Keith gave an example. Her home has very low taxes, and she saves \$378 for the year, which means her Mills Act contract is not a major financial burden to the City. However the Van Nass/Dupee house (Crown Manor) was a tax savings to the owner of approximately \$17,000, which is a much more significant loss of tax revenue to the City.

McCaull explained how the cap and annual increases was decided. When the program was introduced there were only 5 homes designated and \$15,000 was enough to provide benefits for those who had already applied for Mills Act contracts. They estimated that the program would grow by \$5,000 per year. But only 4 years later there are 28 designated properties. She said there isn't only a monetary interest by those designating their homes; many do it because they are interested in preservation for its own sake. Not all of the owners of historic properties apply for the Mills Act.

Chairperson Keith said the Commission has spent a lot of time discussing how to get more money into the bucket for historic preservation. She said it isn't the only benefit offered for historic preservation though. The HRC can grant other benefits to historically designated properties, such as relaxed standards for parking, setbacks, and floor area ratio. Commissioner Ryan said that one approach he has repeatedly tried to get across is that the City Council needs to be educated that there is a finite number of

homes that could possibly be designated in Coronado and not all of them will request Mills Act benefits. He feels the Commission needs to get that idea across when asking for more funding.

Doug St. Denis said that most of the CHA Preservation Committee was present and named Jon Ryan, Chris Ackerman, Casey Tanaka, and herself. She said they are also looking for ways to incentivise historic preservation.

Chairperson Keith said the Commission is looking for help. They have an outreach program and have made several presentations to many groups, but there is much more outreach that needs to be done. One idea is to hold a workshop.

Commissioner Ryan said it seems that most realtors are not in support of historic preservation and the Realtors Board is strongly against the idea. Mr. Ackerman said that perhaps there needs to be an organized response from realtors who are aware of the benefits of historic preservation. Commissioner Ryan said they need to work on the entire public, not just a segment.

Commissioner Draper asked what plans CHA has in mind for preservation this year. Ms. DeMichele said they have made a pledge to slow down demolition process. Currently you can pull a demolition permit one day and tear it down the next for very little money. She said that demolition permit expenses are ridiculously low, as are the fines. She said they want to go to the City Council with a solid plan. Perhaps there should be more expense for the permit by putting the onus on the owner. One step in the right direction is that CHA is now notified of demolitions by the Building Department. She said they also want to look at the opportunity of relocating historic resources that are in danger of demolition.

There should be a process so that when a home is going to be demolished, a determination can be made whether it is historic or not. If it is historic and the owner still wants to demolish it, there should be the option to purchase the structure from him and relocate it. Less that, there should be the opportunity to salvage any historic portions of the structure (doors, windows, woodwork, etc.) She said there are sources that could be developed for funding such preservation - permits/fines/resale of properties. Commissioner Ryan added that if more people could be convinced to have their homes designated historic, those homes would be safe from demolition.

Doug St. Denis said the CHA's Historic Preservation Committee had just recently been formed. They meet the second Tuesday of each month at 8:15 a.m. at Café 1134.

Councilmember Tanaka said you have to consider that the nature of the program is voluntary. There is a good political reason for that; you don't offend anyone. The suggestions that are being discussed here would radically change what the program is

and would require a decision to change the policy. The first thing you would need to sell the Council on is that the current program is not getting the job done, in terms of saving historic properties. Then request a change in program policy. You have to keep in mind that you don't want to encumber funds that are made. He cautioned that if there are fees charged for fines or permits - the City will see it from the point of view that those proceeds will go into general fund. They wouldn't tend to send that money directly to historic preservation. Just as they would not want to tie program funding to a percentage because their hands are then tied to a certain number, which handcuffs them when making budget decisions down road. Councilmember Tanaka suggested that the request not be made for the large ticket item, and ask more directly. Just ask for more money and don't ask to earmark a portion of the general fund. He explained that was where he was coming from during HRC's discussion of linking Mills Act funding to taxes. Commission Ryan pointed out that one of the reasons the value of property in town (which relates to increasing property taxes) is due to historic quality of village with these properties.

Commissioner MacCartee said that from her point of view the City isn't losing money. When the house sells and owner gets a reduction in taxes for Mills Act benefits, the City hasn't lost any tax money; they still get more because of the sale of the home increases the tax base. Councilmember Tanaka pointed out that with the DiMatteo house the City is already getting that money. Also, any home that has a Mills Act contract locks the City in to a reduced amount of tax in perpetuity. Commissioner Ryan countered that there is a finite number of homes that could participate in the program and the total cost could be figured and it won't break the City.

Nancye Splinter said her belief is that if we don't get some more of the approximately 120 eligible historic homes designated over the next five years they will be lost. She thinks that five years is the critical length of time that something needs to be done to save those homes.

Chairman Keith said it appears that CHA and HRC are stepping together. She said she appreciates the work that CHA is doing. Her thought is that the Historic Preservation program is succeeding. There are 28 houses now when there were only 5 four years ago. She said she doesn't hear that people aren't applying because they can't get the Mills Act, but she does hear that people don't designate because a realtor recommends against it and point out the lack of resale value, so there is still a lot of education to do in the community.

She said there will be a Special meeting between the City Council and the Historic Resource Commission in mid-February or March and said she would be delighted if members of Coronado Historical could attend.

Ms. Harrington said that CHA will help in any way they can; strategic planning, etc. They can also help with a newsletter and outreach efforts. She said they could also reach out to the realtors. Members of both groups said they would like to get together more frequently. Another effort CHA has undertaken is the development of a pamphlet on significant architects who designed historic homes. They would make the information available to the HRC members.

Ms. McCaull said if the Historic Resource Commission wanted to have a representative attend CHA meetings regularly they could designate a representative.

FUTURE ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Tony A. Peña