

# HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING

JUNE 23, 2004

A Special Meeting of the Coronado Historic Resource Commission was called to order at 1:00 p.m., Wednesday, June 23, 2004, at the Coronado Police Department Emergency Operations Center, 700 Orange Avenue, Coronado, California by Chairperson Keith.

## ROLL CALL:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Ann McCaull, Associate Planner  
Linda Hascup, Secretary

## ORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS

Jon Ryan, 716 Margarita Avenue, said he thinks the Commission is doing is good work and that they should continue even though some in the community are not voicing support. He said he has invested in Coronado real estate for the last 40 years and has been a retail realtor for the last two years and does not agree with the idea that preservation decreases property values. He would say just the opposite, the more we preserve Coronado's character, the more we increase the property values in Coronado. The other issue is that there are only 100 or so buildings out of 10,000 that are possibly going to be affected, so he advised the Commission to continue their good work.

Chairman Keith advised that the July 6 meeting of the City Council had a weighty agenda and the report from the Historic Resource Commission regarding the Commission's recommendations on the Mills Act Program would be moved to the August 3<sup>rd</sup> City Council agenda.

## HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION BUSINESS

- 1) **Direction to staff concerning utilization of the historic resource inventory prepared by Source Point as a resource to inform the public of the potential historical significance of a residential structure as it relates to the recently adopted Demolition Permit Ordinance**

Ms. McCaull explained that the recently adopted ordinance has caused some concern by property owners as to the implications for their properties. The Mayor and Councilmembers have been receiving many phone calls on this issue and they are looking for an informal review to help property owners with their questions. In response, the Community Development Department has established an interim procedure to assist people who come to the counter to provide information regarding the potential historical significance of properties, until a more accurate list is developed by the HRC. Since the City Council is already aware that the HRC is using a previously compiled list by Sourcepoint as a starting point in creating a list, staff feels it is appropriate to also use that inventory when responding to questions of property owners regarding the historical significance of their properties. The inventory has a numeric rating system, where structures listed as (1) are the most significant (only the Hotel Del Coronado is listed as a (1), and (5) are the least significant. Staff advises homeowners that if their property is rated as a 4 or 5 on the inventory it looks like there is not a great potential for the home to be designated as a historic resource and probably won't be an issue when they apply to the HRC for demolition. Even though they still have to go through the process they will be comforted to know they will most likely be approved. If a home is rated as a (2) there is a much greater potential for some historic significance. That applicant would be advised to prepare a more compelling argument as to why the home should not be designated or to be prepared to have an alternative solution. Structures that are rated (3) fall in the middle of the spectrum and there is more uncertainty in that case.

Chairman Keith said she didn't have any issue with the methodology. She agrees with a conservative approach to advice on homes listed as (3). She said the inventory is almost 20 years old, so the possibility exists that some listings are no longer accurate. In her assessment she found there were many that were no longer there and several that were altered. A home could be in much worse condition than it was when the inventory was made, or it could have been restored. She said as long as the public understands that the information provided is from 1985 and that it hasn't been updated it is a good starting point. Commissioner Wilson agreed that caution is in order when giving advice from the old list.

Commissioner Draper said that particular attention should be paid to any of the homes on the list that has an "H" designation because that indicates a CHA registered home.

Commissioner MacCartee said she would like to let anyone who is in escrow know that they will be given immediate attention. She said the Commission would meet as soon as necessary to help them out to make decisions. She thought it was time to use the inventory that was created. It will be a wonderful tool to help staff and the Commission in the interim.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Page Harrington, Coronado Historical Association, commented that another thing to keep in mind is that when the homes were ranked in 1985 it was based on the number of the same types of structures that were still existing in 1985. Over the last 19 years many of the other similar homes that may have been ranked higher may be gone. If it is the last or one of the few remaining of a type, even if it isn't in the best of condition it may have more of a rarity value and may increase the ranking. She mentioned the Red Rest and Red Roost cottages in La Jolla that are the last of their kind. Even though they are in hideous condition there is a huge fight to save them.

Chairman Keith said that someone who wanted their home to be designated and found that their home is a (4) or (5) on the list, they shouldn't despair. If they want to come forward voluntarily and apply they could make a case to have their homes designated. Commissioner seconded that thought. The Commission still wants to see those applications.

Kathy Koop, said she is a realtor in Coronado, and her home is a Kate Sessions historic home between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets on J Avenue. She said she has taken an oath to protect property rights and wants to know what the benefits she can tell people they will receive if their home is designated. She said if you take away a right there should be something back for it. She asked if they would be given recommendations regarding Mills Act tax benefits, or remodeling leniency. She said without those kinds of benefits why someone would want to designate their home unless they just love history.

Chairman Keith said that the incentives Ms. Koop mentioned are built into the preservation ordinance and owners of designated properties are eligible to apply to receive those benefits. Not only can historic properties receive remodeling leniency, they no longer have to build to meet current building code; the historic building codes apply, which is a major benefit. There are additional benefits that are being discussed, such as City grants and restoration loan programs. She said she was surprised about the amount of misinformation in the community with the amount of outreach the Commission has been done and continues to do. She said they talk about the public outreach program on every agenda. A presentation had been made to the Association of Realtors, the Optimists, the Rotary, and to many other groups in town. There is a historic preservation pamphlet that has been distributed to many establishments, the library and visitors center, etc., as well as a booth at the Flower Show for the last three years. In addition there have been all of the public meetings of HRC and the City Council where preservation is often discussed. She said it is an ongoing educational effort and requested Ms. Koop's help and cooperation. Commissioner Wilson added that she had recently talked to the Board of Realtors and they were very unreceptive to a presentation. She said she is continually amazed at what people don't know about the

program. Ms. Koop said that whatever the Commission needs to do go keep working on their educational efforts they should do it constantly.

Doug St. Denis, 710 Adella Avenue, said that all of the realtors who spoke at the City Council meeting said they are for historic preservation as well as being for property rights. It seems that it is a hysterical thing that is happening around town. Everybody wants historic preservation, but they want to be able to tear down their own particular home and rebuild their own huge home. But they want to be surrounded by charming cottages. The reason we want to save historic homes is because that is what makes Coronado 'Coronado'. She referenced a study on national property values that shows that once a house reaches a hundred years old, its value increases markedly. She would have liked to see more realtors at this meeting because there is a huge misunderstanding and they are the ones that need the correct information most.

Jon Ryan said it is monumentally amazing to him that one of the premier business people in town who doesn't understand the rules. He said that tells us that our public organization needs to find a way to get that information into their hands. He said maybe a bulleted list would work; something that is easy to review quickly and to pass along. He said that the real estate people can be the best salesmen for the program if they have the right information.

Commissioner MacCartee said that the public awareness has been raised and there may be a lot more attention paid to the education efforts of the Commission now more than ever before. The Commission members agreed that the public outreach effort would continue and see how to work with the public to get the information out where it is needed.

Chairman Keith asked if staff needed a motion. Ms. McCaull said she understood from the discussion how the Commissioners would like to proceed with the interim procedure.

**2) Discussion regarding the Historic Resource Commission meeting schedule to add an additional meeting per month (3rd Wednesday) to accommodate application requests and Commission business**

Ms. McCaull said that in the last couple of months the Commission has had to schedule several special meetings in order to take action on the numerous items before them. In addition, it is expected that the number of applications will increase due to the new procedures and the Commission might want to consider adding another meeting each month to the schedule. The Commission members discussed the fact that they don't want to make applicants wait an unreasonable amount of time to have their applications reviewed and decided to add the third Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. to their meeting schedule.

3) **Discussion regarding the formulation of a list of potentially historical properties**

Ms. McCaull said the item is on the agenda to give the Commission the opportunity to discuss the list of potentially historic homes with some assistance from the Coronado Historical Association. Chairman Keith said the Commissioners received a list from the California Office of Historic Preservation from a historic preservation attorney who had attended a recent City Council meeting when the Urgency Ordinance was adopted. The Commissioners divided up the list, visited each address, and noted whether the home was still existing and if it had been substantially altered or not. Ms. Keith said that out of 220 homes on her pages, 32 of the homes were gone, 16 were severely altered, 5 had already been designated, and some were hard to tell if they had been altered or not. The building permit records would have to be consulted to know what was done with some of the homes. Ms. Keith said she would suggest that the Commission turn over their individual lists to staff to consolidate so they could look at them again at the next meeting. The Commissioners agreed with the suggestion.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

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Tony A. Peña  
Director of Community Development