

CORONADO HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

June 4, 2003

A regular meeting of the Coronado Historic Resource Commission was called to order at 3:05 p.m., Wednesday, June 4, 2003, in the Council Chambers, 1825 Strand Way, Coronado, California, by Florence Draper, Chair of the Historic Resource Commission.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 16, 2002 were approved as amended.
The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 7, 2003 were approved as submitted.
The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 8, 2003 were approved as submitted.
The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 22, 2003 were approved as submitted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Meeting Schedule for July and August – The Commissioners decided to reschedule the July 2 meeting to July 16 since there were no pending applications and to hold the August meeting if there are applications to be heard at that time.

Downtown Specific Plan – Ms. McCaull announced that there would be a community workshop held on Thursday, June 24, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. and the Library to review the Draft Specific Plan for the Orange Avenue Corridor. She said that it deals with the development standards for the commercial district and includes some references to the historical aspects of the community. Commissioner Keith asked if there were any copies of the Specific Plan that would be available for the public and Commissioners to review. Ms. McCaull said the draft plan copies would be available at the City Clerk's office, the Library, and Community Development Department, and online after the Specific Plan Committee's next meeting to finalize their report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no Committee Reports.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS

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

APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW

None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Commission Review and Discussion of Proposed Refurbishment to the War Memorial in Star Park.

Ms. McCaull explained that the City Council had reviewed at their last meeting a proposal by Public Services Department to refurbish Star Park. Scott Huth, Director of Public Services Department introduced himself and explained the proposed project. Ms. McCaull said that even though this park has not been designated historic yet, Mr. Huth requested that the HRC be involved in the process and have a chance to give some input because he knew they would be interested.

Mr. Huth explained that each year Public Services inventories the parks to see which repairs, maintenance and upgrades can be put in the budget. This year it was decided that Star Park Circle needs to be brought up to the community standard. He said they are trying to have it done in time for a ceremony by the VFW on November 11. The only time sensitive item is the delivery of some of the products. It could be done before if the products arrive earlier.

He said the memorials haven't been kept up over time and now it is necessary to repair the damaged concrete bases of the memorials and the cannons, replace the missing bronze dedication plaques, and replace the old flag pole.

The Rotary Club has proposed to replace the flag pole with a split-mast flag pole with yard arm that will be lit at night. It will fly the U.S. and California flags and possibly the Coronado flag if there is room. It will also be able to fly the armed service and POW flags on special occasions. Mr. Huth said the flag pole currently has a flat square base. They plan to remove that and replace it with a star shaped brick base to match the style of brickwork that is on a wall nearby on Loma Avenue. Imbedded in the points of the star will be the emblem of each service. The flag pole might end up being brushed aluminum, but he would prefer it to be anodized bronze because the color looks more like brass.

Mr. Huth said here is a photo showing the historic plaque for the cannon, so they have already ordered a replacement. He said it will be a little more difficult to get accurate information on the “grape-shooter” or gattling gun, which was a precursor to the current day machine gun. He said they are trying to discover exactly how the City acquired that gun and would love to have some help from the Commission on that. The bases under the guns are have a lot of rust and are missing pieces of concrete, but they should be able to repair the concrete and then add a decorative, protective layer. He said the protective coating is cementitious and can be finished to mimic the brick base of the flag pole, or the rock that is used down by the beach, and can be made whatever color is desired. There are other finishes that could be used such as a solid coating that has been used at the public services yard at the fleet shop and on the deck, similar to the finish used on the decks of ships. Scott said they haven’t had luck with the stones in epoxy like are used on some pool decks, but there is a similar technology where they put a half inch slurry coating down and inlay brick, rocks, stamp a pattern, the options are endless.

Mr. Huth said the posts that support the chain around the memorial will either be replaced with a brass product or artillery shells if they can be found. If they don’t stay with the decorative chain they propose the use of a stainless coated cable similar to the one installed down on the Strand at the nature decks.

Commissioner Ryan said that because this is one of the most historic parks and has important military significance it would be wise to convene a group with some military people (Navy) and a couple of HRC Commissioners to make sure the details are correct. He would especially like for proper flag etiquette to be followed by flying the American flag at the highest point and to only allow the state and military flags. That way they won’t be tempted to fly any other country’s or event flags and fall victim to trying to please various groups and fall victim to being overly “politically correct”. Mr. Huth advised that it’s been taken care of; the Navy League and VFW have been included in the process and they have made similar suggestions.

Commissioner Ryan asked what the significance is of the big rock in the park. Chairman Draper provided the information that when the seawall was installed on Ocean Boulevard Bruce Muirhead, who worked for the City at that time, and his staff from the Public Works Department moved a rock from the seawall to install in the park. He doesn’t believe the rock has any historic significance other than the fact that it’s been sitting there. Mr. Ryan said this project needs to be done right because a lot of people who have gone to war come from this town and it needs to be historically accurate. He suggested there be 3 halyards and that the service and POW flags are stored in a lock boxes that can’t be tampered with. Commissioner MacCartee disagreed that the rock wasn’t historic. She said it was placed by the citizenry and is a part of the park.

Commissioner MacCartee said regarding the origin of the cannons that as far as she knows they were donated by General Pendleton, who was Mayor of Coronado for several years and for whom Camp Pendleton was named. She believes the guns came from the Dominican Republic Insurrection of 1916. She commented that to carry through with the theme of the brick pattern to match the wall would be wonderful because it is very historic and very rarely done any more.

Commissioner MacCartee asked if it would be possible to install a sign that explains what Star Park means, where the cannons came from, etc. She said it would be wonderful if there was a way to include the photograph. This would really help to bring the history alive for visitors to the park. She said that there actually was a star shaped garden back in 1887 and there was some talk at one point about putting back the star shaped garden.

Commissioner Draper said Coronado Historical Association (CHA) has a photo of the garden showing a huge shrub cut in the shape of a star. She also mentioned that she has personally done a lot of research on the guns at the park and believes that Dr. Cahill has a copy of the information, including definitive article on the cannon (including a photo of Dr. Brandeis at 6 years old sitting on the cannon). It is the minutes from the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees that tells that General Pendleton gave the old field piece, brass muzzle, front loader, made in 1851 in Liverpool, England that was carried by the marines in 1916 during the Siege of Santiago. But she could only find information on the one cannon, not the other. Photographs could be obtained from Paige Harrington of CHA.

Mr. Huth said that they have enough information for a plaque on the cannon and he believes that most people would agree the “grape shooter” also came by way of General Pendleton, but he hasn’t been very successful in getting any more information on its origin or how it was used, etc. Maybe the plaque can just say what it is; perhaps that is significant enough.

Commissioner Keith said the ideas are great. She would love for brick pattern to match the pattern at the Dupee house. It would be nice to use the brick on the bases of the monument and the flag pole to tie them together. She also liked the idea of using brass for the pole. The rock has been there as long as she can remember. She said this is her favorite park; she grew up there and takes her grandchildren there to sit on the cannons. Regarding the chains, kids are always trying to swing on them so it would be a good idea to make sure they are tight enough so they aren’t dangerous to swing on. There is enough play in them now so the children can play with them a little bit, but not enough to do any damage. Ms. Keith’s one major objection at Star Park are the five signs that say “No Dogs allowed”, and ironically she often sees a dog tied up to one of them. She requested that the number of signs on the subject be reduced to only one, with information about the ordinance requiring people to pick up after their dogs. She does like the idea of an informational sign however. It could explain the history of Star Park, that the rock came from the seawall, and that the memorial is in memory of those who have gone to war and returned and those who didn’t. The sign could be tucked up against a tree, at the base of the flagpole, or near the street so that kids who are playing don’t crash into it. She said that if there wasn’t money in the budget for the sign perhaps citizens might want to donate for it. Commissioner MacCartee added that there are some great signs that look historic and would allow for the picture.

Mr. Huth asked if a group of Commissioners would like to work on wording for the sign. Commissioners MacCartee and Keith volunteered. They suggested that Paige Harrington might also be willing to help out.

Commission Discussion Regarding the Public Outreach Program

Plaques: Commissioner MacCartee said she was just recently in Saratoga Springs and saw the perfect plaque. She said she would get the information to present to the Commission at the next meeting. Ms. McCaull said the City Council budgeted \$2,500 for plaques, which should take care of all of the currently designated homes plus 10 more.

Slide Shows: Commissioner Keith said the last slide show, "The Way We Were", had around 80 attendees who were fascinated and wanted to know when the next show will be. A lot of people had heard about it by word of mouth from friends who saw the previous show. Ms. Keith asked if Ms. MacCartee would be willing to do some more presentations in the fall. She said it could be done at CHA or another location since the Library won't be available. Two people requested packets of information on designation she thinks because of the shows.

Commissioner MacCartee thought everyone should think about HRC joining forces with CHA to co-sponsor some events beginning in the fall; perhaps co-sponsor a series of these shows, since there are several. She said the two entities working towards the same goal could be more effective than working separately. MacCartee asked if a liaison person or a committee could be appointed to work with CHA so they could speak with CHA prior to each meeting. She asked if this could be discussed on the next agenda. Commissioner Ryan concurred that a relationship with CHA could be beneficial. Referring to the recent City Council meeting he said he was dismayed by some reactions of Council and staff people who seemed to be operating afraid of historic preservation people. More education of what is going on in other communities needs to be done. And there has to be better explanations of the CEQA process and what it takes to tear down a house. He said he feels like we are back in the attitude of the 1980's.

Paige Harrington, Executive Director of Coronado Historical Association said that they will be willing to work with anyone. She said when people don't have information the first thing that happens is they get scared. They need to be educated on the importance of our history and provided with the tools they need so they will want to preserve it. She committed that CHA will give as much of their resources as they can towards that end.

Commissioner Draper commented that her forte is research and that is what she loves to do. He likes to dig around and get the real story on things. She was more comfortable in that role and suggested that she step down as Chair and let Vice Chair MacCartee carry forward. She discussed the Council meeting the previous day and the discussion over the survey. Her feeling was that there are a lot of benefits to having the survey, but the City Council didn't have any idea of the benefits. She felt that she may have stepped on some toes and might be more comfortable in the role of researcher rather than Chair.

Commissioner Keith said that Chairman Draper would be out of town for July and August and as the topic wasn't on the agenda today it might be better to wait to discuss any changes in the fall. If the Chair feels the same way in September she could talk to staff and request it to go on the agenda then, but it wouldn't be appropriate to take any action at the current meeting.

Library Display: Commissioner Keith said there were numerous comments on how wonderful the display was. She would like to pursue and develop that relationship and have more displays. She said it's amazing how many people use our library.

Newspaper Articles: Ms. McCaull said that during last night's discussion of the history of the Village Parks a suggestion was made that a series of articles in the Eagle would be very informational to the public to let them know of the History of the Parks.

Commission Discussion Regarding the History of Coronado's Village Parks

Chairman Draper said she was surprised that the City Council had chosen the option by which the HRC would prepare an application for historic designation of all parks except SDG&E and Rotary, which means the parks in the Cays and Glorietta Bay would be included. She said they will have to go back to the drawing board now, since the application would include properties that are clearly not historic. Commissioner Keith said that the application process would take care of the discrepancies. The application will state what the findings are regarding each park and would show whether it is deserving of designation or not. The Council will then have the option of accepting or not accepting the Commission's recommendations in the application. If the designation of certain parks can't be justified, then it would be logical to exclude them from designation.

Commissioner Ryan suggested that the application could include two lists in the application, one being "the Parks", and the other "Historic Parks". He was concerned that the Council didn't understand that the parks couldn't be altered once they are designated. Ms. McCaull said the question did come up and she explained that exactly as stated in the staff report that if anything other than a minor alteration (landscaping, pruning, painting) was proposed, it would trigger additional review. She made it clear that the intent is to preserve the park. If the park is designated as historic that will protect the property. Ms. Keith said she believed it would become very clear once it's written down in the application.

Commissioner Draper said that perhaps it could be pointed out in the application that the criteria is "either 75 years old or have reached historic significance." She said the application could point out the parks that had not reached any historic significance. Commissioner Keith said they might be considered important to the park system, but they are not historic. Mr. Ryan said that they should go forward with what they asked for, but he was stunned with the Council's reaction at the Council meeting. He wants to make sure they understand that the designated parks will be preserved as they are and not have possible changes down the road, such as adding parking spaces. Ms. Keith said that it was her understanding that the Council wanted to make sure that they wouldn't have to go through CEQA for the replacement of a tree or other general maintenance subjects. She believed they understood that there would be no major changes allowed without further review.

Commissioners Keith suggested that the Commission wait until September to choose the committee and prepare the application so that Commissioner Draper could participate. She didn't think it would take very long at that point because the hard work has been done already. Ms. McCaull said that over the summer staff could go out over and take pictures and gather up some old pictures to show what they used to look like, etc. This would be a good opportunity to liaison with CHA.

Commission Discussion Regarding the Request to Utilize the Historic Resource Inventory Prepared by Sourcepoint to Create a New, Updated Historic Resource Survey

Commissioner Keith suggested that Commissioners Walsh and MacCartee might want to watch the rerun of the City Council on cable to understand what the City Council is thinking on this subject. She said the bottom line is there were a lot of questions as to what a collection of data might mean. There are those that could interpret the collected data as being an inventory even though the data has not been processed in any way. There are those who believe it isn't an inventory and remains strictly data. The City Councilmembers felt they needed more legal advice because they do not want to establish an inventory without knowing that was what they were doing. She and Councilmember Monroe thought that this is a two-step process. One step being the collection of data for use by the Commission for the purpose of determining how many properties were possibly eligible for Mills Act and thus the extent of the possible fiscal effect of the Mills Act contracts on City general fund. The next step would be for the City Council to decide what they would do with that report. The thought of some people is that once you take the first step you already have an inventory. The discussion ended with the City Manager saying he would work with the City Attorney, investigate the legalities, and come back with a recommendation to the City Council.

Commissioner Ryan agreed with Commissioner Keith's assessment. He said the Mayor was trying to broker the two-step idea. He said the Council started the discussion before they understood any of the numbers. Once the information came out that there are perhaps only 150 properties out of 9,400 in the City that may be eligible for designation Mr. Ryan noticed a couple of the opponents backed off the opposition because they realized it wasn't as large of a problem as they first thought. He said there is still a lot of education that needs to be done.

Commission Discussion Regarding the Historical Preservation "Mills Act" Program and Fiscal Restrictions

Commissioner Keith recused herself. Commissioner Draper asked how demolition requests had been received over the last year. Ms. McCaull said that she didn't know the number, but the record is available in Community Development. Commissioner Draper said the reason she asked was she thought perhaps one way to raise money for Mills Act contracts would be to have anyone who requests a demolition permit pay a \$2,000 fee specifically for Mills Act. Commissioner Ryan said he didn't know if that approach would be very profitable, or even if it was this Commission's purview to develop ideas for Mills Act funding. Commissioner MacCartee brought up her idea of designating a percent of the annual increase in property tax revenue base to the program. Ms. McCaull said it was entirely appropriate for the Commission to brainstorm on ideas to the City Council. She said the City Council is aware there is a problem because she has pointed out to them that there are now eight designated homes backlogged waiting for Mills Act contracts now that the funding cap has been exceeded. She reminded them of another idea the Commission had come up with previously regarding a prioritization methodology for Mills Act applications.

Susan Keith, 901 Tolita Avenue, said she was speaking as a citizen. She said the house across the street from hers sold recently for over a million dollars. The previous owner was paying

maybe \$1,000 in property taxes. The increase in property taxes that the city will be receiving on just that one property is huge. That is additional income right there. She said the City wouldn't lose any money if they were to designate a portion of the additional funds to Mills Act contracts.

Commissioner MacCartee commented that this is a solution that takes care of itself since the city hasn't seen that money yet. Nobody gets hurt.

Ms. McCaull said this idea was explored with the City's previous finance manager, however his and the Assistant City Manager's response at the time was that estimates of the increased property tax base are considered for the bonding capacity of the City for redevelopment projects. It takes into account the change of ownership and change in property tax values. She said that John O'Brien brought that subject up when he was representing his client. He was going to request of City Manager's office whether the predictions made eight years ago for this redevelopment were still accurate, or if there was a greater increase in property tax than had been figured. He hasn't followed up as he had discussed at that time, but perhaps there would be a window of opportunity.

Ms. MacCartee said that perhaps this request could be accompanied with the argument of how retaining the City's historic charming quality and community ambience will only enhance property values. Commission Draper said it would be best to make this request while the value is high.

The Commission members discussed how to present information to the Council. Commissioner Ryan said that if the Mills Act contracts continued to stack up that would apply some political pressure. He said they could present some numbers to show them how many Mills Act contracts they might possibly see and what that might cost over the next ten years. Show them the history over the last two years to show that of designated properties, only "x" amount apply for Mills Act contracts. He said it's a good thing Crown Manor is on the list because there will be other larger properties to come up in the future as well. This will give a more realistic picture over time.

Commissioner Keith returned to her seat with the Commission.

MISCELLANEOUS

Brown Act Workshop – Lessons Learned. Ms. Draper said that Mr. Pena brought up the "awkward time" just after and before the meetings. She said she would be much more careful in the future. She thought it was really interesting that you can still participate in a meeting if you are traveling as long as you post an agenda and introduce anyone who is in the room with you, as well as let them participate.

Commissioner Ryan commented that he was a little miffed that he was called out as having violated the Brown Act when he wasn't guilty of an infraction. He said that the Council members ought to know what the rules are better than the rest. Ms. McCaull said that she could pass the information along to the appropriate person.

FUTURE ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

Tony A. Peña
Director of Community Development