

HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Regular Meeting

October 1, 2008

The regular meeting of the Coronado Historic Resource Commission was called to order at 3 p.m., Wednesday, October 1, 2008, at the Coronado City Hall Council Chambers, 1825 Strand Way, Coronado, California, by Chairperson MacCartee.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Crenshaw, Jones, MacCartee, O'Brien and St. Denis

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Ann McCaull, Associate Planner
Martha L Alvarez, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of September 17, 2008, were approved as submitted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

There was no separate Director's report.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS

Susan Enowitz, Interim Director for the Coronado Historical Association and Museum of History and Art, announced that a Mayoral Forum will be held on October 20, 2008, at 5 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

HAP 17-08 SCOTT HELMERS AND ROBIN WOOD – Request for Historic Alteration Permit to install solar panels on the roof of the historically designated residence addressed as 744 B Avenue and located in the R1-AE (Single Family Residential) Zone. (*continued from the meeting of September 17, 2008*)

Ms. McCaull introduced the staff report as outlined in the agenda. A total of 38 new solar electric panels are proposed on the roof or back roof line of the historic building. Twelve panels are proposed on the flat roof of the sun room and a remaining 26 are proposed on the sloped roof of the dwelling facing the alley.

At the September 17, 2008 meeting, the Commission had a lengthy discussion regarding the proposal and continued the item to allow further study of the proposal as the Commission had not considered this type of request before. The owner, Scott Helmerts, assisted staff in completing

additional research and this information has been provided to the Commissioners. City staff did an inquiry on the Office of Historic Preservation site to learn how other cities across the nation are handling the use of solar panels on historic properties. Staff research indicates only one City across the nation has addressed this issue. The City of Breckenridge, Colorado has adopted an ordinance this year addressing the use of solar panels in historic districts. In general, their City took the philosophy of encouraging and supporting solar panels and to promote the concept that Historic preservation allows for “green” buildings. The panels are required to be located in an area that minimizes the effect on the historic property and character defining elements. The Commission asked that the project architect, Dorothy Howard, be present at today’s meeting to provide additional information and design ideas.

Chairperson MacCartee said she was impressed by the City of Breckenridge’s ordinance and asked that staff place this item for discussion on a future Commission agenda.

Commissioner St. Denis asked that some of the ordinance’s language could be incorporated in the motion today.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The applicant, Scott Helmers, 744 B Avenue, gave a brief overview and answered questions. He stated that he is very committed to historic preservation and has undertaken a significant renovation of his property. He is also committed to minimizing the impact on our environment. His intent is to install the panels on the back side of the house and because the roof slope is very shallow, the panels will have an overall minimal visual impact and no impact to the front façade. He understands the Commission’s concern about setting a precedent and he encourages the Commission to set a precedent of supporting solar use on historic homes, with some caveats as outlined in the Breckenridge ordinance. He stated that many California cities have adopted similar plans such as the cities of Pasadena, San Francisco, Fresno, and Santa Cruz. Cities from other states include Breckenridge, Colorado; Ashland, Oregon; Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Salt Lake City, Utah. On an international level, England has just approved placement of solar panels on their castles as has Scotland and the Vatican in Rome.

Commissioner St. Denis asked if the applicant had decided on the installation of the solar panels after the remodel had begun as she notes that it is not integrated in the initial design.

Mr. Helmers said this project came up midstream and commented that his architect originally tried to talk him out of installing the panels. However, he decided it would be a good financial investment albeit an expensive one. He added that it is debatable if the panels will pay for themselves during the life of the product; he would prefer to do this because he feels it is the right thing to do.

Dorothy Howard, Architect, 420 H Avenue, gave a brief overview via a PowerPoint Presentation and answered questions.

Commissioner St. Denis asked if the blue panels will be much darker in shadow and brighter in sunlight.

Ms. Howard said that, based on photographs she has seen, the panels are not bright blue, they are dark—even in the sunlight.

James Pinon, 4153 Falcon Street, San Diego, commented that the back side of the garage is not a good location because of the direction it is facing. In addition, the panels would be picking up shadows from power poles in the alley. Mr. Pinon displayed a sample of the solar panel and suggested that the metallic frames not be painted to match the color of the roof because the frames are black anodized aluminum which will last much longer in this environment than any type of paint.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Commissioner Crenshaw thanked the applicant for his commitment and trendsetting actions. She stated that she visited the site and was unable to view the solar panels. She said the home is beautiful and she did not feel that this project would harm it.

Commissioner O'Brien thanked the architect, Ms. Scott, for her presentation and her effort in educating the Commission on this new type of project. He also thanked Director McCaull for providing the Commission with information on what other cities are doing on this issue. He stated that he is supportive of the direction those cities are headed and feels that Coronado is well on its way in commencing "framework" that suggests that solar panels on historic homes, given the right set of circumstances, are certainly acceptable and encouraged.

Commissioner Jones concurred. She said she visited the site and was also unable to view the solar panels from the sidewalk. She stated that it is important to integrate solar energy and congratulated the applicant for pursuing this project.

Commissioner St. Denis agreed. In reviewing the Breckenridge ordinance, she stated that the Commission must practice caution and review the requests on a case-by-case basis. She thanked Director McCaull for the great amount of research and information she provided to the Commission.

Chairperson MacCartee thanked everyone and stated this is a fabulous first project of its kind in Coronado.

COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSIONER ST. DENIS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE HAP 17-08, REQUEST FOR HISTORIC ALTERATION PERMIT TO INSTALL SOLAR PANELS ON THE ROOF OF THE HISTORICALLY DESIGNATED RESIDENCE ADDRESSED AS 744 B AVENUE.

THE FOLLOWING FINDINGS WERE MADE:

- A. THAT THE PROPOSED ALTERATION IS CONSISTENT WITH THE PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THIS CHAPTER, THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENT AND THE GENERAL PLAN.
- B. THE PROPOSED ALTERATION WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE HISTORICAL, ARCHITECTURAL OR AESTHETIC VALUE OF THE HISTORIC RESOURCE IN THAT THE PLACEMENT OF THE PANELS DOES NOT COMPROMISE THE HISTORIC RESOURCE OR ITS ROOF AND DOES NOT IMPACT THE PUBLIC VIEW OF THE HISTORIC RESOURCE FROM THE STREET.
- C. THE PROPOSED ALTERATION WILL RETAIN THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS THAT MAKE THE HISTORIC RESOURCE SIGNIFICANT IN THAT THE PLACEMENT OF THE PANELS AT THE REAR OF THE BUILDING PRESERVES THE ROOF LINE AND PRESERVES THE PUBLIC'S VIEW OF THE HISTORIC RESOURCE FROM THE STREET.
- D. THE PROPOSED ALTERATION WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE HISTORIC RESOURCE'S RELATIONSHIP TO ITS SURROUNDINGS AND NEIGHBORING HISTORIC RESOURCES IN THAT THE PLACEMENT OF THE PANELS HAS BEEN LOCATED AT THE REAR OF THE PROPERTY AND ON THE REAR SLOPE OF THE ROOF AND DOES NOT COMPROMISE THE RESOURCE OR PUBLIC VIEW OF THE HISTORIC RESOURCE FROM THE RIGHT-OF-WAY.
- E. THE PROPOSED ALTERATION WILL COMPLY WITH THE SECRETARY OF INTERIOR'S STANDARDS AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 106 OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT OF 1966.

COMMISSIONER CRENSHAW SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Commissioners Crenshaw, Jones, MacCartee, O'Brien, and St. Denis.
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: None.
ABSTAIN: None.

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

There is a 10-day appeal period.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:37 p.m.

Tony A Peña
Director of Community Development