

HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Regular Meeting

October 20, 2010

The regular meeting of the Coronado Historic Resource Commission was called to order at 3 p.m., Wednesday, October 20, 2010, at the Coronado City Hall Council Chambers, 1825 Strand Way, Coronado, California, by Chairperson Crenshaw.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Crenshaw, Jones, O'Brien, Ryan, St. Denis

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Tricia Olsen, Associate Planner
Martha L Alvarez, Recording Secretary/Minutes Preparer

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of October 6, 2010, were approved as submitted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

There was no separate report.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS

Commissioner St. Denis reported that at the City Council of October 19, 2010, Councilmember Denny spoke about the terrazzo located in front of the Village Theatre and referred to a meeting with a Caltrans representative in which Commissioner St. Denis was also a participant. She inquired with staff about the process to designate the terrazzo as historic.

Ms. Olsen replied that the Commission can designate publicly-owned resources; however, the property owner, Caltrans, would need to submit an application requesting designation.

Commissioner Ryan asked if the terrazzo located in front of Lamb's Theatre has been designated historic.

Ms. Olsen replied that it is not designated historic.

PUBLIC HEARING

NOI 2010-12 **NICK TOMASELLO** – Notice of Intent to Partially Demolish the Commercial Building addressed as 100-104 Orange Avenue and located in the C (Commercial) Zone.

Ms. Olsen introduced the staff report as outlined in the agenda.

Commissioner St. Denis asked if the applicant can move forward with their project should the Commission find that the structure meets the criteria to be designated historic.

Ms. Olsen said that if the structure is deemed historic, the applicant's next step would be to obtain approval by the Commission for an Historic Alteration Permit. She said the applicant, at this time, must still address other issues with the Design Review and Planning Commissions.

Commissioner St. Denis asked if the structure is deemed historic, would the request be reviewed by this Commission and not Design Review or Planning.

Ms. Olsen said yes.

Commissioner St. Denis asked if the structure is deemed not historic, could it conceivably be demolished.

Ms. Olsen replied yes, the structure could be demolished if the Commission determined it does not meet the criteria to be designated; however, the applicants are not seeking to demolish the property at this time.

The applicant, Nick Tomasello, 560 Fifth Avenue, San Diego, gave a brief overview and answered questions of the Commission.

Commissioner Ryan asked about ownership of the property.

Mr. Tomasello replied that he and his investors own the land. They have owned the building since July 13. The property was formerly owned by the Forsyth Family Trust.

Commissioner Ryan asked for the specific location of the property they own.

Mr. Tomasello confirmed that they own the land which extends to the alley as well as the area from Orange Avenue to 104 Orange Avenue.

Commissioner Ryan asked if Mr. Tomasello wishes to keep the property's appearance unchanged.

Mr. Tomasello replied yes.

Vice Chair O'Brien asked if Mr. Tomasello is asking that the structure be designated historic.

Mr. Tomasello clarified that the intent of their request was to obtain approval from the Commission in order to make an opening for the trash area. He said that the building has not been deemed historic; however, Associate Planner Fait had suggested that their request be reviewed by the Commission.

Ms. Olsen stated that the reason this request is before the Commission today is because the owner is requesting replacement of the existing windows which, per the Municipal Code, constitutes partial demolition as windows can be considered character-defining features of a building.

Mr. Tomasello responded that they are proposing to replace the single-pane glass with triple-pane glass on the existing windows. There are no changes being proposed to the actual

windows. In addition, they are required to provide a trash enclosure area as there is currently not one available.

Ms. Olsen clarified that what has triggered review by the Commission today is the replacement of the glass pane on the existing windows, the front façade windows with accordion windows and brick, and tile that is located underneath the existing blue awning.

Commissioner Ryan asked if a trash enclosure can be accommodated in the alley at the rear of the building as opposed to having the enclosure face The Landing.

Mr. Tomasello said that Associate Planner Fait recommended the currently proposed location of the trash enclosure.

Commissioner Jones asked if there was access to the building from the alley.

Mr. Tomasello replied that there is no access from the alley. He said there was another property that was built up to the rear of his building so his building is surrounded on the two back sides by two other properties.

Commissioner St. Denis asked if they are replacing and/or changing the shape of the windows that face First Street.

Mr. Tomasello clarified that the windows facing First Street will not change—only the glass will be replaced. The sill will be raised in order to keep the consistency with the brick located at the bottom of the window, which is currently a wood material.

Commissioner St. Denis asked if the windows on the sports bar were previously replaced, and if tile was applied.

Mr. Tomasello confirmed it was.

Commissioner St. Denis asked if there is brick underneath the tile.

Mr. Tomasello said he is unsure; however, the tile will be replaced with matching brick.

Commissioner Ryan asked if there was another ownership contiguous to this building. He asked if designating Mr. Tomasello's building as historic would affect the adjoining property owner's structure.

Ms. Olsen said it was a separate parcel; therefore, it would not be affected.

Vice Chair O'Brien stated that over the last five years, he has seen between seven and 10 storefronts in Coronado, all at least 75 years of age, replaced and those changes have never been reviewed or approved by the Historic Resource Commission. He questioned why the Commission is being asked to review a request for a change to a storefront when other similar requests have not been reviewed. Mr. O'Brien stated that this request does not appear to be in the Commission's purview.

Ms. Olsen responded that she was directed to place the item on the agenda due to the replacement of the windows being considered a partial demolition.

Commissioner St. Denis said she also had the same question.

Vice Chair O'Brien said many properties in the community, such as the property located across the street as well as the café building at 1134 Orange Avenue, had storefront changes but were not required to appear before the Commission.

Commissioner St. Denis commented that 1134 Orange was exempt from being reviewed by the Commission.

Vice Chair O'Brien stated that Emerald Surf and Sport did not appear before the Commission although it is a separate building and owner.

Commissioner St. Denis agreed.

Mr. Tomasello said he was appreciative that the Commission brought up this point as he, his attorney, and his architect had discussed this issue. They have diligently visited the Orange Avenue Corridor area and have counted 62 buildings that have been re-done since 1985 that have not appeared before the Commission. He has tried to determine why other property owners have not gone through this process for similar requests and stated he would appreciate clarification on this matter.

Commissioner Jones said that generally requests for changes to façades of buildings would be reviewed by the Design Review Commission; however, it would not include changes to historical buildings.

Commissioner Ryan noted that the historical element was not in place until the year 2000.

Vice Chair O'Brien agreed but stated that there have been many similar requests within the last 10 years.

Chairperson Crenshaw clarified that when the Commission began its Coronado Property Review list in 2008, they did not designate any structures in the commercial corridor as historic, nor were they asked to do so. In addition, she remembers that the Forsyth Trust was represented by Elizabeth Lovell, who appeared before the Commission to declare that this structure was certainly not an historic building. Ms. Crenshaw said that this item is before the Commission today because of their request to partially demolish. The Commission is very strict in their review process. In order to deny the request, the Commission would be required to deem the property as historic. She reminded the audience that the Commission would appreciate receiving testimony today regarding the structure's historicity. The Commission's decision will be based on whether the building meets the five criteria in order to designate it as historic.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Miles Harvey, 1099 First Street, resident of The Landing for 20 years, stated he was not in support of the business' name, and requested that the Commission place conditions on the issuance of a building permit.

Ms. Olsen reiterated that today's hearing is being held to determine whether the property is an historic resource. If the Commission determines that the property is an historic resource, then the project will return as an Historic Alteration Permit request. At that time, there would be a permit process involved.

Karen Finch, Coronado Chamber of Commerce, shared that she has been working as a business advocate with Mr. Tomasello and his group for the last several months. She has been working as a liaison between Mr. Tomasello and John Schneider of Edco to address trash and recycling issues. She is very pleased that the applicant is willing to be clean up that particular corner and corridor. Ms. Finch said the Chamber of Commerce supports the applicant's efforts.

Gary Smith, resident of The Landing, asked for an overview of the five criteria.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated the five criteria are as follows: A) It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's military, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, or architectural history; B) It is identified with a person(s) or event(s) significant in local, state or national history; C) It is one of the few remaining examples in the City possessing distinctive characteristics of an architectural style and is valuable for the study of a type, period, or method of construction and has not been substantially altered; D) It is an example of the notable work of a builder, designer, architect, artisan or landscape professional; E) It does/does not meet the state program of landmarks and points of historical interest as set forth in Section 5024.1 of the California Public Resources Code (as amended from time to time).

Commissioner St. Denis asked if the Forsyths were previous owners of this property.

Chairperson Crenshaw said she did not find information in the staff report regarding this information.

Tim Aaron, co-owner of the building, confirmed that they purchased the building from the Forsyth Trust.

Chairperson Crenshaw asked if this structure was part of the original Mexican Village complex.

Tim Aaron replied that the Mexican Village was located further down the block.

Commissioner Ryan said it is good to see the Chamber of Commerce supporting this business. Mr. Ryan noted for the record that there are 10 restaurants in a one-block area of Coronado. He suggested that the Chamber of Commerce may want to begin a process with North Island and AIRPAC to make available an NWR- or Chamber-supported small bus to provide transportation service between the hours of 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. to our military residents located on base.

Commissioner Jones said that although the request does meet Criterion A and C, she does not consider the building to be historic.

Commissioner St. Denis said the structure can certainly meet Criterion A and C. She said it can also meet Criterion B because the building was owned by the Forsyths. She said that the two Forsyth brothers were Canadian hockey players who came to Coronado and opened the very famous Mexican Village. She added that Mary Kay Forsyth founded the Chamber of

Commerce. She asked why this information was not included in the staff report.

Ms. Olsen noted that the name Forsyth was not found on any historical permit records. The permit records that staff reviewed showed that this property was owned by Albert Zange.

Mr. Tomasello confirmed that, based on his research, the Forsyths never pulled a permit on this property or on any other property that they partially owned on the block of Orange Avenue.

Commissioner Ryan said that this structure could meet two or three of the criteria. He would favor the solution that involves the owner. If the owner volunteers to designate the building as historic, this would influence him in one direction. However, if the ownership is adamantly opposed, then this would definitely influence him in the other direction.

Commissioner St. Denis said the architecture is unique and it appears the new owners are making every effort to preserve the structure and restore what has been changed so that it is brought back to its "glory days." Commissioner St. Denis requested that the item be continued in order to allow her time to research information on the Forsyths. She stated that if the Forsyths owned this building, they are significant persons in Coronado so it would meet the criterion under "cultural history."

Commissioner Jones stated that in all likelihood, this matter will come before Design Review. She likes the building and would like the façade to remain unchanged. Ms. Jones suggested that the building be deemed non historic and that Design Review review this request. She added that although the Forsyths were well known in Coronado, this building was an investment and not a structure that they were involved with; they simply owned a block of property.

Mr. Aaron commented that the Fire House building was the original Mexican Village; this structure was not deemed historic and the owners remodeled the entire structure.

Commissioner St. Denis said that this building's architecture has not been altered and is in pristine condition. She also noted that designating this building historic does not mean that changes cannot be made. It just means that the applicant would appear before the Historic Resource Commission and they would protect what is historic about the structure. The Design Review Commission has a different set of criteria for approval of requests.

Commissioner Ryan asked if the property owners would be in favor of volunteering to designate the building as historic.

Mr. Aaron said he would need to speak with Mr. Tomasello and could not provide an answer today.

Commissioner Jones said that if the building is deemed historic, zoning relief would be available.

Commissioner O'Brien asked Commissioner Jones if it is under Design Review's purview to approve or disapprove exterior signage.

Commissioner Jones stated that Design Review reviews the overall exterior design of the building including the façade, signage, windows, materials, awnings, doors, exterior tables and chairs. She stated the issues being reviewed today would be considered by Design Review and a

determination would be made with regard to the changes being in character with the building. If the building is designated historic, the matter would be reviewed by this Commission as opposed to Design Review.

Chairperson Crenshaw said that the Commission should be very careful, if they designate this building as historic, to provide details on how the structure meets each criterion. She noted that if the applicant desires to designate this building as historic, much research would be necessary. She stated that she does not consider this building historic as it has been significantly altered. She understands that the applicant is asking to place new windows on the side of the building. If the Commission disagrees, she would suggest that the Commission deny the request for new window placement. She noted that surrounding structures have had significant changes to the front façade but were not required to appear before the Commission.

Mr. Tomasello commented that the windows on the Laundromat are not original based on a photograph taken in 1964. The original windows were smaller and more consistent with the other two windows on the First Street side.

Chairperson Crenshaw confirmed that these windows are not original.

Mr. Tomasello also commented, in response to public testimony, that a name does not improve property value—only the building itself improves property value.

Commissioner St. Denis asked if Mr. Tomasello is removing the blue tile, which was added by Island Sports and Spirits, and matching it to the existing brick.

Mr. Tomasello said yes.

Commissioner St. Denis asked there will be glass in the clerestory windows as was originally.

Mr. Tomasello said yes. He said the windows are gorgeous and are currently hidden by the awning. He noted that the proposed design is exactly the way the building looked in 1964, when The Coronado Fishing Company owned it.

Commissioner St. Denis said the applicant sounded amenable to having an historic building.

Commissioner Ryan said that the applicant may want to do further research prior to deciding if they want to designate the property.

Mr. Tomasello said they have completed their research.

Commissioner St. Denis stated that she would like the opportunity to do additional research.

Mr. Tomasello said he currently owns and operates two facilities in the historic Gaslamp; both of his buildings have been deemed historic. However, the City had advised him that the building was not historic because of significant changes to the structure. He said that had he been given the opportunity by the City to designate the building historic, he would have avoided and diverted some issues.

Commissioner St. Denis commented that if this building is deemed historic, the applicant would have the honor of being the first historically designated commercial building in Coronado.

Mr. Tomasello said he would definitely consider this option; however, he will need to defer to his attorney and his architect for further advice.

Chairperson Crenshaw said she is delighted that they would consider designating the building as historic.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

None.

COMMISSION ACTION

COMMISSIONER ST. DENIS MADE A MOTION TO CONTINUE THE ITEM TO ALLOW THE COMMISSION AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONDUCT ADDITIONAL RESEARCH WITH REGARD TO CRITERION "B" CONCERNING PERSON(S) OR EVENT(S) SIGNIFICANT IN LOCAL, STATE, OR NATIONAL HISTORY.

Joe Astorga, Concepts West, project designer, asked how many properties have been designated historic in Coronado because of its relation to the Forsyths.

Chairperson Crenshaw and Commissioners O'Brien and St. Denis said they were not aware of any properties.

VICE CHAIR O'BRIEN SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Crenshaw, Jones, O'Brien, Ryan, St. Denis.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

There is a 10-day appeal period.

Ms. Olsen said the item will be scheduled to be re-heard at the Commission meeting of November 3.

Vice Chair O'Brien said the applicants are not the first persons to come before the Commission who may not have a clear understanding of the system. He said he would appreciate the applicants advising the Commission of their desire to designate or not designate the property as historic.

Commissioner St. Denis said the Commission prefers that the decision to designate be voluntary.

Mr. Astorga asked if parking requirements were included as part of the exceptions granted by the Commission (if the structure is designated historic).

The Commission said yes.

Ms. Olsen said that as part of the Historic Resources Code, an applicant is allowed to request zoning exceptions related to height, setbacks, and parking. She suggested that the applicant contact her for further information.

HP 2010-03 **CITY OF CORONADO** – Historic Resource Commission review and recommendation to the City Council for 2010 Historic Preservation Mills Act Agreements.

Commissioner St. Denis recused herself and stepped down from the dais as one of the properties being reviewed belongs to one of her clients.

Ms. Olsen introduced the staff report as outlined in the agenda.

Commissioner Ryan requested that staff use the word “investment” instead of the word “loss” when referring to the combined annual revenue calculation.

The Commission agreed to this request.

Commission discussion ensued.

Vice Chair O’Brien suggested recommending to the Council approval of the first five homes on the waiting list as was done the previous years. He stated that the Council appreciated the Commission’s goal of reducing the backlog.

Commissioners Jones and Ryan agreed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jackie Wennen, 329 G Avenue, said her property has been on the Mills Act waiting list for several years. She pointed out that if properties “jump” to the top of the list, it is unfair to other property owners who have also been waiting.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Commissioner Ryan suggested recommending approval of properties based on application submittal date, regardless if the combined annual revenue investment amount is over the fiscal cap.

Commissioner Jones agreed and suggested that proceeding down the list in the order the application was submitted was the fair thing to do.

Chairperson Crenshaw suggested that the Commission recommend a backup option in the event the Council does not accept their first option.

Commissioner Jones agreed.

Vice Chair O'Brien stated he would rather not give Council a second option. He reminded the Commission that the Council reviewed and approved, last year, Mills Act Agreements for five homes even though it was over the fiscal cap.

COMMISSION ACTION

CHAIRPERSON CRENSHAW MADE A MOTION TO RECOMMEND TO THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING PROPERTIES FOR THE 2010 MILLS ACT AGREEMENTS: 1013 ADELLA AVENUE, 744 B AVENUE, 1010 OLIVE AVENUE, 1111 FLORA AVENUE, AND 541 OCEAN BOULEVARD FOR THE 2010 MILLS ACT AGREEMENTS. THE COMBINED ANNUAL REVENUE INVESTMENT TO THE CITY IS \$40,229.00.

VICE CHAIR O'BRIEN SECONDED THE MOTION.

AYES: Crenshaw, Jones, O'Brien, Ryan.
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: St. Denis
ABSTAIN: None.

The motion passed with a vote of 4-0.

Discussion regarding the City Council's action on appeal of the Historic Resource Commission's determination that the residence located at 1105 F Avenue meets the criteria to be designated as an historic resource in accordance with Chapter 70.22 of the Municipal Code (NOI 2010-11 Jon Palmieri).

Ms. Olsen reported that the City Council, at their meeting of October 5, held an Administrative Hearing to consider an appeal filed with the City Clerk regarding the Commission's decision to designate the residence addressed as 1105 F Avenue. Ms. Olsen reported that the hearing was continued to the October 19 City Council meeting. At the Council meeting of October 19, the City Council made a decision to overturn the Commission's designation. The Council agreed to consider and vote on each criterion separately so that their individual votes could be reflected:

Criterion A: Vote 2-3 with Councilmembers Denny and Woiwode voting in favor. Criterion A did not carry.

Criterion B: Vote 2-3 with Councilmembers Denny and Ovrom voting in favor. Criterion B did not carry.

Criterion C: Vote 1-4 with Councilmember Denny voting in favor. Criterion C did not carry.

Criterion D: Vote 0-5 with no Councilmembers voting in favor. Criterion D did not carry.

Criterion E: Vote 0-5 with no Councilmembers voting in favor. Criterion E did not carry.

The City Council voted, at the request of the City Attorney, to have a "clean motion" reflecting the Council decision to affirm, modify, or overturn the decision. The City Council voted 4-1 to overturn the decision with Councilmember Denny voting against.

Commissioner St. Denis commented that the Administrative Hearing was unusual in that it allowed public testimony by persons not on the witness list, under Public Oral Communication. The appellant had eight or nine persons not on the witness list give prepared testimony during Public Oral Communication. A point of order was called, and the Mayor announced that the Council could not prevent anyone from speaking at Public Oral Communication.

Chairperson Crenshaw said that although the Commission continues to have issues about their qualifications as Commissioners, she stated that they should not take the comments personally because they are appointed and serve at the request of the City Council.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:19 p.m.

Rachel A. Hurst, Director of Community Development,
Redevelopment & Housing Services