

HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Regular Meeting

April 21, 2011

The special meeting of the Coronado Historic Resource Commission was called to order at 3 p.m., Wednesday, April 21, 2011, at the Coronado City Hall Council Chambers, 1825 Strand Way, Coronado, California, by Chairperson Ryan.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Crenshaw, Jones, McGowen, Ryan, St. Denis

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

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

CITY ATTORNEY: Lisa Foster

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Olsen reported that information had been provided to Commission members related to the Webinar titled "The Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties" as well as information regarding the updated Mills Act waiting list which includes the new prioritization results.

Ms. Olsen then provided information regarding the number of applications the Commission has reviewed and considered since the program's inception, as follows:

Applications

- 133 Designations
- 102 Historic Alteration Permits
- 106 Notice of Intent to Demolish Reviews (since 2004)
 - Of the 106 Reviews, 4 were historically designated as part of the review process

Mills Act

- 44 Recorded
- 26 Waiting List
- 2 Applications Submitted in 2011

NOI

- 102 Non Historic
- 4 Historic

Chairperson Ryan asked that under the NOI reviews, information be included regarding the number of structures that were demolished.

Commissioner St. Denis asked if staff could provide the number of voluntary historic designation applications denied by the Commission.

Commissioner McGowen commented that certain homes had been given original historic placards by the Coronado Historical Association. She asked staff if information was available on how many of these homes had been designated historic.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS

Vice Chair St. Denis thanked Ms. Olsen for the opportunity to participate in the aforementioned City-paid Webinar.

Commissioner Crenshaw asked if the historic designation for the property located at 456 Palm Avenue had been recorded.

Ms. Olsen confirmed that the document had been recorded against the title.

PUBLIC HEARING

(The following item was taken up first on the agenda.)

HR 2011-04 **WELSH FAMILY TRUST** – Preliminary review of a Historic Alteration Permit, including zoning exceptions related to setbacks and parking for the property addressed as 621 C Avenue and located in the R-1B (Single Family Residential) Zone.

Commissioner Jones was disqualified from participating in discussions as she lives in close proximity to the subject property.

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

Commissioner McGowen asked about the required setbacks.

Ms. Olsen said the setback is required to be 5 ft. and the applicant is proposing 4 ft. 6 in.

Ms. Olsen stated for the record that a letter had been received by the City today from a neighboring property owner who was concerned about the project's setbacks.

The applicant, John Welsh, gave a brief overview of the request and answered questions of the Commission. The applicant confirmed there is sufficient root space for the Tangelo tree.

Chairperson Ryan asked if the adjacent property to the north contains a one-story garage that is within three feet of the setback.

Mr. Welsh said yes.

Commissioner Crenshaw asked about the applicant's request for 738 sq. feet for the first level, and why the first floor cannot conform to the required setback.

Mr. Welsh said that they would like to gather as much space as possible since the main dwelling is only about 1,500 sq. ft. in size. He said the requested space would accommodate a three-car garage facing the alley side. The remaining space would potentially house a garden room or art studio, which would open up to the rear yard. A small area would also accommodate a small beach commode.

Commissioner St. Denis said it appeared the applicant is intending to build a basement under this structure.

Mr. Welsh said they were considering this option.

Vice Chair St. Denis asked if the applicant's arborist provided an age estimate of the Tangelo tree.

Mr. Welsh said no; however, he believes that the tree is at least 30 years old.

Commissioner Crenshaw said it appeared that if the first floor level did not exceed the 600 sq. ft. requirement, the applicant could still accommodate a 5 ft. setback to the north without removing the Tangelo tree.

Mr. Welsh said the exception for the 4 ft. setback is to accommodate the Tangelo tree; however, this would impact the garage's size. With regard to the setback to the north, they still have about 11 ft. and the extra sq. footage would not impact the setbacks.

Ms. Olsen clarified that the Commission will not be taking any action on this item today as the purpose of a preliminary review is for the Commission to provide the applicants with general comments and feedback regarding potential alterations.

PUBLIC COMMENT

City Attorney Foster stated that under the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) rules, Ms. Jones, a neighboring property owner, is allowed to speak but only on a limited issue of how the proposed project affects her property.

Polly Jones, a neighboring property owner, said the removal of her neighbor's beautiful Tangelo tree would negatively affect her property as she currently enjoys the view of said tree from her residence. She said that the proposed changes to her neighbor's garage would be an added enhancement of the alley way.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Vice Chair St. Denis said the applicants have restored their home beautifully. She stated, however, that the spirit of the Carriage House Ordinance was intended to address the addition of cottages for use by family or guests and not to be used as a rental or to be built in such a way that it contained more than a separate bedroom and bath. She stated that, in response to complaints received by the City from residents of the community, carriage houses are limited to 600 sq. ft. for the first level, and 400 sq. ft. for the second level. Ms. St. Denis suggested that the applicant either add footage to the main dwelling or conform to the requirements of the Ordinance.

Commissioner Crenshaw agreed with Commissioner St. Denis' comments and suggestion.

Commissioner McGowen said she was under the impression that the sq. footage requirement applied to one lot and stated that this property consists of two lots.

Ms. Olsen said the property is located in the R-1B zone, which would allow the property to be split into two 25 ft. lots. Theoretically, if this were to occur, one carriage house could be built on each lot.

Commissioner McGowen said the applicants are not intending to split the lot and are asking for less than the permitted sq. footage on one lot. She said she would prefer to have one building on two lots, and asked about the location of the existing garage structure and how it relates to the proposed structure.

Ms. Olsen said the current garage is located in the southern portion of the lot. The applicants are proposing to demolish the existing garage and move the new structure further north.

Chairperson Ryan said he considers this submittal in the context of an historic application. He stated he does not have any issues with the proposed side setback to the north, or the setback into the alley way, and commented that the proposed building is large for one but not two lots. He said he supports the request and is willing to approve the exceptions based on the fact that he considers the property historic.

Vice Chair St. Denis said if the main dwelling is designated historic, it would mean that the property would not be divided into two lots. She said the applicants chose to keep and maintain the main dwelling. She feels that a continuous 36 ft. of triple garage would look very different from the alley and neighborhood than two separate carriage houses with 6 ft. in between them. She reiterated that the entire point of Residential Standards Improvement Program (RSIP) was to reduce bulk and mass.

Chairperson Ryan said it appears that that two Commissioners support the potential alterations for the residence and two Commissioners are not in support.

The applicant, Stacey Welsh, said she understands the intent of the Carriage House Ordinance as it relates to bulk and mass; however, she understood it to apply to one lot. She stated that their intent is to address their current living conditions – the main dwelling provides a small living space – and the proposed addition would serve as a guest house only and not an apartment. They would also prefer to not add a second level to the main dwelling or remove the Tangelo tree. She said she does not believe that the addition of the carriage house will be a detriment to the neighborhood. Ms. Welsh thanked Ms. Olsen for her professionalism, and stated that she and her husband will consider withdrawing their application for designation of the main dwelling as it appears that the level of agreement among Commission members does not seem such to provide the confidence she and her husband need to move forward.

Chairperson Ryan asked if additional comments or feedback was forthcoming from the Commission as it appears that the applicants may withdraw their application for designation based on the Commission's comments.

Commissioner Crenshaw asked for clarification on the purpose of the preliminary review.

Ms. Olsen clarified that it may benefit the applicant if the Commission could provide more information on how the proposed carriage house may become more acceptable, e.g. potential design modification. Ms. Olsen noted that the applicant has invested a lot of time, energy and money into restoring the main dwelling. She believes that if the applicants choose to withdraw their application today, it may be for the purpose of re-thinking their options prior to encumbering their property with a permanent historic designation.

Commissioner McGowen commented that the applicants are doing everything possible to preserve the Tangelo tree, and although they are slightly over the required sq. footage for both the lower and upper levels of the proposed carriage house, she would not like to see two carriage houses on two separate lots as this would be more mass and bulk than what is currently being proposed.

Commissioner St. Denis said that she would support the 4'-6" setback from the alley property line; however, the proposed square footage of the carriage house is still a concern.

Commissioner Crenshaw said she had no issues with the proposed 4'-6" setback; however, she believes that the applicants must comply with the municipal code requirements regarding carriage houses. She asked if the applicant could design a smaller carriage house.

Chairperson Ryan asked if the applicant wished to provide additional comments.

Ms. Welsh said they made a significant investment in the main dwelling and were mindful of keeping the density low which is why they are personally against adding to the main dwelling from a design and historic standpoint. With regard to their request, they are trying to accommodate sufficient living space for a family of three. In terms of the carriage house, if they were to slightly reduce the size of the carriage house, she feels that they would continue to remain on opposite sides of the fence with regard to their views on design and livability. She thanked the Commission for their comments.

Vice Chair St. Denis asked if they had considered shifting about two feet the proposed garage structure as it appears there is sufficient space.

Mr. Welsh responded that this was a consideration. He said that he had drawn plans which met the requirements for a carriage house, i.e. sq. footage and setbacks; however, the issue was the size of the garage. Their decision for considering historic designation of the main dwelling was the possibility of being granted exceptions which would allow them to build a more spacious carriage house. He noted that they do not have any intention of splitting the lot but will not consider designating the main dwelling if there are no clear advantages in doing so. He said that placing the type of restrictions that historic designation would place on the main dwelling does not outweigh retaining the tree. He added that someday his daughter, Addison, may want to split the lot and they prefer to not lose that option. Mr. Welsh said he understands the Commission's position.

PUBLIC COMMENT (RE-OPENED)

City Attorney Foster said it was the prerogative of the Commission to re-open the public hearing. She reiterated that, based on conflict of interest rules, the comments by Ms. Jones should be limited to how the proposal affects her property only.

Ms. Jones said the proposed project impacts her home in a positive way as her neighbor's property is spacious and pleasant. She appreciates that her neighbors opted not to split the property and add structures on both lots. She said her neighbors have done a wonderful job and the potential alterations would not adversely affect her property.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION (RE-OPENED)

Ms. Olsen stated that the applicant has the option of withdrawing the application for historic designation, or continuing the item to allow them an opportunity to review the comments provided by the Commission before making a decision.

Chairperson Ryan summarized that the Commission conducted an open hearing and provided feedback to the applicants, including information on the City's Carriage House Ordinance and historic designation.

COMMISSION ACTION

There was no action taken on this item.

Total deliberation time: 1 hour, 10 minutes.

(The following item was taken up next on the agenda.)

HR 2011-02 WELSH FAMILY TRUST – Request for a Historic Designation of the single family residence addressed as 621 C Avenue and located in the R-1B (Single Family Residential) Zone.

Commissioner Jones was disqualified from participating in discussions as she lives in close proximity to the subject property.

Ms. Olsen provided the Commission with options on how to proceed with this item.

The applicant, Stacey Welsh, requested the item be continued.

COMMISSION ACTION

The item was continued at the request of the applicant.

Total deliberation time: 6 minutes.

Commissioner Jones returned to the dais at 4:51 p.m.

HAP 2011-05 PATTERSON – Request for a Historic Alteration Permit for the historically designated property addressed as 941 G Avenue and located in the R-3 (Multiple Family Residential) Zone. (*Continued to the regular meeting of May 4, 2011*)

No action was taken on this item.

HP 2011-01 CITY OF CORONADO: Results of the Mills Act Agreement prioritization process for applications submitted in 2010.

Ms. Olsen provided an overview of the information item.

Vice Chair St. Denis asked when this item would be heard by City Council.

Ms. Olsen said that this would occur in October or November of this year.

Chairperson Ryan asked if any properties on the list were funded.

Ms. Olsen said no. The City Council approved funding for seven homes in October of 2010, and these properties have been removed from the waiting list.

Commissioner Crenshaw said that the property located at 1000 Glorietta Boulevard has no fiscal impact on the City, and asked if the City Council would consider it for approval as part of the next review hearing.

Ms. Olsen said that this property was included in the list for consideration by the City Council last October; however, the City Council was opposed to reviewing homes which were not listed in chronological order.

Commissioner McGowen asked why this home had no fiscal impact.

Ms. Olsen said the home has been owned by the same property owner since Prop. 13, so the assessed value under the Mills Act provides no benefit, therefore, there is no loss to the City. She said that one of the points made by City Council is that if the property is sold tomorrow, there would be a larger investment made by the City. The other point made was that by taking the property out of order, it would not be fair to other properties that have been waiting for a much longer time period.

Commissioner Crenshaw asked about the property located at 848 D Avenue and noted that some of the condominium units were restored while others were not. She asked if the waiting period for approval of the Mills Act would hold up the restoration of the remaining units.

Ms. Olsen said that City Council will meet this summer to discuss ways to reduce the Mills Act waiting list. She said this property may be included as an item for discussion at this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

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