



MINUTES HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
7:00 p.m., Monday, May 22, 2006
Los Altos Community Meeting Chambers
One North San Antonio Road, Los Altos, California 94022

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair GIRDLEY called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.



ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair GIRDLEY, Vice-Chair GIRDLEY, Commissioners BLAKE, DREWES, and HAMBLIN

Absent: Commissioners FOERSTER and SCHINK

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

It was moved by Commissioner DREWES and seconded by Commissioner BLAKE, to adopt the April 24, 2006 minutes.

The motion passed 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Members of the audience may bring to the Commission's attention any item that is not on the agenda. Please complete a "Request to Speak" form and submit it to the Chair. Speakers are given up to three minutes. State law prohibits the Commission from acting on items that do not appear on the agenda.

DISCUSSION AND PUBLIC INTEREST ITEMS:

1. **571 Cherry Avenue:** Presentation by the property owner regarding the property, which has a rating of 78 on the HRI. (*Girdley*)

Lance Kreisman, the owner of 571 Cherry Avenue, made a presentation regarding the history of the home. He felt new information justifies increasing the HRI rating to 85 from 78. The following is the information Mr. Kreisman felt was not considered in the current HRI rating:

- The architect, who was not previously known, appears to be Birge Clark, a prominent architect in the Palo Alto/Los Altos area. His draftsman was Erwin Reichel, a Los Altos resident, who also lived on Cherry Avenue.
- The owner of the home, Lucille Liewer, was the daughter of Herman and Marie Bleibler, who were founding families of Los Altos. Mrs. Liewer was very active in the community, especially with local school districts and the American Legion Girl's State program.

Dick Liewer, Mrs. Liewer's son, also spoke about events at the house and his mother's contributions to the community. Four of the Commissioners supported the re-evaluation of the property's HRI rating, by the subcommittee of Commissioners GIRDLEY and DREWES that was previously appointed to the review the home. Commissioner HAMBLIN dissented; he did not feel there was sufficient new information to warrant re-evaluation of the rating.

It was moved by Vice-Chair GIRDLEY, seconded by Commissioner BLAKE, that the subcommittee appointed to review the home consider re-evaluating the home's HRI rating.

The motion passed 4-1 (HAMBLIN).

2. **Review of Historical Preservation Ordinance:** Discuss Section 12.44 of the Municipal Code regarding Historical Preservation for comments and clarifications. (*Girdley*)

There were no comments or clarifications regarding the ordinance.

3. **HRI Update:** Update on potential funding sources for the HRI update. (*Girdley*)

Chair GIRDLEY mentioned that he spoke with the Community Foundation regarding potentially funding the HRI update. The Packard Foundation has already distributed funds for this year for local causes. The Community Foundation normally limits grants to \$5,000 and might match a donation from outside sources. Chair GIRDLEY also suggested that the Commission break up the City into quadrants and do a windshield survey to identify homes to be surveyed. It was also suggested that the update could be done yearly instead of comprehensively. Commissioner HAMBLIN expressed concern about doing updates yearly and noted that homes reviewed for inclusion in the HRI update should have historical significance. Staff also stated that the update should be done comprehensively, rather than piecemeal. Maintaining a list of potential homes to be reviewed creates confusion regarding the homes' status and can cause apprehension in the community regarding the program. Staff will research including a budget request for \$10,000 to help fund the HRI update.

4. **History Museum Archive Update:** Report from Commissioner BLAKE regarding use of the History Museum archives.

Commissioner BLAKE reported on her challenges to access the archives at the History Museum. She contacted the Museum several times and they were not able to find much information about the properties she was interested in reviewing. Allyn Feldmen mentioned that much of the information they had came from the Historical Commission and from donated information, which is held under the names of the people. Vice-Chair GIRDLEY volunteered to research a property and that along with Chair GIRDLEY would meet with the Museum CEO to facilitate better access to the archives.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

Other than the meeting with Community Foundation discussed above, the Chair had nothing additional to report.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

COMMISSION REPORTS AND DIRECTION ON FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Vice-Chair GIRDLEY would like to discuss the Campbell Historical Guidelines and developing something similar for Los Altos.
- Questions for future Commissioners.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair GIRDLEY adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Curtis Banks, AICP
Staff Liaison to the Historical Commission