



Historic Preservation Commission Executive Minutes

April 22, 2019

MONDAY

6:00 p.m.

2600 FRESNO STREET
CONFERENCE ROOM A
2nd Floor, City Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL- 6:00 p.m.

*The meeting was called to order by **Chair Patrick Boyd** at 6:03 PM.*

Commissioners Present: Patrick Boyd, Robin Goldbeck , Paul Halajian, Jason Hatwig, Ron McNary (late), and C. Kristina Roper

Staff Present: Laura Groves van Onna, John Hastrup (CAO), Amber Piona and Dan Zack.

II. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES

A. Approve Minutes for February 25, 2019.

The minutes for February 25, 2019 were approved 5-0 with a motion by Commissioner Roper and a second by Commissioner Hatwig. Commissioner McNary was not present for this vote.

III. APPROVE AGENDA

The agenda with was approved 5-0 with a motion by Commissioner Goldbeck and a second by Commissioner Roper. Commissioner McNary was not present for this vote.

IV. CONSENT CALENDAR

None

V. CONTINUED MATTERS

None

VI. COMMISSION ITEMS

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- A. REVIEW AND APPROVE FINDINGS FOR FULTON STREET HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY (DECEMBER 2018) PURSUANT TO STIPULATION II.5 OF THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA) BETWEEN THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND THE CALIFORNIA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER AND THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION REGARDING THE FULTON MALL RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT, CITY OF FRESNO, FRESNO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA (MAY 2014) AND FMC 12-1606(a)(1).

Historic Preservation Specialist Laura Groves van Onna presented the staff report the Fulton Street Historic Resources Survey. The December 2018 survey was prepared by Historic Resources Group (HRG) as a requirement of the MOA between the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). This survey was a reevaluation of the Fulton Mall Historic Landscape and the potential Fulton Street/Fulton Mall Historic District. This 2018 survey resulted in a determination that neither historic resource retained sufficient integrity to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places following the re-opening of Fulton Street. The integrity of the Fulton Mall Historic Landscape has been substantially diminished and that approximately 50% of the buildings in the potential Fulton Street/ Fulton Mall Historic District met the criteria as contributors to a potential historic district, but that his percentage is less than the 60% which is generally considered adequate for a historic district. Caltrans submitted the 2018 survey to SHPO on February 4, 2019 and received concurrence on March 5, 2019. They are seeking concurrence from the City of Fresno Historic Preservation Commission. Staff recommends that the Commission review and approve findings for the Fulton Street Historic Resources Survey.

Commissioner McNary arrives 6:07 P.M.

Commissioner Jason Hatwig: Question for staff, the report quoted that roughly 50% of the buildings in the district were eligible as contributors, but that 60% was the threshold. Where does this 60% number come from? We have districts that might have less than 60% contributors.

Chair Patrick Boyd: Is that the difference between a contiguous and noncontiguous district?

Historic Preservation Specialist Laura Groves van Onna: We have a member of HRG's staff here who might be able to speak to those findings?

Kari Fowler, HRG (12 S. Fair Oaks Ave, Pasadena): With regard to that 50% number there are a couple of important things, that number came from we were looking at the Fulton Street Corridor also as a local historic district to see if there were a potential historic district here, what percentage would we consider to be eligible at the local level. At that time

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we found around fifty percent (slightly less) of the resources to be eligible, at that point we did not go further and do a property by property district survey. With this most recent evaluation, we were looking at National Register eligibility, different integrity thresholds. Significance of the district is very well established and acknowledged, it was a matter of historic integrity. Typically for a National Register historic district, a general threshold for a contributory ratio is 2/3. When we did the intensive-level survey this time around we were coming up to 37% to 40% contributors depending on how you draw the boundary, or whether you include undeveloped properties as non-contributors. We were not coming close to 2/3, neither did Caltrans.

Hatwig: So this evaluation was looking at National Register level designation.

Fowler: Yes. Our finding will not affect any designation you might consider at the local level.

Commissioner Paul Halajian: Could you clarify 2/3 of what?

Fowler: 2/3 of the total number of parcels that were in the survey area boundary. Fulton Street from Tuolumne down to Inyo, every parcel that fronts the street on both sides, and the cross streets (including Mariposa). The total number of parcels 54, that was the one hundred percent mark we started with. There are a number of NR eligible and listed (individually) in this area, this finding won't undermine or conflict with that in any way.

Hatwig: To me this appears to be a delisting of what the Fulton Mall was prior to the opening of the street.

Fowler: There has never been an identified National Register eligible listed district. Nothing is being delisting, this is a confirmation of what we have known. SHPO wanted us to take a look after the project is completed and we found the same thing.

Hatwig: Just wanted to make clear that this isn't affecting the local significance, just the national level.

Public Comment Opens

Philip Vallejo, CalTrans Branch Chief Cultural Department: There are two resources that we are identifying here here, the Fulton Mall Historic Landscape and the potential district. The Fulton Mall Historic Landscape is sort of like a delisting; it was never officially listed but had been determined to be eligible.

Hatwig: So neither resource is eligible for the National Register at this point?

Vallejo: That is correct, although it can be reevaluated at a future point.

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Halajian: Why is this relevant to Caltrans now?

Vallejo: It's part of the Memorandum of Agreement that we had for the Fulton Mall corridor project. That project used transportation funds, which brought in Caltrans. This is one of the obligations we agreed to with SHPO and the ACHP, to come back subsequent to the construction and reevaluate these two resources.

David Davenport (6156 N Miter Ave): I have a question about historic surveys are done. The Fresno Expositor building [1029-1031 Fulton Street, H.P. #292] it is sheathed with modern plastic stuff from a jewelry store, since the original building can't be seen, I am wondering how the process takes place to evaluate whether a parcel is historic. I'd like to learn how that goes about.

Boyd: You mention the jewel of Fulton Mall. No one knew what was under that building was there. It was given a modern cloaking in the 1960s, it was purchased by a Bay Area owner, during some investigation we found old bricks in the basement, cuts for doors and windows sealed up in the basement. Essentially what we found what that building was...[looks at Dan Zack]

Assistant Director Dan Zack: The oldest standing historic building in Fresno, that we know of.

Boyd: We were thankful that he thought about it positively.

Zack: I met with him a month ago. John Rupe made a scale model of downtown, and he discovered that fact. It was designated for its aesthetics merits but for its association.

Boyd: We can either find buildings that meet the criteria, or what we prefer is when owners of buildings come to this body and proactively list them, but we've done it both ways.

Hatwig: Sometimes it takes a little digging; amateur historians are very helpful in this respect. A lot of surveys aren't as intensive.

Boyd: In addition, not all of them meet the local significance, which is why we have the heritage designation.

Hatwig: Talking about historic districts, too.

Davenport: Let me give you a hypothetical. If I were walking down there now, how would I know? How do surveys find this info?

Commissioner C. Kristina Roper: A survey would include Sanborn maps as part of the routine.

Fowler: Definitely in addition to walk through we look at building permits (if available), Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Tax assessor data, you have a lot of historic photographs of Fulton Street, and that's a starting point. The first thing we try to do is when did this building go up originally? The

second step is what do we see now? If we see a 1960s remodel of a 1920s, we have to evaluate what building convey to the viewer now, not what it might convey in ten years when it's restored. With a resource like Fulton Street as a main street district, it's well-acknowledged that often main streets post-World War II did wide scale modernization of storefronts, and that's a trend we want to acknowledge. The period of significance of this potential district was very broad from 1914 to 1970 to capture the modernized storefronts from the postwar period and the efforts that the Fulton Mall landscape had on modernizing the downtown. We used an evaluation date; that date might have been the construction date or a later date. The Gottschalk's building is a good example. It was built in 1914, nothing about today says 1914. There was a 1948 remodel which is pretty intact, so we used the 1948 date as an evaluation date, which is what makes that building a contributor. We made an effort to capture as many potential contributors as possible.

Public Comment Closes

Hatwig: This is pretty much what we expected, given the evaluations in 2014/2011. So I have no problem approving this recommendation.

The findings were approved 6-0 on a motion by Commissioner Hatwig and a second by Commissioner Roper.

Commission Halajian recused himself at 6:30 P.M.

TAPE STOPPED 26:52

- B. REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THE REVISED APPLICATION PZ17-90000064 FOR REHABILITATION BY THE PROPERTY OWNER REGARDING THE DOCK ALONG THE SIDE (NORTH) ELEVATION FACING INYO STREET AT THE STATE CENTER WAREHOUSE (HP #242) LOCATED AT 747 R STREET PURSUANT TO FMC 12-1606(a)(2) AND (b)(23).**

Historic Preservation Specialist Laura Groves van Onna presented the staff report on the revised application for rehabilitation of the State Warehouse Center (HP #242) located at 747 R Street. The application was initially reviewed and approved by the Commission in December of 2016. Revised plans for the north elevation of the building facing Inyo Street entail demolition of the dock and installation of a sidewalk in response to the Department of Public Works requirement to have an ADA accessible path along the southeast side of Inyo St. Staff finds that the potential loss would not be in accordance with standards 9 and 10 of Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Alternatives to removing the dock completely have been discussed by staff and the applicant. Staff recommends that the Commission review and comment on the revised application and provide advisement to the applicant.

Commissioner Robin Goldbeck: We're addressing the Inyo Street frontage this evening, there has been some work done on R Street, correct?

Historic Preservation Specialist Laura Groves van Onna: Correct the rehabilitation process has already commenced, this is a revision to the project that is being submitted for consideration.

Hatwig: Is there any survey of the street available? An ALTA-topo survey, have some grade been established?

Zack: I am not aware of any. We discussed the painted adjacent walkway for the first time last week. We're not sure what the cross slope is and how much manipulation would be required to make the walkway accessible.

Groves van Onna: A representative of the architect is here who might have further to say regarding the proposed project whenever you'd like to hear him speak.

Boyd: As Jason is alluding to, drainage and utilities might be an issue. I am certain the grade is not 2%, maybe closer to 5% closer to the curb and gutter.

Zack: Public Works staff thought that if it wasn't 2%, grinding could be a low cost way to get it to where it needed to be.

Boyd: The left turn channelization, the double left lane that would actually become a southbound thru lane, so you wouldn't have the center lane, you'd remove it and take it out?

Zack: No this is on Inyo, which is only a half a block long. It's a 150 ft. run from R to parking lot. The Inyo Street dock is a much shorter dock than the R Street dock; much more of the dock would be converted to a ramp. You could do a pedestrian safety zone, painted with the planters as a tactical urbanism approach if slopes work out. The third option, which the applicant proposes, is to remove the dock and put in a conventional sidewalk. Those are the options we see for getting that pedestrian access.

Hatwig: I know there's cost and demolition. Which mostly that is not a staff recommendation necessarily, so that's cost. The 12 ft. or 10 ft. whatever the width of the sidewalk is, back of material, that's cost, too. Instead of the four foot extension out into the right of way, and that could be done with a couple of simple methods we've got 2% of the sidewalk coming this way, the road coming this way, and we can have a curb reveal of 4 inches or higher, we can build up that sidewalk and still meet all the percent accessibility slopes and requirements by some very minor things and a 4 ft. wide, 150 ft. long sidewalk could be extremely minimal on costs compared to other alternatives. There's even monolithic precast options that they make decking for scenarios like this. The urban idea of

streetscape is also a good alternative I've seen done very well and very low cost, too. I know the cost of ripping down the dock and placing a 12 foot sidewalk is pretty expensive stuff.

Goldbeck: A hybrid solution of some of that urban streetscape with a partial ramp.

Hatwig: There are plenty of options to explore, without having the survey of the street I couldn't be able to look at it and give you an exact grading plan today. I've done work with projects with challenging frontages.

Shaunt Yemenjian, Paul Halajian Architects (389 Clovis Ave, Clovis): Thanks for giving us the opportunity to be here. We've read through the nomination carefully and the report highlights the windows as the prominent character defining feature, those are intact (have window system inside to seal it thermally). The report talks about the painted signage, that's staying. The third thing, covered dock that runs along R Street. That dock was beyond dilapidated; we're rebuilding the dock with careful detail. The report does reference the raised docks, covered raised docks, the Inyo façade is not the primary façade. Everything we promised to in 2016 is being done. We felt that it was important to come back in and ask about the Inyo dock. Impetus is that two months ago that an accessible path from R to the promenade lot is required (Public Works required). With the removal of the dock we're also going to introduce windows along that north façade into the cold storage basement, introduce a little landscaping and green with some street planters, to make a nice, walkable promenade.

Hatwig: There is an accessible route on Inyo along the other side of the street, you could with proper accessibility signage you could direct the public to that route. If there is already an accessible route, I am not sure why a route is required here.

Goldbeck: Shaunt, was this discussed with Public Works?

Yemenjian: The onus would be on us to go back and have that conversation. When we sat down and talked with them that wasn't suggested that as a feasible option, but they didn't reject that as an option.

Hatwig: That might be a potential then.

Yemenjian: Plans were originally submitted to retain the dock, but Public Works has asked for a sidewalk on this side.

Zack: A representative from Public Works is here in the audience, if you wanted to ask those kinds of questions.

Goldbeck: Do you have historic pictures of the Inyo frontage; was this frontage a prominent originally?

Yemenjian: We have some historic photos; there are two 10 ft. wide

shed awnings that look like walkup doors for delivery.

Assistant Director of Public Works Andrew Beneli: While you are correct that meeting the legal obligation would put people on the other side of the street on the north side of Inyo, I don't think that many pedestrians would walk north, up to the corner and then back south. Most pedestrians with the dock there would chose to walk into the street, which is not a safe location for pedestrians. We think with the building, we have a high accident rate here with pedestrians. Any time you can get a pedestrian up on the sidewalk they are in a safer place. On a per capita basis, we have one of the highest pedestrian death and accident rate, higher than cities like New York and San Francisco, pedestrians are hit here all the time. higher than but that folks will not cross the street to walk into the parking lot. People will walk in the street. We have a higher per capita death rate for pedestrians than other big cities (check notes)

Hatwig: Is the street width a problem for extending the sidewalk around the dock and into the existing street?

Beneli: No, there is adequate width, it's a cost issue. We do have topo surveys; however I do not think he went out into the street. I don't know what it would take to make it work.

Public Comment is open

Boyd: The applicant is looking for recommendations, correct?

Zack: No formal action needs to be taken on this item, we are seeking feedback from the committee.

Hatwig: Could we form a subcommittee with the applicant/owner and Public Works?

Zack: Sure you could, would need to do it quickly. We'd be happy to help if there's interest in that.

Larry Roselle (344 E Simpson Ave): Any discussion of making the dock a public walkway?

Boyd: Yes, given the height of the dock and the length of the dock, ramping up and down would eat up most of the dock.

Hatwig: I'd like to form a subcommittee.

Zack: If you all had any direction on the loss of the dock. Is that the loss of the dock something would people be comfortable with that? That kind of direction would assist the conversation; the value of that dock as part of the resource.

Hatwig: It's a secondary façade, but it is a façade and you can see it from the public street. What about halving the width of the dock? There are lots of options.

Boyd: I am of a less is more approach. Adding street furniture will still

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visually change the building. I like the narrower width dock idea, because you get both, or even removing the dock. I am not sure that removing that one dock would have that great an effect.

Goldbeck: I would be more willing to accept to a similar version of the dock rather than pylons in the street.

Commissioner Ron McNary: I think the dock is significant to the building. I'd be okay with narrowing the width.

Shawn: Again just for context it would look like the other side of the street, a fresh-pour concrete retaining wall.

Will Dyck, applicant (via conference call): Prominence of Inyo, it was a connector street at one time, but it had 90 degree truck parking. My concern in going forward is the changing the street itself is expensive; the water from the promenade lot comes down this street into a storm drain that is near the corner of Inyo and R Streets. I get the half dock idea; for reference that side of the building won't be using the space as patio space. We don't own the dock; it's in the public right of way. Our preference is to remove it, if we need to create connectivity there. My counterargument is where are people going from and to? After hours parking on R Street would just for this building. I really don't want to alter the street; it's a can of worms.

Groves van Onna: During talks with the applicant we discussed vacating that right of way.

McNary: I think the idea that it doesn't belong to the building changes it for me. If it's not his property, why does he have to change it?

Dyck: The offer for dedication was tied to re-grading the street and building a new sidewalk around the dock.

Boyd: It would seem to me that any form of retention of the dock, full or half dimension, that piece should be vacated back to the property owner.

Zack: If the dock remains, then it should go to the property owner, if it goes away it should remain in the public domain.

McNary: It meets the legal standard for the area?

Hatwig: With signage, yes.

Zack: Yes, Public Works is concerned about safety.

Item Closed.

[5 minute break BEGINS 1:07:00ENDS 1:14:00]

Paul Halajian Returns 7:17

Boyd: It sounded like there might have been clarification needed on the

last item?

Deputy City Attorney John Hastrup: It was decided that there was no subcommittee to be established.

Zack: I've got notes on the different we got, there was talk of a subcommittee, but that didn't come to fruition. We will huddle internally with the applicant from feedback we got. This may come back to you, or it might not, we'll work with Public Works and the applicant.

- C. CONSIDER AND MAKE FINDINGS ON THE APPLICATION BY THE CUSTODIAN FOR RELOCATION OF THE CALIFORNIA MERCI TRAIN BOXCAR (HR #025) LOCATED AT 3509 N FIRST STRET PURSUANT TO THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN CITY OF FRESNO AND THE GRAND DU CALIFORNIA OF LA SOCIETE DES 40 HOMMES ET 8 CHEVAUX (SEPTEMBER 21, 2004) AND FMC 12-1619.

Historic Preservation Specialist Laura Groves van Onna presented the staff report on the application by the custodian, the Grand Voiture Du California, to relocate the California Merci Train Boxcar (3509 N First St H.R. #025) to the Palm Springs Air Museum. Applicant is seeking to relocate the property due to lack of ability to care for it, the funding required to maintain the boxcar is the issue. Heritage Fresno has expressed support for keeping the boxcar in Fresno and has been conducting outreach to begin gathering support across Fresno County which has resulted in Clovis Veterans Memorial District to appropriately display and care for the boxcar, securing the support of Alliance Française and other local veterans groups support, and the circulation of a petition to keep the boxcar in Fresno County which has at least 154 signatures. Additionally a letter of support has been received from the Fresno County Historical Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission. Heritage Fresno is committed to spearheading the fundraising for the relocation and display of the boxcar in Fresno. After meeting with the Fresno City Manager, staff has received confirmation that the City Manager's office is committed to keeping the boxcar. Because this project proposal is a substantial alteration to a Heritage Property, it requires review by the Historic Preservation Commission. Primary concerns for staff include the removal of a historic resource from Fresno city limits, Fresno County and the Central Valley. Staff recommends denial of the application by the Grand to relocate.

Public Comment Open

Wayne Schwartz (2851 E San Gabriel Ave): I'd like to bring up why this came about. The intent of the Grand has never been to move the boxcar for the sake of moving it. We're a small organization, the last bid to cover

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it was \$54,000; we don't have \$54,000. The problem is that the boxcar is old; it cannot set out in the weather like it is now, and the maintenance is significant. The Clovis Memorial sounds like a fantastic idea, not sure where they'd keep it. I think where it's at is great; I wish the people's efforts had been to raise money to take care of the boxcar. This boxcar belongs to the people of California, not the people of Fresno. I think it should stay where it's at, at 509. If every signature gave 10 or 20 dollars our problem would be solved.

Vern Schmidt (315 E Nees Ave): I remember riding in one of these in January/February 1945, riding up to the front lines serving under General Patton. My family served in both WWI and WWII serving overseas. It has tremendous historical value. I just feel that this is the place it should be. We have a tremendous inventory of veterans in the greater San Joaquin Valley that are interested in preserving our history; this is what France gave to the U.S. as thanks. I don't recommend anyone ride in one of these, I did it for three days and three nights in very cold weather, the snow came right through the cracks, but from a historical standpoint this is a piece of history that should stay here in Fresno.

Linda Scanbray (6146 N Callisch St): [Janice Stevens and I] are co-chairs of Heritage Fresno, our first project has been working to keep the boxcar here. You all received Vern's story, if you didn't I have copies. After World War II the people of the United States contributed 300 boxcars full of food and supplies to France to aid in recovery after the War. What a wonderful gift and symbol of the friendship between our countries. Heritage Fresno and Alliance Française [of Fresno] are striving to keep this here. We are working on getting a roof on it, we've had offers of money but no checks yet. We want this to be accessible to the public, we would even offer docent guides.

Janice Stevens (6330 N Wilson Ave): I am also part of Fresno County Historic Records and Landmarks; it was unanimous by them to keep it here in the area. Lack of publicity has been a problem. John Walker did a fabulous article about this last October and that was the first thing I knew about the Merci Boxcar. I think that we can do good things to keep here. With Clovis Veterans Memorial District, Lorenzo Rios has said I will make a place for this, but he would like to work with 509. Let me read from his email "The Merci Boxcar is currently located at the American Legion Post 509 which is outside of my boundaries (Clovis Veterans Memorial District) I fully support the effort to keep the boxcar in Fresno, and will gladly support the effort to keep such artifacts available to the public. My support does not construe an assertion that the Clovis Veterans Memorial District seeks to secure the Merci Boxcar for its historical collection. My support is strictly intended to assist our fellow veterans in Fresno to secure an iconic piece of history in our community. If the veterans of Fresno seek to work with the Clovis Veterans Memorial

District to find a place to host the Merci Boxcar then I am confident that we can work something out where we can work collaboratively with the City of Fresno and other local organizations to find a suitable place.” They do not have a facility to put the boxcar in, they would like to work closely with Post 509 to protect it and preserve it keeping it here in our community.

Halajian: Is the plan to keep it at 509?

Mildred Wright-Pearson (3509 N First Street): Yes, they do want it there. The biggest thing is to get it covered.

Scanbray: Have you visited it? I take my grandchildren there. It illustrates many things about what took place there.

Stevens: I think 509 should be commended to create this, it’s beautiful, and to have to stop because of lack of funding. I want to be on board to find the funding.

Halajian: Putting the cover on it is a first step. Is there a larger vision for curating it?

Stevens: I haven’t gotten further than can we keep it.

Scanbray: I think it’s really possible. Ideally, it could go somewhere with more visitors like the fairgrounds. Clovis is building a heritage center; that could possible.

McNary: It seems like a cover isn’t enough, there are environmental concerns.

Scanbray: The long term goal is to get it inside. It’s not as big as a modern boxcar.

McNary: I feel it’s important that it needs to be done. I applaud efforts to fund raise to preserve it. I haven’t heard anything about fundraising.

Stevens: First things first can we keep it? Let us try to keep it, working with 509 and Lorenzo Rios. CVMD is very big on partnering with other organizations. If there is no way to keep it in Fresno, CVMD is willing to take it.

Scanbray: This is why this didn’t happen it the past, lack of coordination. I was part of the Alliance Française in 2008 when they had the ceremony putting it in place and I had a hard time getting a letter to get funding.

Boyd: Anyone here for moving it?

Schwartz: Well, the Palm Springs museum wanted to put it inside in a hangar. I think we’re a little selfish when we say we want to keep it here, it belongs to the state of California. No one was talking about providing money to maintain it, until we started talking about moving it. In the museum many people would see it, and it would serve an educational purpose. I don’t see that happening here in Fresno, but I would like to

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see it! I heard people talking about the Fairgrounds. A temporary cover wouldn't fly, we've been working on with the City of Fresno and they will not allow it. If this passes, custodianship will revert back to the City of Fresno not us. Do they have funding?

Hastrup: To clarify, that's not strictly accurate. The City has a reversionary right per the 2004 agreement, if there were a breach of that agreement then the City would have a reversionary right to reclaim custodianship. You're voting on yes or no on the proposal to moving it. The custodianship would still remain with the Grand.

Halajian: I'm unclear, why is this a matter before the Historic Preservation Commission? It's an artifact not a building.

Zack: It is a Heritage Property. If it were to be altered, demolished or removed it must come before this body.

Halajian: But we're opining on the legal disposition of it, not the treatment of it.

Zack: That is a separate but related matter.

Hastrup: Even if this body approved the proposal, the City could say "no move."

McNary: what does staff recommend?

Larry Roselle: I am past president of Alliance Française, I had 27 years with the local office of HUD, I retired from working with cities and counties from Modesto to Bakersfield and none of them has anything like this. Thank you to Post 509 for keeping it. My experience is that people only react to emergencies and this is the first I'm hearing of it. I was a part of October 28, 2008 ceremony, I am dismayed that it's come to this. This is a cause that would get people going. Alliance Française is an organization that promotes French Language and culture; I am astounded and grateful that we have living history with us, too. It's something really special. If you haven't been to the museum and fairgrounds, that's another local treasure. I think this could galvanize people! Ultimately how it gets protected and where it sits could be solved by people acting in good will. I am a native Californian, and I think it should be in the middle of the state, I think we should work to get 100,000 people here. The way things have been going it may be a long time before we get such a gift from the people of France.

David Davenport: I spoke on this item back in October. One item regarding protection that we haven't talked about is that the homeless folks outside the 509 perimeter are doing foul things in close proximity to that boxcar because the fence allows things to go inside the perimeter. In addition to protection from above, it needs like a giant sheet of Plexiglas, which would allow the boxcar to be seen from the street. Also, people who are in the largely abandoned complex to the south and throw stuff over

the concrete wall and hit the boxcar. The people of 509 have to clean up the debris. My thought is that concrete wall needs to be about 20 ft. and Plexiglas on the Shields [First Street] side. Because of the way the boxcar is situation you could create a triangular shaped enclosure. The third side could be open or Plexiglas. The man who has painted that boxcar is here again, Alan Nyitray, he's a professional painter (more of an artist), he did work on Sequoia Brewing, he used that artistry to restore the symbols in the panels of the boxcar. When I taught at Fresno City college I used to have my students gather at the boxcar and I would teach an outdoor lesson by having them stand with backpacks in the shape of the boxcar; it's a geography lesson wrapped into the First and Second World Wars. Fresno has this because it's the biggest city closest to the center. Thank you for your time.

Alan Nyitray (428 N Ferger Ave): I have the before and after pictures of the Boxcar [hands photos to Wayne Schwartz]. It took two weeks for the boxcar itself and the plaques took four months to paint; I took great care. These plaques should last; I'm willing to touch the plaques up until I die.

Halajian: That's the original color scheme of the boxcar?

Nyitray: They gave me pictures of what they are supposed to be. I used that. If it could be moved into the museum in the fair, so teachers could bring their classes, and there it would be covered. I think Leo Wilson or someone like that to donate a new door to get it in there. I put two to three coats of clear on top. I do houses, and furniture, too. [handed out business card].

Pat Hunter (1490 W Shaw Ave): First of all we need to make the public aware, it's been here for years, but very few people know the significance of it and where it is. We need to raise public awareness and then we can fundraise and after that where exactly we are going to put it. Thank you.

Roselle: When the Consul General was here in 2008, he was quite candid about U.S. - French relations, and we are also on record with the French government about being able and hospitable hosts for the boxcar.

Wright-Pearson: I am a member of Post 509. The boxcar was brought to our property in 2004; it's been restored twice since then. People have come all over the country to see that boxcar. I am part of the 40 and 8, and we fixed the areas that were dry rotting and had them repaired. We're open from 8am to 10 or 11 at night. It's available to people, and people do come.

Goldbeck: Would the Grand be open to another placement on your property?

Wright-Pearson: it's there because of the agreement. It needs to be visible from the street.

Schwartz: 509 parking lot is small. When we put it, it takes the least

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amount of parking spots. It would be up to 509 to agree to move it.

Public Comment Closes

Boyd: Thank you to everyone for their interest. Because of the interest there are numerous groups represented here, hopefully we can capitalize on this momentum and that some of these solutions come to fruition. There are more people at this meeting than we will probably have adding up the rest of meetings for the year. This is kind of a big deal, and your representation here is strong and you should use it, and we'll back you on it.

Commissioner McNary leaves the room 8:10 P.M.

Halajian: I think Fresno is fortunate to have this artifact here and I think we should do all we can to hang on to it. It seems like with the momentum here there is a positive outlook for finding a place for it and sheltering it properly.

The application by the custodian to relocate the California Merci Train Boxcar (HR #025) was disapproved 5-0-1 on a motion by Commissioner Halajian and a second by Commissioner Goldbeck. Commissioner McNary was not present for this vote.

VII. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

None.

VIII. UNSCHEDULED ITEMS

A. Members of the Commission

- 1. Fresno Trolley Cars/Standard Diner (1731 S Cherry, H.P.#99)**
- Commissioner Hatwig asked about the condition of the Fresno Trolley Cars/Standard Diner.

Commissioner McNary returns 8:12 P.M.

Groves van Onna: There was a fire earlier this month that was pretty devastating to the cars. It's unfortunate because we were working with the City Attorney's Office to take back the cars. The process that was proceeding, but it was slow moving. It was an unfortunate incident. We are still taking steps forward to take back the property, however there is no longer a historic resource on the property

Hatwig: At this point it would be a delisting now, at a future meeting since it's a loss, correct?

Hastrup: The Commission has the power to bring up a delisting

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and that may be the most appropriate thing. We had submitted the paperwork to get the judgement. Even if we had taken over possession, we may not have had the resources to monitor and secure it. It is disappointing.

B. Staff

1. **Historic Preservation Month**-Historic Preservation Specialist Laura Groves van Onna presented the schedule for Historic Preservation Month. Staff is working with the Fresno Historical Society to host a trivia night at a local brewery, and will update the commission. There will be historic preservation awards at City Council also to be scheduled. Other events include the Lowell is doing a historic home tour on Saturday May 11. Wilson Island centennial celebration is on May 18th at Fresno High School. Staff will keep the Commission updated

Hatwig: I sit on the brewer's guild, locally and the Downtown Partnership folks asked about events happening specifically in May, they were thinking about holding one next year. I identified a few for places to hold events not just in May but also throughout the year. Also there is a new licensed brewery in town [Commissioner Hatwig's brewery XXX has been licensed].

C. General Public

1. **Veteran Liberty Cemetery, 1831 W Belmont**- David Davenport asked the commission if the Commission be concerned with the activities going on at Liberty Veterans Cemetery on West Belmont. Is this something HPC would be interested in designating it as a historic site? It's been in operation for over one hundred years. Mr. Davenport has received confirmation from Congressman Devin Nunes that the Congressman Nunes will introduce a resolution to absorb it into National Cemetery system. It might add more icing to make that decision if this group were to designate it as a local historic resource. He will draw something up and give to staff.

IX. **NEXT MEETING: May 20, 2019, 6 PM Conference Room A, City Hall.**

X. **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Boyd adjourned the meeting at 8:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

***Laura Groves van Onna, Historic
Preservation Specialist***

Amber Piona, Recording Secretary