

2600 Fresno Street, Third Floor

Historic Preservation Commission Executive Minutes

June 27, 2016

MONDAY

6:00 p.m.

CONFERENCE ROOM A
2nd Floor, City Hall

2600 FRESNO STREET

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

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

Commissioners Present: Jason Hatwig, Patrick Boyd, Robin Goldbeck, Kristina Roper, Don Simmons.

Commissioners Absent: Paul Halajian.

Staff Present: Karana Hattersley-Drayton, Casey Lauderdale, Seth Mehrten and Kevin Watkins (Code).

II. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES

The Minutes for May 23rd were approved on a vote of 5-0, with a motion by Robin Goldbeck and a second by Jason Hatwig.

III. APPROVE AGENDA

The agenda was approved on a vote of 5-0, with a motion by Kristina Roper and a second by Don Simmons.

IV. CONSENT CALENDAR

V. CONTINUED MATTERS

None

VI. COMMISSION ITEMS

- A. Review and Make Findings on an Initial Application for an Armenian Town Historic District Pursuant to FMC 12-1610(b) and 12-1607(b). (**ACTION ITEM**).

Staff Recommendation: Approve Initial Application.

Karana Hattersley-Drayton gave a Power Point which reviewed the protocols for the preparation of a Historic District nomination and the history and importance of Armenian Town which once extended over 60 blocks. She noted that several buildings are already designated historic

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resources but others, including several typical working class cottages, are not. At the May meeting the Commission voted to request that staff prepare an Initial Application for an Armenian Town Historic District. This is the first step in the formal process. A majority of the property owners must consent to being in the District and a majority of the resources must be 50 years or older. Districts may be contiguous or non-contiguous and thematic, as with the proposed Armenian Town Historic District. Karana reviewed the benefits and constraints of being within a historic district. There would be 17 resources in this District. Page 2

Comment from audience: Is #10 just a vacant lot?

Hattersley-Drayton: Yes [there are two vacant parcels actually] if a new building was constructed on a vacant lot within the District it would need to be compatible with the District. She continues her presentation noting that a community suggestion was to include the Armenian Cultural Center but the building is once again being remodeled and it has lost integrity. Additionally, this building was not the location where the Asbarez Armenian Daily Newspaper was published.

She notes that all property owners received information about tonight's meeting and were invited to attend. As of last week, 53% of the property owners consented to be in the District with others showing interest. Karana stresses that it is best to start with a smaller District and add to it later. The District appears to be eligible for listing on the Local Register under criteria 1, 2 and 3.

Don Simmons, Ph.D.: Have any of the 47% expressed actual opposition?

Hattersley-Drayton: Not yet. The 53% is based on properties already designated and people who have been contacted directly.

Question from audience: What is a majority number?

Hattersley-Drayton: 50% plus 1.

Question from audience: So you are there now?

Hattersley-Drayton: Yes, and we can list over the objections of a property owner but we don't like to do that.

Chair Boyd opened the agenda item for public comments.

Scott Boghosian (1743 Princeton Avenue, Madera 93637). His family owns 320 M Street. Notes that his family uses the property as a rental and they have some concerns about the impact if the home is listed: 1) would having window air conditioners be precluded; 2) they need to replace the roof, how would historic status affect this; 3) they have an older air conditioning unit that needs to be refurbished; 4) their renter would like to have child care at the home and they need to meet the safety requirements of the State of California, what restrictions for a gate/wall on the front porch would there be?

His family has owned this home for over 90 years and they have concerns. They are not displeased with the idea of a historic district, but they need to be certain they can meet the needs of their tenants.

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Hattersley-Drayton: Notes that one rule in historic preservation regards reversibility: taking out and putting in an air conditioners would be allowed and would not have an effect on the historic character of the home.

Boghossian: Notes that the original windows are still there.

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Hattersley-Drayton: Health and safety always comes first. Regarding the roof, you would probably want to replace the current roof (comp shingles?) in-kind. You could use the cool roof standard.

Boghossian: Wanted to know whether they would have to go back and use roofing materials as originally there.

Hattersley-Drayton: When a building is designated, it is as it appears at the time of designation. You are not required to go back to an earlier look of the house, although you may choose to do that if you want to restore a property as it originally looked. You are not required to do so however. You would use the California Historical Building Code (a more flexible way to meet health and safety) and pull a building permit. She asks about the child care facility question as this was not clear. [It is still not clear after further discussion if Mr. Boghossian is talking about replacing or installing a railing or additional pickets on the porch or just a child proof gate.]

Boyd: Asks about the other air condition question... it appears that this is a unit on the rear of the home and thus not an issue. Chair Boyd stresses that it is the hope that being in a District will help homeowners by uses of the more flexible California Historical Building Code.

Boghossian: Mentions the fact that the zoning in this area is not residential.

Hattersley-Drayton: Notes that the zoning is in the process of being updated for all of Fresno and the new zoning will be friendlier for residential uses.

Simmons: Mentions that he has a historic barn behind his house and recently installed solar panels. He saved a lot of money because of their exemption from the cool roof standards. There can be significant savings for designated historic resources.

Boghossian: They are not against the idea of the historic district but they have concerns about having free will over their property. His grandfather put in a secure foundation on this house; this is the only thing that has changed over time.

Simmons: This is why it is so important that this house stay there for another 90 years.

Boyd: States that the historic building code will help a property owner get where they need to go.

Hattersley-Drayton: The concept of "free will" is important; but as a reminder no one living in a City has free will to do whatever they wish to do with their property, due to zoning and building codes.

Boghossian: States that he appreciates this.

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Jo Salikian: Her family owns 304, 310 and 318 M Street although 304 is not included in the proposed boundaries because it has been significantly altered. Mentions the amount of work that they have done to these homes, which belonged to her husband's parents. She states they put more money into the properties than they derive from rentals. Does not believe that 318 M Street is of historic value, perhaps 310 M. Asks if the 53% represents property owners?

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Hattersley-Drayton: Yes, that is as today.

Salikian: Notes that these homes are in a mostly commercial neighborhood. She asks to have 318 M Street removed from the District boundaries. It has a wood foundation, almost like a motor home. They do maintain them and work hard to make them look good.

Hattersley-Drayton: Concurs that they do a great job of keeping up the properties.

Boyd: Reminds Mrs. Salikian that there can be cost savings for repairs using the California Historical Building Code. He wonders how being in the District would hurt?

Salikian: If they are not within the District she would have the option to demolish the houses and build a commercial building.

Boyd: So it's the potential to demolish in the future?

Salikian: Right.

Ray Ensher (Armenian Cultural Conservancy, 364 W. Vartikian Avenue, 93704). Asks about the benefits of being in a historic District. Are there tax exemptions?

Hattersley-Drayton: Explains that there are no tax benefits per se for residential properties [Fresno is not a Mills Act city]. The State Historical Building Code and exemptions and flexibility under the City's Zoning Ordinance are the best tools for residential property owners. There are no rebates per se for repairs or guaranteed grants.

Ensher: Asks if we are pushing the District to a state or national level later on?

Hattersley-Drayton: No, that's not part of our job at the City. There is more protection actually by registering properties on the Local Register due to the ties with the Ordinance.

Ensher: Asks if Sandy's bakery is included in the District.

Hattersley-Drayton: [Lahvosh Bakery is included... no other at this time.]

Midge Barrett: (Heritage Fresno, Armenian Cultural Conservancy, 560 E. Portland Avenue, Fresno.) She addresses the upsides of the District and thanks Karana and staff for the work to date on the District. States that this is a real opportunity for the City and for the Armenian community. She notes that the word for "outsiders" in Armenian is "Odar". She notes how excited they are to have outsiders (non-Armenians) on their committee. She thanks Mabelle Selland for her preservation efforts and recounts the story of her grandfather's church (the Armenian Evangelical Church) which was the reason that Heritage Fresno was founded. An Armenian Town Historic District is a great opportunity for heritage tourism in Fresno.

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Yuritz Villaseñor [Parents own 309 M Street which is HP#097.] She notes that her parents want to have the home preserved as part of the Armenian Town history. They have worked hard to take care of it. She asks whether the City is receiving a grant for this project and whether in the future they could use the home for a museum. She wishes to clarify that they have made changes to the interior of the home.

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Boyd: Responds that the Commission is always available to answer questions and help a historic property owner.

Villaseñor: Mentions that she has seen other homes with a historic plaque which she thinks is important. Wonders if this is part of this department?

Hattersley-Drayton: Answer that the City does have a historic plaque program but that unfortunately the property owner (usually) has to purchase it themselves. Sometimes we get outside funds. The plaques are bronze and cost about \$300. [Drayton later sends a plaque order form to the family.]

Villaseñor: Her family just wanted to understand the process and is supportive of the historic district.

The public comment period is closed.

Jason Hatwig: Notes that tonight's hearing is just the Initial Application so nothing is designated tonight. There will be future meetings and additional studies.

Goldbeck: Mentions that property owners can opt out, or in.

Hattersley-Drayton: Actually the strategy that was adopted by the City Council for Huntington Boulevard (opt in, opt out) runs counter to the Historic Preservation Ordinance and was a compromise. She notes that she does not like to list resources over the objection of a property owner but in fact the Council has the authority to do that. Tonight the Commission is looking at the proposed District boundary and whether it is worth preparing the Formal Application for an Armenian Town Historic District.

Goldbeck: Then we would still need the 50% of the property owners [agreeing to be in a District.]

Hattersley-Drayton: Yes.

Boyd: So if Ms. Salikian objects to having her properties in the District we should respect that.

Hattersley-Drayton: Reiterates that the decision before the Commission is regarding the District boundaries... it is the discretion of the HPC to decide this.

Simmons: But we wouldn't have to do that tonight...[omit properties].

Hattersley-Drayton: Reiterates the rationale for drawing the initial boundary, to include some of the best extant working class houses as well as monumental buildings such as the Holy Trinity Church which is already a designated resource. We have very few examples of the way average

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folks lived. There are several cottages on L Street but they are in disrepair and so they were not included at this point.

Roper: Clarifies that the Commission is being asked to approve the Initial Application tonight.

Simmons: With the boundaries as stated.

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Hattersley-Drayton: Or the Commission can change the boundaries.

On a motion by Roper with a second by Simmons the Initial Application with proposed District boundaries is approved 5-0.

Hattersley-Drayton: Notes that additional information will be sent out to the property owners.

- B. Review Notice of Violation for the Frank J. Craycroft Home (HP#182) Located at 6545 N. Palm Avenue Pursuant to FMC12-1626(c).

Staff Recommendation: Review and provide comments. No formal action is required.

Karana Hattersley-Drayton gives a brief Power Point that shows the ongoing condition of the Craycroft Home and the recent partial collapse of the porte cochere on the rear of the home. A Notice of Violation was prepared by Code staff that included sections from both the Vacant Building Ordinance as well as the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Deadline for compliance is July 15th.

There were no questions from either the Commissioners or the Public.

Hatwig: We have met on this issue a few times and now it is Code Enforcement's job.

- C. Consideration of Approval of Request by the Property Owner to Designate the California Baptist Foundation Building Located at 1441 Fulton Street as a Heritage Property Pursuant to FMC 12-1612 (**ACTION ITEM**).

Staff Recommendation: Approve.

Karana Hattersley-Drayton gives a brief Power Point that includes the history of the building, its adjacency to the Wilson Theater, the project that led to a consideration of the Heritage Property designation and the fact that the Fulton-Lowell Design Review Committee has endorsed its designation, 5-0.

Pastor Jim Franklin (Senior Pastor Cornerstone Church): Listing the property makes perfect sense. They want to preserve what is there. Their needs are for additional space on the interior for Sunday School rooms and offices. They welcome all help and input. The Church also owns the building across from the Wilson so they may be returning to the HPC in the future.

Simmons: Notes that he was an employee of the Southern California Baptist Church and remembers that this building was in the center of discussion between the southern and northern conferences/dioceses. There was some thought that this building could serve as middle ground

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for a State center. It is a great building, simple and beautiful and in a great location.

Boyd: *Quotes comments from Commissioner Paul Halajian, who is not here tonight. Back before Paul was appointed to the Commission he spoke before the HPC about buildings and adjacencies and that cities evolve over time. Architectural styles peak and ebb and it is the juxtapositions of different building styles that make the downtown so dynamic and wonderful. This does not exist in suburbia.*

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The Commission designated the California Baptist Foundation Building as a Heritage Property 5-0 on a motion by Kristina Roper with a second by Robin Goldbeck.

- D. Workshop Presentation: "Lessons from the Field: Durham, Detroit and Minneapolis" (Karana Hattersley-Drayton, Daniel Zack and Casey Lauderdale).

Both presentations were given.

VII. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

No report.

VIII. UNSCHEDULED ITEMS

A. Members of the Commission

1. Election of Commission Chair and Vice Chair Pursuant to FMC 12-1605(b).

Chair Boyd and Vice Chair Hatwig were elected 5-0 for another year, on a motion by Don Simmons and a second by Kristina Roper

B. Staff

C. General Public

Roger Taylor (Heritage Fresno, 4557 E. Pico Avenue, Fresno 93626) noted that he worked in the Development Department in the 1970s. The Craycroft Home was the first property that he evaluated for the Local Register. On another matter, he mentions that he has prepared new text for the plaque at the Water Tower (where he volunteers) as the plaque on the building includes some incorrect information. He hands out the revised text. Once the plaque is installed there will be a celebration at the site.

Hattersley-Drayton: Asks if the Historic Property # is on it (HP#001).

Taylor: Responds, not yet, but this will be fixed. Checks to help with the funding can be made payable to Heritage Fresno.

Herb Arden (Heritage Fresno) hands out flyers for the next Armenian film program and invites the Commissioners to attend.

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IX. NEXT MEETING: July 25, 2016, 6 PM Conference Room A, City Hall.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 8:07 PM.

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Respectfully submitted:

Karana Hattersley-Drayton, Secretary

Casey Lauderdale, Recording Secretary