



**Historical Resources Management Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
Hattie Weber Museum – 445 C Street, Davis, California
Corner of 5th and C Streets in Central Park
Monday, September 29, 2008**

Commissioners Present: Rand Herbert (Chair), Richard Rifkin (Vice Chair), Gale Sosnick, Keren Costanzo and Mark Beason

Staff Present: Ike Njoku, Kelly Stachowicz, Rob Cain and Nancy Stephenson

1. Call to Order. Chair Herbert called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda.

Action: Vice Chair Rifkin moved, seconded by Commissioner Costanzo, to approve the agenda. The motion passed by the following vote:

AYES: Beason, Costanzo, Herbert, Rifkin, Sosnick

NOES: None

3. Approval of Minutes.

Action: Vice Chair Rifkin moved, seconded by Commissioner Beason, to approve the June 16, 2008 minutes as amended. The motion passed by the following vote:

AYES: Beason, Herbert, Rifkin, Sosnick

NOES: None

ABSTENTION: Costanzo

4. Public Communications. None.

5. Written Communications. Staff Liaison Ike Njoku circulated written materials for review by the commissioners.

6. Museum Report. None.

7. Staff and Commissioner Comments. Commissioner Sosnick requested an update on the Aikin (311 and 315 B Street) and Ogrzydziak (233 B Street) projects. She also noted that the Planning Commission had an inadequate understanding of the *Davis Downtown and Traditional Residential Neighborhoods Design Guidelines* (Updated June 2007), and wondered if training of the Commission is not warranted. The Commission agreed that the Planning Commission should understand the importance of the Design Guidelines. Staff Liaison Ike Njoku and Deputy City Manager Kelly Stachowicz responded that Ogrzydziak had appealed the City Council's denial of her 233 B Street

project and that the project will come before the City Council on November 5, 2008, as will the relocation of 311 and 315 B Street. Chair Herbert requested that the Commissioners be notified before the meeting takes place. Staff added that a joint meeting of the Planning Commission and the Historical Resources Management Commission (HRMC) would be proposed for the benefit of the Planning Commission to increase their understanding of the HRMC and the *Design Guidelines*.

Vice Chair Rifkin reported that he has been in communication with Chancellor Vanderhoef regarding the naming of a building on campus after George Washington Pierce, Jr., but stated that he does not know where things stand regarding the proposal. Rifkin added that he had attended the UC Davis Fall Convocation, and that the Chancellor had mentioned Pierce in his speech.

In further remarks, Rifkin stated that there had been no progress on the 320 I Street project. He then informed those present of the upcoming dedication of the Sam Brinley Plaza at the Southern Pacific Depot on Friday, October 10, 2008. He said that Brinley had been an agent at the Depot as well as being a local realtor. Chair Herbert noted that he (Herbert) had been asked to speak at the event. In other comments, he mentioned a couple of issues upon which he had been consulted regarding historic markers and the proposed fence for the Hattie Weber Museum. He stated that the City had located two historic markers made of granite, one for the Southern Pacific Depot and the other for the Chiles Farm on the UC Davis campus. Herbert said that he had recommended that the marker at the Depot be placed at the platform rather than by the "Iridescent Tuning Forks of the Valley" [*Solar Intersections* installation] on 2nd Street. Herbert reported that the proposed fence at the Hattie Weber Museum will enclose the area to the southwest of the building and will replicate existing fencing on the premises.

Vice Chair Rifkin reported that the barn on the Chiles property at 2411 E. 8th Street will be torn down and the salvaged material will be reused to build a community room for the housing project proposed at the site. Rifkin explained that the issue had not come before the HRMC for lack of a quorum. He stated that it had been determined that dismantling the structure would be more cost effective than moving the barn.

8. Business Items.

A. Landmark Tree Designation application for the *Citrus sp.*, Orange grove located at the Hunt Boyer building at 604 2nd; Rob Cain, Urban Forest Manager

Urban Forest Manager Rob Cain introduced the item, indicating that the City had received an application from a community member to designate the orange trees in the grove to the east of the Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer Mansion (hereafter referred to as "Hunt-Boyer Mansion" or "Mansion") as Landmark Trees. Cain stated that he was gathering comments from the Commission, which, along with the evaluations of Cain and the independent consulting arborist, will be forwarded to the Tree Commission and thence to the City Council. He added that he was seeking input as to whether or not the trees meet the Landmark Tree Designation criteria as stated in the City of Davis Municipal Code.

Community member Emily Meharg stated that she had submitted the application when she learned that the trees were to be destroyed in preparation for the construction of the Mishka's Café project.

She asserted that the trees should have been designated a Landmark long ago, and she echoed the comments of historical consultants in past historical surveys in saying that the trees are a part of the context and setting of the Hunt-Boyer Mansion as a Landmark listed in the National Register. She concluded that the destruction of the trees would result in the destruction of the historical setting of the Hunt-Boyer Mansion.

On a personal and historical note, Professor Emeritus Roger Romani stated that he and his children had been urged by Mary Hunt Boyer one day 45 years ago to pick some oranges from the trees. He stated that the whole area is historic, and that the trees are part of the Landmark. Chair Herbert stated that it was good to have an eyewitness account in this situation, since the consulting arborist could not determine whether or not the trees are the same ones depicted in historic photos of the property.

Commissioner Beason asked if the trees are subject to any protection as part of the house's designation as a historic landmark. He stated that removal of the trees would compromise the integrity of the resource. Beason noted that the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) report mentions sources that state that the fruit trees are a remnant of Henry Stelling's orchard, indicating that someone who looked at the trees and looked at the historic record thought that they were the original trees. He said that this detail seems to argue for the trees as being of historical interest (Criterion 3 of Section 37.03.020 in the Davis Municipal Code).

Commissioner Costanzo suggested that the two consultants involved in the surveys be made aware of each other's evaluations. Costanzo stated that it would be necessary to know whether the trees were original or not to determine if they are of historical interest.

Chair Herbert noted that the issue of the trees was part of the deliberation in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Hunt-Boyer Mansion / Varsity Theatre; the trees were considered contributing elements whose destruction would be an unmitigable adverse effect. He stated that the trees were part of the National Register nomination and determination of eligibility in the sense that they are considered to be contributing elements to the National Register and City Landmark. However, the City Council reviewed the EIR and voted to allow the destruction of the trees in spite of the HRMC's opposition. Herbert concluded that the decision has already been rendered; the trees are of historic interest, and covered by an EIR, they are subject to being removed.

Vice Chair Rifkin added that there would be no benefit to designating the trees as historic since the City Council had already voted to allow their destruction. Rifkin noted that, according to the EIR, the trees are the original trees. In addition, he stated that there is no evidence that the trees depicted in historic photos had died and been replaced by other trees.

Chair Herbert summarized the Commission's comments:

The commission thinks that the trees would qualify under Criterion 3 of the Municipal Code Landmark Tree Designation Criteria by virtue of their being contributing elements to a National Register-listed building and a City Landmark, but the issue is mooted by the fact that the City Council has already voted to destroy these

trees. The trees would also qualify under Criterion 2 in that, if they are the original trees, they are some of the oldest in the city of Davis.

Vice Chair Rifkin asked Cain to have the growth rings counted to determine the age of the trees when they are chopped down.

B. Old North Davis Neighborhood Association (ONDNA) Proposal to Install Plaques on Historical Resources within the Neighborhood (i.e., Heritage Homes)

Sheryl Gerety of the ONDNA reported that the Association had raised \$400 and would donate the money toward the historical signage project if it would make a difference in the quality of the signs. She added that another possibility for the funds would be a “beauty contest” in which well-maintained houses in the historic neighborhoods would be awarded ceramic plaques. The purpose of this project would be community identity and public education. Gerety asked if the City would be willing to match the Association’s funds. Staff Liaison Njoku responded that the City would be able to match the funds, but more information about the project would be required.

In response to a question from Chair Herbert, Gerety stated that the Association is leaning toward attaching the plaques to the houses, but placement of the plaques adjoining the sidewalk and the front path might be another option so they could be seen by passers-by. Gerety added that the plaques would display the year of construction of the house and the name of the original owner in the foreground over an artistic rendering of the house in the background.

Vice Chair Rifkin stated that the ONDNA project and the HRMC plans for historic signage are in fact complementary. He said that the primary interest is to have a signage program that promotes history. He added that, particularly for public buildings, the signs need to be large enough for the public to be aware of them, and, for private homes, there is a need to be sensitive to what the owner wants.

Njoku noted that the signs would need to be compatible with the City’s sign ordinance. Gerety responded that the historical signage being contemplated by the ONDNA was closer to yard art than signage. She stated that the proposed size of the signs would be between 12 and 24 inches square, to which Njoku responded that a sign of that size would not require special approval from the City because signs of that size are allowed by the City sign ordinance.

Chair Herbert asked if the ONDNA planned to hold signs for the succeeding owner in the event that the current homeowner does not want a sign. Gerety responded that this would depend on the funding availability. She stated that the ceramicist will donate her time, but there will be a cost for materials.

The commissioners requested updates as the ONDNA project progresses.

C. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) for Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer House (604 2nd Street) & Varsity Theatre (616 2nd Street) – City Landmarks

Chair Herbert explained that a HABS report is a federal document. He added that the documents being received are “HABS-like” and are actually City of Davis reports that were prepared as one of the mitigation measures for the destruction of the Hunt-Boyer Tankhouse and for the infill between the Varsity Theatre and the Hunt-Boyer Mansion. He said that a HABS documentation is a technical report that demonstrates the structure’s historical significance and provides historical information about that structure. In the report, the project that is going to result in harm to the resource is typically described. Herbert stated that a series of large-format photographs depicting the existing structure are included, as well as historic photos and copies of architectural plans, if available. He stated that the HABS reports being received by the HRMC were submitted as one of the mitigation measures for the installation of the two-story building between the Varsity Theatre and the Hunt-Boyer Mansion, the loss of the plaza and trees, and the inappropriate movement of the Tankhouse from the side rear to the front of the Mansion.

The commissioners had the following comments regarding the reports:

Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer document:

- Add preparer’s name.
- Add page numbers.
- Add in-depth discussion of the changes to the resource and the effects of these changes on its historical integrity.
- Page 2, Section B. Historical Context, third paragraph: the acquisition of the Hunt-Boyer Mansion by the Lillard family needs to be included.
- Page 2, Section B. Historical Context, second paragraph: change *Desbach* to *Dresbach*.

Varsity Theatre document:

- Add preparer’s name.
- Add date.
- Page 2, last line: change *Modern* to *Moderne*.

Chair Herbert requested copies of the photos in Portable Document Format (PDF) and stated that the photos are necessary for the commissioners to determine whether or not the photos are complete in their recordation of the character-defining features of the buildings.

D. Commission Projects.

- Signage and Identification for Landmarks
- UC Davis Centennial Celebration Participation Update
- Subcommittee Report on Update of Historical Resources Inventory
- No New Update on Preservation of Digital Records

Signage

Njoku presented a cardboard sign mockup (created by Vice Chair Rifkin) along with an actual sheet metal City of Davis parking sign in the size and shape of the proposed signs. Njoku stated that the proposed signs would be mounted on 3-foot poles. He mentioned concerns raised

regarding placement of the signs on City-owned Landmarks and noted the lack of public easements in the downtown and surrounding areas in relation to the privately owned Landmarks.

Vice Chair Rifkin responded that the plan is to place the signs on the planting strips in front of houses in the downtown area where feasible. The planting strips, which are 8 feet wide, would provide ample room for the 2-foot-wide proposed signs. He noted that there are similar signs in at least 20 places in the downtown area. Further, Rifkin shared his vision of having the lettering for the name of the resource large enough for people driving by to read it, with additional, smaller text below with historical information about the resource that could be read by bicyclists and pedestrians.

Chair Herbert noted that certain City-owned structures, such as the Tankhouse, which has been ruined [by being moved to the corner in front of the Mansion], could have a sign placed on the side. He stated that this would pose no threat to the resource given prior alterations to the buildings.

Commissioner Costanzo suggested that since it appears as though the signage will be considered on a case-by-case basis, it would expedite matters if a liaison from the Public Works Department were appointed to shepherd each sign through the necessary process. Ideally, the candidate would have an understanding of the issues involved and be able to work out possible issues between the HRMC and Public Works regarding placement of future signs.

Resident of Old East Davis and Landmark owner Valerie Jones stated that she is interested in the signage concept and would like the public to have more access to information about historical resources in the city. She stated that there is a marble plaque at her property in the ground close to the entrance to the property. She added that it can be seen from the sidewalk, although it is upside-down from that perspective and is not noticeable.

Chair Herbert noted that the older signs provide a name only and no information. Vice Chair Rifkin suggested that the words "private residence" be included on the signs located on private property to protect the privacy of the property owners. Commissioner Beason suggested that smaller signage, perhaps one-half to one-third the size of the proposed signs, be used for private residences. Vice Chair Rifkin expressed the desire to have signs that are big enough so that pedestrians and others can see them; the purpose of the signs should be to demonstrate that there are historical resources in Davis.

Jones stated that she would prefer signage a little more distinctive than a metal public parking sign. She acknowledged that the neighborhood associations would need to raise funds for such signage.

Old East Davis resident and Landmark owner Rhonda Reed stated that the ground marker at her property does catch the eye of pedestrians. She expressed concern that if the proposed signs are placed in the sidewalk strip, they will attract car doors and intoxicated persons. Reed said that the brass signs used in state parks are virtually indestructible, but are difficult to clean if they are painted. She suggested ceramic signs as a possible option.

Yolo County Historical Society President B. J. Ford described how heritage homes are recognized in Woodland: A brass plaque with the words “Heritage Home” and the date the house was built is placed on the house, and the Society provides a walking tour book (winner of the Governor’s Award for Historic Preservation) with additional information on each house.

Kathy Harryman, of the Yolo County Historical Society (YCHS) Board of Directors, talked about the pamphlet *History on the Go*, which is compiled by the YCHS and contains information on historical sites throughout Yolo County. The YCHS noted the lack of representation for sites in Davis, and Harryman stated that the YCHS planned to install a plaque at the Romani home. She added that she and the others were there to figure out how the YCHS and the HRMC can work together to recognize historical resources in Davis. Ford added that the plaque at the Romani home would be of etched granite attached to a boulder or a concrete block.

The commissioners discussed the pros and cons of concrete block monument signs, metal signs and etched tile signs. Commissioner Sosnick suggested that the commissioners do more of the footwork rather than asking staff; if the commissioners themselves went out and viewed the sites, it would keep costs down.

In response to a question from Chair Herbert, Joe Catterin of the Davis Cemetery District stated that the District would like to put its sign at the new or old stone gate entrance to the cemetery.

Harryman noted that large signs work well on public buildings, but small signs work better for private homes. She added that historical information could be included in a brochure for the historical neighborhoods and on the signs for the public properties.

Old East Davis resident Joel Brungardt stated that he found the mockup sign a little large. He noted that a brochure was created by the Old East Davis Neighborhood Association (OEDNA) a few years ago with a great deal of historical information regarding the neighborhood. Brungardt concluded that a brochure containing as much historical information as possible is a good idea and would generate interest in the historical sites throughout the community. Chair Herbert requested a copy of the OEDNA brochure for review by the commissioners.

Rhonda Reed indicated that there are plans to post an updated version of the OEDNA brochure on the Davis Wiki website. Reed also stated that a podcast had been set up at Yourwetlands.org for the Napa Wetlands that gives an audio tour of the wetlands. There are small posts with numbers installed throughout the wetlands matching segments in the podcast. Reed indicated that this approach might find a broader audience and it might be less expensive than signage.

The commissioners discussed the view that the object of the signs is to educate the public regarding the historical sites; thus more text than just the date of construction is needed on the signs. Chair Herbert stated that the main readers of the signs would most likely be pedestrians. He suggested that the shape of the signs, regardless of size, be recognizable, and that the color scheme should be distinct from that of traffic signs. Various color schemes were discussed, and Vice Chair Rifkin stated his preference for blue letters on a white background.

Chair Herbert asked staff for a cost estimate for five or six metal signs to be placed at City-owned Landmarks. Commissioner Sosnick requested costs for both single-sided and double-sided signs (*i.e.*, two signs back-to-back on either side of a post). Commissioner Costanzo asked whether or not an electronic mockup could be provided for the review of various color schemes for the signs.

Stachowicz stated that staff would return with cost information at the next HRMC meeting.

UCD Centennial update

Stachowicz brought the Commission up to date regarding the UC Davis Centennial Celebration plans. She covered three topics relating to the Celebration:

1. The Centennial Gazette, a community newsletter focusing on the upcoming Centennial activities produced by the City and the University. The design of the newsletter, including the font and photos, reflects the period around the year 1908. The newsletter was sent to every resident in the 95616, 95617 and 95618 zip codes.

Street Fair, October 12, 2008

2. A series of banners is being designed, incorporating photos, news articles and maps depicting each decade from 1908 forward. The banners celebrate the history of the community, the university and their relationship over the years.
3. Organizers are planning to incorporate a historical fact into each of the vendor booths at the event. The idea is to convey a sense of innovation for the future along with providing information about the past.

In further comments regarding the banners, Stachowicz said that the current plan is to place the banners where people will be getting free cake at the Farmer's Market Pavilion. She stated that the banners will be between 2' by 3' and 2' by 4' and consist of thick, white fabric-like paper with graphics in blue, gold and black ink. Stachowicz added that the sandwich board idea had been nixed because of safety concerns.

Update on Historical Resources Inventory

Commissioner Beason reported that new maps requiring new analysis had been received. The commissioners discussed the maps. The commissioners agreed to discuss this item at the October 20, 2008 HRMC meeting.

9. **Adjournment.** The next meeting will be **Monday, October 20, 2008** at the Hattie Weber Museum (445 C Street) at 7:00 p.m.

Action: Commissioner Sosnick moved, seconded by Vice Chair Rifkin, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed by the following vote:

AYES: Beason, Costanzo, Herbert, Rifkin, Sosnick
NOES: None

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.