

## Historical Landmarks & Records Advisory Commission

The regular meeting of the Historic Landmarks & Records Commission was held at the Fig Garden Library on May 21, 2009.

Members present: Randy McFarland, Don Shantz, John Baltierra, Roger Taylor, Aileen Bos, Susan Pappas, Elizabeth Laval, Nancy Enloe, Ethan Kytle, James Kus, David Berkey, Penny Raven

Members absent: Steve Barile, Bud Olson

Others present: Bill Secrest Jr., Bill Darnell, Karen Coletti, Bernard Jimenez, Karen Bosch Cobb, Elida Mendoza, Dennis Garrett, John Krikorian, Doris Smilie, Woody Gregory, Bill & Bernice Darnell, Zograb Tsolokian, Mike & Jeanette Mecca, Chip Blythe, Jim Shekoyan, Rudy & Denise Halencak, Chris Baierski, Bill Huene, Roy Emerzian, Kathie Gregory, Jim & Sue Coelho, John & Cathy Downing, Steve LaFerrera, Phillip & Norma Bates, Bob Palacios, Karana Hattersley-Drayton

### AGENDA ITEMS

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Randy McFarland who explained that a formal public hearing format would be followed for Sierra Sky Park hearing. He also took a few minutes to explain the role of the Commission. Speaking specifically about the Sierra Sky Park, he said, the Commission does not deal with land use issues; they make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors about historic designation.

2. Welcome: Chairman McFarland welcomed all guests.

3. Adoption of Agenda: The agenda was adopted as distributed.

4. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of March 19, 2009.

5. Comments from the Public: None

6. California History & Genealogy Room Acquisitions- Mr. Bill Secrest Jr. circulated two pieces of history. Mr. Secrest passed a book around on a Serbian Princess. She was said to be from Visalia and once engaged to William Randolph Hearst. Nancy Enloe made announcements on the Masonic Lodges in the area.

7. Records – None.

8. Landmarks

a) Inventory of Historic Sites in Fresno County

1) Approve Historic District Designation for Sierra Sky Park-(SSP)  
Public Hearing

*Chairman McFarland* opened the public hearing to consider the SSP application for historic designation. He encouraged everyone wishing to comment to do so, and all persons wishing to speak were asked to provide their name and address. Mrs. Bosch Cobb presented an overview of the key information about the SSP application. The application was brought to the Commission by Mr. Bill Darnell, and it has been discussed at several meeting. The Commission toured the SSP in February to view the development.

*Mr. Bernard Jimenez*, Fresno County Public Works & Planning Division Manager, addressed a question concerning the impact of historic designation on a property. He said that historic designation does not affect a homeowner's ability to modify or rebuild their existing home, but it may have an impact on rezoning or use change.

At this point Chairman McFarland asked for comments from the public. Below are the comments voiced during the hearing:

*Mr. Bill Darnell, 4157 W. Kelly, Fresno 93722*

He expressed appreciation for the assistance he received from the Commission, Mrs. Bosch Cobb, Mr. Bill Secrest Jr. and Chairman McFarland. He said that the merits of the application have been reviewed and discussed time and time again, and it is time to approve it for historic designation. He said the SSP was the first airport in the world, and he encouraged the Commission to vote yes.

*Mr. Jim Shekoyan, President, Herndon-Doolittle, Associates, 7535 N. Spyglass, Fresno, CA 93722*

Mr. Shekoyan, President of Herndon-Doolittle, Associates (HDA), spoke as the owner of a parcel in the SSP and as the spokesperson for his business partners Messrs Rick Ginder and George Knapp. Mr. Shekoyan said neither he nor his associates were formally notified of today's hearing, nor were they notified of the March meeting of the HLRC. He requested a continuance of the hearing in order to prepare comments, and said that they opposed the application for historic designation, due to the lack of notification. HDA owns the runway, and Mr. Shekoyan owns 40+ acres in the subdivision. Mr. Shekoyan faxed a letter to Mrs. Bosch Cobb earlier today (May 21, 2009), and he asked that it be read to the Commissioners. Chairman McFarland read the letter in which Mr. Shekoyan stated that HDA has been working with the City of Fresno, on a conditional use permit related to future development of lots 107 and 108, and he requested continuance.

*Mr. John Krikorian, 4159 W. Alluvial, Fresno, CA 93722*

Mr. Krikorian stated that property owners have easements for use of the airport, and they have some rights of ownership.



*Mr. Bill Darnell (address above)*

Mr. Darnell said he wrote several letters to Mr. Shekoyan, but Mr. Shekoyan did not respond. He also said that Mr. Roger Taylor, Historic Landmarks commissioner, had discussed the application with Mr. Shekoyan.

*Chairman McFarland* reminded everyone that the discussion and comments should focus on the merits of the application, and he also said that the questions of notification were legitimate and that matter would be discussed later on in the hearing.

*Karana Hattersley-Drayton, Historic Preservation Officer, City of Fresno Department of Housing, 2600 Fresno Street, Rm. 3076, Fresno, CA 93721*

Ms. Hattersley-Drayton said that professionally speaking she considered the SSP a very important site. She suggested that a continuance may not be a bad idea because of CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) requirements and the potential impact that CEQA may have on HDA's application before the city. The site does require a survey. It was stated that some of the homes were built in the 80's which also causes some concern.

*Chip Blythe, 4469 W. Chennault, Fresno, CA 93722*

The Sky Park is unique in that its early homes had plane ports. Construction has spanned over a number of years so you can see the evolution of the development. It has served as a model for hundreds of sky parks all over the world.

*Woody Gregory, 7394 N. McCampbell, Fresno, CA 93722*

Mr. Gregory had a question for Ms. Hattersley-Drayton, the City of Fresno and City's approval process of the HDA application. He said he is currently paying for easement rights to access the airport. Ms. Hattersley-Drayton said her understanding is that if Doolittle and Spatz avenues are closed, parking would not be allowed there. She also stressed that she is not a City planner and is not directly involved with this project.

*Chairman McFarland* reiterated that the HLRS's role related to this hearing is to determine historical significance.

*William "Bill" Robinson, Sol Development, 906 N Street, Suite 100, Fresno, CA 93721*

Mr. Robinson stated that he is a lawyer that has been very involved with SSP as their land use consultant. He restated that the HLRC is a County commission that makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, and that the Commission has made recommendations to the Board that are both in the city and county. He said there is a historic survey underway.

*Kathie Gregory 7394 N. McCampbell, Fresno, CA 93722*

Ms. Gregory asked what would happen if the HLRC approved the application and then handed it to the Board of Supervisors for them to act on it.

*Chairman McFarland* said it would probably get bounced back to the HLRC very quickly because of the unresolved issues.

*Mr. Bernard Jimenez*, Fresno County Public Works & Planning Division Manager, stated that in general any development near an area or structure that has been designated historical could impact the historical integrity of the property. He also said that there are limitations that could be placed in design features if they are identified in the CEQA review. The process is for the evaluation of what consists on the property.

*Glennis Crocker, 7380 N. McCampbell, Fresno, CA 93722*

Her parents are who started the SSP; it was the first aviation park in the world. Ms. Crocker has lived there for 56 years. She stated that after listening to everyone that the goal seems to be to designate the SSP an historical site.

*Elizabeth Laval, HLRC Commissioner*

Ms. Laval asked if Mr. Bill Darnell had encountered any residents who opposed the project, and he replied there were none of whom he was aware.

*Cathleen Downing, P.O. Box 4461, Fresno, CA 93744*

Ms. Downing said she is proud to be part of such an important part of history that belongs to Fresno. She said the SSP was an idea that came to fruition, and she could not imagine why it should not be recognized by the HLRC.

There were no further comments and Chairman McFarland closed the public hearing at 5 p.m. He stated that the HLRC would consider Mr. Shekoyan's letter asking for continuation, the comments during the public hearing and the SSP application to determine if it should be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors.

*Chairman McFarland* asked the Commissioners for comments.

*Commissioner Kus* said that given that the next meeting is not until September, it might be appropriate to defer action until September because they may want to review the consultant's report.

*Commissioner Baltierra* said he opposed postponement for any length of time.



*Commissioner Kytte* was interested in knowing what would be gained by postponing action until September.

*Chairman McFarland* agreed with Commissioner Kus that there is a historic survey that has to be undertaken for this property and that it would improve the application. He also added that it would be better to have the SSP applicant (Mr. Darnell) and the representative of HDA more in agreement before going to the Board of Supervisors.

*Chairman McFarland* reopened the hearing and asked Mr. Bill Robinson about the timeline. He replied that his estimate was between 90-120 days.

*Ms. Hattersley-Drayton* said that a key consideration for the City in land use cases is to make sure their findings are legally defensible.

There was no further discussion, and it was moved by Commissioner Kus, seconded by Commissioner Kytte, to postpone a final decision on the SSP application, and that the Commission would expect to receive information from Mr. Bill Robinson on the historic survey. Motion carried.

2) Fig Garden Swim & Racquet Club-the Club was approved for the placement on the County's List of Historic Places on May 19, 2009 by the Board of Supervisors.

3) Application under Review

a) Hall of Records-The application was returned by the State Historic Preservation Officer with a request for further changes, and Mrs. Bosch Cobb listed the changes requested. Mr. Secrest Jr. said he was discouraged that the SHPO was rejecting the application in spite of the fine work done by Mr. John Powell. After considering options ranging from withdrawing the application to contacting legislative representatives, it was decided that Mrs. Bosch Cobb should prepare a status report to the Board of Supervisors to ask how they want the HLRC to proceed. Mrs. Bosch Cobb will also work with Bill Secrest Jr. on this.

4) Suggestions for other applications-None.

a) Inventory

b) Centennial Farms-None

c) Centennial Business

- 1) Commercial Transfer, Inc.-Commissioner Pappas reported on the results of her extensive research and discussions with Mr. Tim Fortier. The company has been in business for over 100 consecutive years, and has been owned by the Fortier Family for over 80. Ms. Bosch Cobb asked for a more completed application

It was stated that Commissioner Pappas presented a nice explanation and will bring back in October.

- d) Centennial Communities-Review each year in January

- e) Fresno Courthouse Park grounds markers/memorial and sculptures-None.

- f) Review Historic Landmarks Commission's role for related to Board of Supervisors Policy #48

Mr. Bob Palacios briefly reviewed this policy. The HLRC and Department of Public works and Planning are responsible for reviewing requests to name road and bridges in honor of and individual.

- g) Discussion of threatened building in the City of Fresno-No discussion.

- h) Discussion of threatened buildings in the County of Fresno-No discussion.

## 9. Reports and Administrative Action Items

- a) Chairman's Report

1) Chairman McFarland turned the meeting over to Mrs. Bosch Cobb for the election of officers. Mrs. Bosch Cobb called for nominations for Chairman. It was moved by Commissioner Baltierra, seconded by Commissioner Raven to re-elect Chairman McFarland for another term. There were no further nominations and Chairman McFarland was unanimously re-elected.

Chairman McFarland called for nominations for Vice-Chair. It was moved by Commissioner Taylor, seconded by Commissioner Baltierra, to nominate Commissioner Taylor to another term. There were no further nominations and Commissioner Taylor was nominated Vice-Chair.

2) Planning for Summer Trip to Eastern Sierra-Commissioners discussed the itinerary for a trip this summer. Some of the stops mentioned were a logging camp, Dinky Creek, Truss Bridge, and McKinley Grove. The dates chosen for consideration were August 15<sup>th</sup> or August 22<sup>nd</sup>. Mrs. Bosch Cobb will check on availability on the Museums in Shaver Lake and Tollhouse.

b) Vice Chairman's Report-None

c) Secretary's Report

1) Recognition of Years of Service serving on HLRC- Mrs. Bosch Cobb distributed certificates of appreciation to each member for volunteering their time as members of the Commission.

2) Attendance Report-No discussion.

3) Status of Vacancies-No discussion.

d) Commissioner's Report

1) Commissioner Raven reported on various events and projects of interest to the Commission. Spoke of Fresno Magazine's article on the 9 Top Women.

10) Announcements-The next meeting will be on September 17, 2009 at 4 p.m. tentative at Arte Americas. The November 19, 2009 at 4 p.m. at the Fresno Fire Station located at 911 H St.

11) Adjournment-May 21, 2009 at 6:18 p.m. there was no further business.