



# HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD MEETING

## MINUTES: October 13, 2022

Council Chamber & Virtual Zoom  
8:30 A.M.

### **Call to Order/Roll Call**

Present: Chair Caroline Willis; Vice Chair Christian Pease, Board Members Michael Makinen, Gogo Heinrich, and Alisa Eagleston-Cieslewicz, Board Member Margaret Wimmer

Absent: Board Member David Bower

Madina Klicheva, Planning & Development Services, shared instructions for members of the public who wish to provide comments on Zoom and in person.

1. Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing Use of Teleconferencing for Historic Resources Board During Covid-19 State of Emergency

Board Member Heinrich moved to approve the Resolution. Seconded by Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz, the motion carried (6-0) by voice vote.

### **Oral Communications**

### **Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions**

### **City Official Reports**

2. Historic Resources Board Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Ms. French reported that there are no changes to meetings and assignments.

3. Office of Historic Preservation Alert to National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund Grant Opportunity

Chair Willis introduced discussion of this grant opportunity, which was due the following day. She explained that the funds available will be divided among the applicants. She said she hoped to use the opportunity to initiate digitizing of the existing inventory. She hoped that the effort would be substantially done by volunteers, but any funds available would help with consultants and perhaps methodology. She invited discussion from the Board Members.

Ms. French advised that there is one form to be completed. It does not specify what the funds will be used for. There is no commitment required to using it for a certain project. The amount received would have to be matched with in-kind services. In the case of the HRB, this would be for a consultant, so there would need to be funds budgeted for that. Chair Willis felt that volunteer hours could serve as the match. Ms. French stressed that it would be matter of carefully tracking the items. She advised that she would be sending the application by the deadline.

### **Approval of Minutes**

4. Approval of Historic Resources Board Draft Minutes of August 25, 2022

Vice Chair Pease moved to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2022, HRB meeting. Seconded by Board Member Wimmer, the motion carried (6-0) by roll call vote.

### **Board Member Questions, Comments or Announcements**

Chair Willis invited announcements or discussion of items that were not on the agenda.

Board Member Heinrich wondered if there was a calendar of the schedule for 2023. Ms. French responded that the HRB meetings are always on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, at 8:30 in the morning. Generally, the meetings are once a month, and it is not determined which of those two days the meeting will be held, but if Board Members know of days they are going to be unavailable, they can email her, and she will try to focus on the other meeting date for that month.

Chair Willis wanted to get all of the dates on the calendar. She assumed there is not yet approval for a consultant on the inventory update. Ms. French replied that the Council approved it but there is still some of the process to go through in bringing the consultant onboard. Chair Willis wished to allow for additional meetings in 2023. As properties are added to the inventory, she thought there might even be some night meetings involved.

Chair Willis brought up the railroad bridge coming into Palo Alto from Menlo Park, which is National Register eligible, as are the underpasses at University and Embarcadero. The bridge is at risk because Cal Tran is looking to replace it. She wanted to see this agendaized for the next meeting and asked the Board Members to think about how they would respond. She hoped it could at least be relocated, as it is a landmark that can be seen from El Camino. She asked for opinions on how to approach the decision-makers on this, to make a plea for at least some type of restoration or relocation. She asked Ms. French to put this on the agenda for the next meeting and perhaps share some photos and history.

Chair Willis proposed that there is a good opportunity to reinstate a Mills Act with the de Lemos property on Cowper. It is a unique property, and she felt if they could maintain the current level of housing there, it would be of historic benefit and a benefit to the City. She asked Board Member Wimmer if some type of condensed version of a request could be put to Council, for them to consider this property as an example of the Mills Act. Buy-in from owners would be required, but Chair Willis felt that the longer the property sits, the more at risk it becomes, and this could be an opportunity to be proactive on this one property.

Vice Chair Pease commented that this has come up before. It is likely that, depending on what state it is in for a Mills Act, there would have to be an analysis done and there would be a fiscal impact. He wondered if that was likely. Ms. French thought that in the pilot program which was discussed the prior year there were some comments. The taxes are diverted, which is one of the controversial aspects of the Mills Act. She said Board Member Bower was on the committee, and she could put this on the agenda for a future meeting when he was in attendance.

Vice Chair Pease thought the draft had been in process for as much as a decade, on and off. Ms. French responded that it has not been in process. There was a subcommittee that worked on a draft, which was shared with the Historic Resources Board, but has never been taken further than that. Board Member Heinrich wondered if the Mills Act and the designation of a historic district would be done in tandem. Chair Willis replied that those would be two different things. It was agreed to postpone this discussion to a future meeting.

Chair Willis reported that she attended the PAST meeting, the Palo Alto Stanford Heritage Board meeting the previous night. There was some enthusiasm for helping the HRB update the inventory. They would look for one of the Board Members to join them as a liaison. If anyone is interested, Chair Willis asked them to let her know. She thought it was basically a once-a-month commitment. She felt they would be a good source for volunteers and would have some good ideas about putting the request on the City Manager's weekly update as a way to reach out into the community.

### **Adjournment**

Motion by Board Member Heinrich to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Vice Chair Pease, the motion carried unanimously, by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48.