



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

Historic Resources Board Staff Report

From: Planning and Development Services Director
Lead Department: Planning and Development Services

Meeting Date: March 28, 2024
Report #: 2403-2784

TITLE

Approval of Historic Resources Board Draft Minutes of January 11, 2024

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Historic Resources Board (HRB) adopt the attached meeting minutes.

BACKGROUND

Attached are minutes for the following meeting(s):

- January 11, 2024

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: HRB 1.11 Minutes

AUTHOR/TITLE:

Amy French, Chief Planning Official



HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD MEETING

DRAFT MINUTES, January 11, 2024

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

Call to Order/Roll Call

Present: Chair Alisa Eagleston-Cieslewicz; Vice Chair Samantha Rohman; Board Members Gogo Heinrich, Michael Makinen, Pease and Caroline Willis

Absent: Board Member Wimmer (joined 8:39 a.m.)

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

Public Comment

Leland Francois commented that he is looking for some assistance in trying to identify some of the earlier structures that were used and utilized by the dignitaries or part of the process during the 1945 United Nations era. There is a meeting at the old church at 2201 University Avenue in Ravenswood on or around the 24th of every month.

Darlene Yaplee commented that staff's presentation at the December 14, 2023, meeting showed the Joint Powers Board Cal Train as submitting an objection letter for both the University underpass and the Embarcadero underpass. She requested that the Historic Resources Board (HRB) and staff not separate the two properties from the rest of the objecting properties for the January 25, 2024 meeting. The same process, criteria, and categories should be used for all properties: residential, commercial, and city owned. The Joint Powers Board Cal Train is similar to fellow objectors regarding the concerns of being listed on the inventory even though they did not have an issue with devalued property. The public should be able to review and comment before the HRB acts in an open public meeting on all objecting properties using the same process, criteria, and categories.

Ms. Yaplee stated that Mountain View City Council decided on survey properties based on community input, did not require formally opt off properties to participate, consideration of benefits beyond the Mills Act, and requires the property owner to opt in to be listed for the new survey, Section 36.54.70.

Karen Holman commented that the City has not updated its inventory since it was first established. There are properties that have covenants on them that are not listed on the City's website. The purview of the HRB needs to report and make recommendations directly to staff. The National Register Eligible should be a public meeting so the public can provide input.

City Official Reports

1. Historic Resources Board Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Chief Planning Official Amy French announced a February 23, 2024 meeting intended to replace the regular February 22, 2024 date.

Action Items

Chair Alisa Eagleston-Cieslewicz asked if there were any disclosures from Board Members. There were none.

2. Recommendations on Nominations of Eligible Historic Resources to the City's Historic Resources Inventory Resulting from the 2023 Historic Reconnaissance Survey

Ms. French presented consultant recommendations regarding properties previously found eligible and confirmed to continue to exist and have integrity that were not eligible to the local inventory, and recommendation to Council to place them on the inventory. She explained that there are forty-three properties on the docket comprised of forty-one properties in the original group for January 11, 2024, and two properties postponed by owner request from the December 14, 2023 meeting. Twenty-eight properties were found significant due to association with persons, nine properties were found eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources through individual historic resource evaluations, and four properties are sites of ongoing or previously approved projects. The January 25, 2024 HRB meeting is recommended for the objections received on properties to allow full engagement, reporting, and discussion. The State of California recognizes that consent of the owner is not required for nomination, but a resource cannot be listed over an owner's objections. Ms. French provided an overview of the State Historic Resources Commission (SHRC)'s procedures.

Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz invited comments from the public, with a reminder that there would be a three-minute limit.

Carolyn Godfrey stated that she and her husband have owned the property at 211 Middlefield since 1988, and the home is proposed for the Historic Registry due to its connection with Earl C Thomas, who was a mayor of the City and who lived in the home from 1926 to 1939. She believed that the connection to Mr. Thomas was inadequate to justify placing the home on the historic register, stating that most residents likely do not know who Earl C Thomas is and would not know or care where he lived. The home was crushed by a tree last March, but the home is being rebuilt to look just as it did before. She encouraged the board members to explain the benefits, but then allow them to make the decision.

Susan Dunn, property owner at 509 Coleridge Avenue, stated that the property is proposed for inclusion based on its association with a former president of the Southern Pacific Railroad and its perceived architectural quality. She and her husband love the home and do not intend to make any changes, but they do not believe that they should bind the hands of future owners as to what they need to do. She noted that the nonprofit organization Palo Alto Stanford Heritage help owners of property understand architectural and historical value, and stated that type of voluntary education and preservation is highly commendable. Additionally, the property lot is one hundred by one hundred and fifty acres and could be subdivided into two residential lots even under the current zoning. California's housing initiatives recognize the need for additional housing, and this is an example of where it is not appropriate to bind the hands of future people who might be addressing issues that they consider more important than the historic and aesthetic considerations that the Board is supporting.

Kusum Pandey, homeowner at 1965 Cowper Street, remarked that the entire process was extremely ambiguous and cloudy. She received a note card in the mail from the Planning and Development Services informing about the December 14, 2023 meeting; however, the card itself was postmarked on December 20, 2023, and it landed in her mailbox on December 21, 2023. She believed that as owners, they should not be forced to have their property listed if they disagree. Their primary objection is the lack of clarity regarding clear guidelines and communication of the value to them of being on the registry. Conversely, some property owners see the red tape involved as a burden. Community members love the environment and atmosphere of the City and want to maintain that without being forced to have properties unduly burdened.

Geetha Svikantan, homeowner at 385 Waverley Street, commented that she was also unaware of the process and found out after being alerted by a neighbor. A letter of objection was sent to the City, and she also received a card in the mail for the December meeting the day before the meeting. The process itself seems to be shrouded in ambiguity and not enough notice has been given to the homeowners. She noted that her property was remodeled ten years ago and is no longer the original historic property. The reason

it seems to be on the list is because it was built in 1900 and occupied for a few years by people who worked at Stanford. She felt the advantages were ambiguous and did not believe that including the property on the list was appropriate.

Dianne Jenett, homeowner at 330 Cowper Street, stated that her home has been nominated because it is a significant contribution to Black History in the City of Palo Alto. She was pleased that the City is honoring black history by nominating the home for inclusion. The founding of the AME Zion Church occurred in her home, and she wanted to support black history being told. Within the neighborhood, there are significant other resources that would tell the history of black contributions, such as Fran's Market. She urged the City to step up and take some responsibility for researching and publicly honoring black history, and wanted to know what would be done to ensure people know about what happened in the nominated neighborhoods and the contributions of the families who lived there.

Karen Holman commented that this is a topic that can be divisive, so it is important that the HRB and City Staff pull people together to understand the importance and benefits of having a historic inventory and properties that are exemplary of the history and that express its culture and values. There are lists of benefits regarding floor area ratio and setbacks. Notifications are lacking and need to be corrected. Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)'s are allowed on the same property as a historic property. She spoke of areas that were identified as districts years ago when the survey was done; however, due to the lack of education by the City regarding demolition or demolition alternatives, homes in perfectly good shape that are twenty years old are getting demolished.. The Board's obligation, in her opinion, is to educate individuals on the benefits, purpose, and reason of historic preservation.

Simon Firth, homeowner at 2131 Harvard Street, commented that the home was no longer seen as eligible for the California register for its association with a person, as determined by the new survey, and inquired regarding how to get that communicated to the California Register. It was, however, found eligible for the local register as a Category 3 due to being representative of its time. Mr. Firth pointed out that there are many buildings in the College Terrace neighborhood built by that same builder that are not included in the inventory due to being considered ineligible twenty years ago. He felt that the Historic Resources Board and the City should conduct a more comprehensive and less arbitrary survey and consider what should be protected and what is defined as history prior to having a discussion.

Lydia Callaghan stated that she was one of the many homeowners who have been unfairly impacted by this process and did not receive any notification. She felt the process was a tax on her time and finances. The community is not going to tear down and destroy historic homes. She believed that the effort was very suspiciously close to the state's passing of Senate Bill (SB) 9, which would allow eligible lots to be subdivided. She felt the process would open the City up to litigation and that the HRB should rethink the situation and pass a resolution clarifying that the process is opt-in by owners and that objecting owners are now excused from having to participate.

Ms. French requested that Ms. Callaghan send her an email because the Board is very careful about the notifications and sent certified letters for the December 14, 2023, and January 11, 2024 meetings.

Colleen Braff, homeowner at 939 Forest Avenue, remarked that the home was remodeled ten years ago and she was careful in keeping with a historical style. The porch was removed and replaced exactly how it was with the original windows and original doors. A certified letter was received in December regarding the meeting. She stated that she was leaning toward supporting the process, but more information is needed regarding the benefits and potential burdens involved.

Jerry Smith, homeowner at 162 Bryant Street, expressed objection to placing his home on the historic inventory in a letter to the HRB. He received assurance that the HRB did not intend to apply this designation if the homeowner objected; however, the policy is not yet formalized. Mr. Smith stated that he understood the need for City and State government to ensure that structures are safe, but imposing regulation on his aesthetic preference is egregiously trampling on his private property rights and unfairly costing substantial loss of property value. He suspected that the historic inventory issue may have emerged as a means of limiting the application of SB 9. Selectively targeting the owners of older homes with extra regulation and financial penalties is unfair. The city of Palo Alto government is already a bit too heavy-handed in the difficult balance of weighing the rights of the community against the rights of the individual. Adding regulations that impose the City Council's taste in architecture would be a step in the wrong direction. He

stated that he agreed with Hank Williams when he sang, "If you mind your own business, then you won't be minding mine." He applauded the recommendation of the staff report to affirm that the HRB would not recommend that Council place properties on the local historic inventory over the expressed objections of the property owners and felt that opt-in would be a better solution.

Naji Bekhazi, homeowner at 1570 University Avenue, remarked that he was not consulted by the committee observing the homes. The front of the home is the same but the back of the home and inside have been remodeled.

Ms. French addressed public comments, stating that gutting a home on the inside does not render a property non eligible for a register. Mr. Smith's objection was noted, and the property was not nominated on the November 9, 2023 date. Mr. Firth's property is on the list currently as an objection property. Ms. Svikantan's property was already resolved as an objection property on November 9, 2023. Notice cards were sent to the November 9, 2023 properties instead of certified letters. Properties located at 1965 Cowper Street, 509 Coleridge Avenue, and 211 Middlefield Road are listed as objection properties.

Ms. French presented the first group of ten properties under Criteria 1, six with objections.

Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz invited discussion among the Board members. There was none.

MOTION

Motion by Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz to advance 537 Coleridge Avenue, 2005 Cowper Street, 1215 Emerson Street, and 1511 Madrono Avenue to City Council for consideration for addition to the Palo Alto local register.

Board Member Heinrich commented that the criteria for historic persons was arbitrary and questioned the reasons.

Vice Chair Rohman believed that it followed the National Register or the State criteria for historic persons.

Ms. French remarked that was correct. The properties were identified in the 1997 to 2000 survey.

Consultant Barrett Reiter explained that under the National Register and California Register, there is a criteria for an association with persons. A property having a significant association with the productive life of a person would be eligible for either the National or California Register. These properties were previously found eligible for the National Register for that criteria.

Vice Chair Rohman stated that the National and State Register is seemingly arbitrary. This is an issue that preservationists are currently having conversations about. She expressed support for nominating all proposed properties as they are in line with the State and Federal regulations for the opportunity to represent that multicultural heritage in the City as a step forward on that agenda.

Board Member Willis commented that it is difficult to look back one hundred years and realize that we built on their shoulders. Palo Alto is a very unique place, and we need to look back and look ahead and hopefully a compromise can be found.

Board Member Willis seconded the motion.

Board Member Heinrich commented that she would like to see more education to the public about the benefits before voting on the item. An education process could begin during the February meeting. Her research on the benefits of having a home on the register did not reveal any benefits to an owner while they are living there, not making any changes. Benefits became available when someone starts to remodel their home or applies for an application for renovation. She would like to see this explored more to be able better educate people on it.

Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz remarked that this is an important discussion, but the Board has not agendized a discussion of incentives for the current meeting.

Ms. French noted that Item 3 on the agenda is an opportunity for general discussion, as well as a commentary on the correspondence from the subcommittee that has been published on the web page that has implications being wider than the subcommittee communication. She inquired whether Board Member Heinrich was proposing a substitute motion and stated that some people on the lists are very interested

and have projects waiting for this process to be complete, and holding those individuals back may not be fair. Ms. French asked if Board Member Heinrich was proposing a substitute motion since there was already a motion and a second on the table to move the first group of properties forward. She reminded the Board that the consultants will be with them for the four meetings and they will be finished. They will then move the properties that want to move forward more quickly than those that were objecting. Some who are on the lists are very interested and have projects waiting for this process to be complete.

Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz commented that the HRB does not place anything on the inventory. They simply advance properties to Council. For properties that have been advanced to Council, there is an opportunity for further communication and further objections. The dialogue is not over at today's meeting. Council has already received the majority of properties that have been advanced by the Board, and it is important for Council to see the complete set of properties that are in non-objector status, and she would prefer to continue with this process.

Ms. French added that the HRB reviewed properties on November 9, 2023, and December 14, 2023. Since those meetings, the Board has received objections which are being tracked and would be forwarded. All individuals objecting are invited to attend and provide input during the evening community meeting on potential additional incentives, such as moving forward on a Mills Act, et cetera.

The motion passed(6-1).

Ms. French presented five properties under Criteria 1 and 2 for consideration, with four objections noted.

MOTION

Motion by Board Member Willis to advance 939 Forest Avenue to City Council for consideration for addition to the Palo Alto local register. Seconded by Vice Chair Rohman, the motion carried (7-0).

Ms. French presented three properties under Criteria 1, 2, and 5 for consideration, with one objection noted.

MOTION

Motion by Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz to advance 1407 Hamilton Avenue and 1401 Edgewood Drive to City Council for consideration for addition to the Palo Alto local register. Seconded by Board Member Pease.

MOTION AMENDED

Motion by Board Member Willis to recommend 1407 Hamilton Avenue as a Category 1 and 1401 Edgewood Drive as a Category 2. Seconded by Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz, the motion carried (6-1).

Ms. French presented three private properties under Criterion 2 for consideration two with objections.

Board Member Wimmer recused herself from the item due to the property owners being current clients.

MOTION

Motion by Board Member Willis, that Council place 50 Crescent Drive on the current inventory Category 3 regarding Criterion 2. Seconded by Board Member Pease, the motion carried (5-1-1).

Ms. French presented two properties under Criteria 2, 5, and 6 for consideration, one with objection.

MOTION

Motion by Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz to advance 418 Coleridge Avenue as a Category 1 to City Council for consideration for addition to the Palo Alto local register. Seconded by Board Member Wimmer, the motion carried (6-1).

Ms. French presented two properties under Criteria 2 and 5 for consideration, one with objection.

MOTION

Motion by Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz to advance 1474 Edgewood Drive as a Category 2 resource to City Council for consideration for addition to the Palo Alto local register. Seconded by Vice Chair Rohman, the motion carried (6-1).

Ms. French presented one property under Criteria 1, 2, and 3 for consideration.

MOTION

Motion by Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz to advance 904 Cowper Street as a Category 2 resource to City Council for consideration for addition to the Palo Alto local register. Seconded by Board Member Pease, the motion carried (6-1).

Ms. French presented 330 Cowper, noting that the owner had spoken earlier, having requested postponement from the December 14th meeting in order to do more research under Criterion 1 for consideration.

Board Member Rohman commended the owner for conducting extra research and following up on the matter. She agreed that more can be done to recognize African American and multicultural histories in the City. This is an amazing first step in adding it to the inventory and beginning to even out the landscape of properties that compose the local inventory and the previous owners of significance. She also commended all of the day's speakers for their comments.

Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz also commended the owner, stating that inclusion of history and history of groups that have historically been underrepresented in the narrative matters.

MOTION

Motion by Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz to advance 330 Cowper Street as a Category 2 resource to City Council for consideration for addition to the Palo Alto local register. Seconded by Board Member Wimmer [multiple voices], the motion carried (7-0).

Ms. French announced that the 365 Hawthorne Avenue property under Criteria 3 and 5 was postponed from the December 14, 2023, meeting by owner request. The owner has since registered an objection to the nomination listing and will be skipped until the meeting on the 25th.

Ms. French presented one property under Criteria 1, 5, and 6 for consideration.

MOTION

Motion by Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz to advance 365 Guinda Street as a Category 2 resource to City Council for consideration for addition to the Palo Alto local register. Seconded by Board Member Pease, the motion carried (6-1).

Ms. French presented one property under Criteria 1 and 3 for consideration.

MOTION

Motion by Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz to advance 375 Hawthorne Avenue as a Category 2 resource to City Council for consideration for addition to the Palo Alto local inventory. Seconded by Board Member Pease, the motion carried (6-1).

Ms. French presented three properties under Criterion 2 and 5 for consideration.

MOTION

Motion by Vice Chair Rohman to advance 518-526 Bryant Street, 2340 Tasso Street, and 546 Washington Avenue to City Council for consideration for addition to the Palo Alto local inventory. Seconded by Board Member Wimmer, the motion carried (6-1).

Ms. French presented two properties under Criteria 1,2, and 5 for consideration, one with an objection.

Board Member Willis asked for clarification regarding whether the property at 525 University Avenue was a commercial building.

Ms. French answered yes, the property is in the commercial downtown community zone.

MOTION

Motion by Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz to advance 525 University Avenue as a Category 1 resource to City Council for consideration for addition to the Palo Alto local inventory. Seconded by Board Member Wimmer, the motion carried (7-0).

Ms. French presented two private properties under Criterion 2 for consideration.

MOTION

Motion by Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz to advance 2140 Yale Street as a Category 2 and 885 College Avenue as a Category 3 resource to City Council for consideration for addition to the Palo Alto local inventory. Seconded by Board Member Pease, the motion carried (6-1).

Ms. French noted that an objection was received from the property owner of 1145 Lincoln Avenue and will be skipped. She presented one private property under Criteria 2 and 3 for consideration.

Board Member Willis reminded that the building located at 321 California Avenue is also a commercial building and used to be a Safeway.

MOTION

Motion by Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz to advance 321 California Avenue as a Category 2 resource to City Council for consideration for addition to the Palo Alto local inventory. Seconded by Board Member Wimmer, the motion carried (7-0).

Ms. French presented one private property under Criteria 2 and 5 for consideration.

Board Member Willis commented that she loved the record of everything that had been done to the home over the decades.

MOTION

Motion by Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz to advance 550 Santa Rita Avenue as a Category 2 resource to City Council for consideration for addition to the Palo Alto local inventory. Seconded by Board Member Rohman, the motion carried (6-1).

Ms. French presented one private property under Criterion 3 for consideration.

Board Member Willis remarked that this is one of those places that is kind of normal and mundane but there are not many remaining, so it is important to include properties like this in the inventory.

MOTION

Motion by Board Member Willis to advance 1082 College Avenue as a Category 3 resource to City Council for consideration for addition to the Palo Alto local inventory. Seconded by Board Member Pease, the motion carried (6-1).

Ms. French presented one private property under Criterion 2 for consideration.

MOTION

Motion by Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz to advance 759 Homer Avenue as a Category 3 resource to City Council for consideration for addition to the Palo Alto local inventory. Seconded by Vice Chair Rohman, the motion carried (6-1).

3. Discussion of Expectations in Advance of the January 25, 2024, HRB Meeting Regarding Making Recommendations Following Receipt of Objection Letters

Ms. French explained that staff had a discussion on December 14, 2023. The full board was not present, so it was difficult to anticipate what the Board may choose. The goal is to have the HRB express its intention for January 25, 2024, with regard to the objections properties. Staff recommends that the HRB not move those properties forward to Council if there are objections, and that the HRB can affirm the continuing eligibility of properties for the local inventory.

Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz invited comments from the public.

Marion Odell, homeowner at 482 Everett Avenue, commented that she attended the November meeting and wrote a letter objecting to being on the historic registry and still feels the same way. Reasons included possible impact on salability, added restrictions to permits for changes, and hindering new building. She believed that the City needed new housing on large lots.

Darlene Yaplee referenced a "mistaken email," and remarked that it is a surprise to read a recommendation for HRB to approve the list for the inventory from three members and a likely fourth member – a majority of the HRB. She shared points of concerns about the content in the email. She categorically rejected the proposal for an HRB approval for the Palo Alto inventory if the Council does not act soon. Such a list places residents on an ambiguous list further underscoring concerns of uncertainty and another round of anguish regarding the properties, particularly without an updated ordinance clearly stating that objections are honored or that an opt-in from owners is required. The statutory list and the benefits are not valued or usable for the homeowner or property. She hoped that the February meeting to get ideas for benefits will identify what could be beneficial for homeowners from their perspective. Design consultation is listed as a benefit, but many see this as a negative. Costs to homeowners are not listed, such as building restrictions of historical designation, and are extremely detrimental to the homeowners and property values. Objecting property owners have been remanded to a January 25, 2024 meeting. Many objectors have not provided comments to the HRB. In other cases, individuals have provided general comments, but are reserving their property specific comments for the January 25, 2024 meeting. Making a recommendation now to approve a list of homes prior to the January 25, 2024, meeting is premature and casts doubt on the integrity of the process. She suspected that Palo Alto is not following established best practices from the office of Historical Preservation.

Katherine Clark, homeowner at 555 Center Drive, stated that she would support the proposition that if anyone objected to being listed, that the HRB remove them from the list. She did not want to be listed without knowing the benefits and for now, no benefits have been mentioned for their listing.

Martin Bernstein commented that any regulations and ordinances that any jurisdiction passes will reflect the cultural values of the community, so they will see how strong of a cultural value historic preservation is for the City and the consequential ordinances that get adopted and passed by the Council. Educating the public on the economic and cultural values of historic preservation is essential. One example of financial value is that some of the properties can expand the floor area ratio. It is important that the HRB explain what is being done to promote the benefits and what the City Council is doing to expand the benefits and education is the key.

Lian Bi, homeowner at 380 Coleridge Avenue, remarked that she did not believe that there was any financial benefit to the property; instead, it is a burden to the owners. The home was remodeled and renovated a couple of years ago by the previous owners and is no longer historical. The criteria standard is unclear and the whole process is cloudy.

Bryan Mazlish, homeowner at 951 Hamilton Avenue, noted that he previously filed an objection. Many objectors are seeking clarity and comfort in terms of the process moving forward. He encouraged the board to provide clarity such that owners are not required to participate in the January 25, 2024, meeting or pursue any further obligations in terms of the cost of time, effort and expense in some cases.

Ms. French confirmed that those who spoke about prior objections have been noted and action was not taken, which includes the properties of 380 Coleridge, 951 Hamilton, 555 Center, 482 Everett.

Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz opened the meeting to board discussion. There are two questions - one regarding commenting on the consultant's work and whether all of the properties have been nominated correctly, and a second separate question of what to do with properties that have objections registered and to create some comfort and certainty for those who do not want their properties listed at this time.

Board Member Wimmer believed that this has been a hopeful but somewhat disappointing exercise for some. She said City Council does care and can probably help define better incentives and offer the assurance that the public is seeking. Locations like Pasadena and Oak Grove put preservation first, and many people have pride of ownership, and maybe that is their incentive, more than a financial incentive. She stated that she would like to see the community focus more on the preservation, stewardship and celebration of the history of the City rather than property value. She reiterated that the Board does not

place the properties on any register, but simply recommends them and embraces the opportunity to help preserve them, but not to place hardship upon property owners. She did feel that the City needs to work on making incentives clear.

Board Member Heinrich said she did not object to the list as a whole, but she did object to the process where the owners have to opt-out instead of opt-in to the list.

Board Member Willis added that most individuals understand that they are lucky to have the properties that they have. There is some craftsmanship, spirit, and design that is not in modern life and something reassuring about walking back into an enclosure that has been standing for a long time and speaks to the future being there. There is a benefit way beyond money that many hope to pass on to the next generation or the next owners of the homes. She stated that it is a leap of faith to think that the City is not going to do something that would make it challenging or expensive, but that leap of faith needs to be taken and say that there is some value in preserving these buildings.

Vice Chair Rohman was pleased to have a quorum of the full board in attendance. She stated that she would be voting in alignment with the California Register of Historic Resources and the State process. This may mean that individuals do not need to attend and object in person on the 25th or comments may be submitted ahead of time. She felt that being a part of this process is a responsibility of the homeowner.

Board Member Wimmer remarked that incentives do need to be improved by the Board to make a profoundly positive impact moving forward.

Board Member Pease said the City provided significant benefits to commercial property owners for historic preservation and it is time to consider providing adequate incentives for owners of residential properties that are significant to their history.

Board Member Heinrich agreed that something is needed for residential properties and not just commercial.

Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz commented that further discussion of incentives is necessary. It is something that there is interest in, and the board intends to take up at the February meeting. The community is encouraged to attend and participate at that time. She agreed with the work of the consultants and stated that the list and properties do appear to be eligible and categorized correctly. She pointed out that the properties under discussion were not identified by the Board, but were found to be eligible by others for the State or National Registers. Also, properties on the list are already impacted by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Acknowledging the work of the consultants gives future owners the opportunity to opt into the historic inventory without re-reviewing the property and incurring those costs. She was in favor of aligning their own procedures with those of the State and not recommending properties for inclusion over the expressed objection of the homeowner. While the list is valid and correct, not every property on the list has to be advanced.

Board Member Heinrich inquired about the cost for an individual review of a property for historic preservation.

Ms. French remarked that she did not have that information available, but she could put that in the staff report for the January 25th meeting. The idea is that if an owner came forward individually, as opposed to within the current process, they would incur the cost to bring properties forward to the HRB and then the Council.

Board Member Willis found it interesting to go back through the reports of projects in the works because those reports were much more detailed than the reports funded by the City. The consultants tended to do very thorough job.

Board Member Makinen believed that there is a level of distrust amongst the public and homeowners of historic properties in dealing with the City. One of the causes for this is that the City used to have a historic planner that could interface very effectively with homeowners to address concerns and questions, and that position has been vacant for a long time, and the absence of that point of contact has led to uncertainty and unanswered questions. He stated that he would like to see the City planner position restored.

Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz stated that was a good point. She requested that the motion be separated by two parts.

MOTION

Motion by Vice Chair Rohman that the HRB recognize and agree with the consultant's work, and that the categories presented for each property are appropriate, and that the properties covered in the inventory recommendation are eligible for listing on the local inventory. Seconded by Vice Chair Rohman, the motion carried (7-0).

MOTION

Motion by Vice Chair Rohman that the HRB does not intend to advance properties with registered objections for consideration by Council at this time. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Rohman.

Board Member Heinrich inquired regarding how her belief that the owner should opt in follows the motion.

Ms. French explained that staff's intention and planned protocol is that certified letters would be sent to all owners of properties for which no objections have been received. The Board does not want to move forward in situations where someone has not received the mail or in which staff has not heard from the owner. In that sense, it is an opt-in process because they will talk to every property owner before going to Council. Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz restated her motion per Board Member Wimmer's request as follows: The HRB does not intend to advance properties with registered objections for consideration by Council at this time. Seconded by Vice Chair Rohman, the motion carried (6-1).

Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz addressed public concerns, stating that the board does not intend to advance properties with objections at this time.

Ms. French advised that there will be a staff report for the January 25th meeting that will clarify that this vote occurred. The community is encouraged to attend the meeting, but it is not necessary. Individuals are also encouraged to attend the community meeting on February 23, 2024.

Board Member Willis implored the public to provide input on specifics of similar properties where one was on the list and the other was not.

Board Member Wimmer inquired about the next step and whether the Board should provide a follow-up stating that they are not recommending the properties with objections until they've accomplished certain goals, such as public education, outreach and incentives. After those secondary goals are reached, would they then recommend more of those properties?

Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz explained that Council would have the opportunity to vote on the non-objector properties and for those properties, that is the next step. HRB is signaling that there is no intention to advance any of the objector properties now. Hopefully, the development of incentives can become impactful enough to convince the property owners to no longer object.

Board Member Pease agreed, stating that it helps preserve the investment in the whole process, which has been significant.

Board Member Heinrich stated that she would like to see the Council approve the list, but have the owners opt-in.

Board Member Wimmer said that the subcommittee had hoped to amend the current ordinance to include the wording on the State and National Register to state that no property should be on any historic list or register over the objection of the owner.

Vice Chair Rohman pointed out that is different than an opt-in.

Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz added that opt-in is an affirmative "I want to be on the register," and what the Board is doing is a non-objection.

Vice Chair Rohman added that this is in line with the wording of the State and National Register.

Board Member Wimmer didn't believe they were using that same wording.

Vice Chair Rohman said no, they were not, but the motion they just voted on is affirming the wording of the State, even though it is not in the Palo Alto ordinance.

Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz stated that their ordinance is silent on that. In theory, their ordinance would allow a property to be placed on the inventory over the objections of a homeowner, but the Board is stating that it is not their intention to doing that.

Board Member Wimmer said that it would be nice if it was solidified in the ordinance.

Board Member Pease asked if it would be easier to include that one sentence to the existing ordinance as an amendment rather than revisiting the whole process.

Ms. French explained that the changes to Chapter 16 do not require going to the Planning and Transportation Commission first. Staff might consider a two-part process going to Council with those properties that have not provided objections after multiple certified letters and cards have been sent. Perhaps, there could be an agenda item that states the sentence placement on the Ordinance Chapter 16.49 for the January 25th meeting.

Board Member Wimmer commented that one other item was to revisit the ordinance and to understand its effectiveness, so maybe this could be agendized at the meeting after next and could include the discussion regarding owners' objections.

Vice Chair Rohman supported the suggestion to have the HRB agendize adding the proposed sentence to the ordinance for the next meeting.

Ms. French stated that it is possible as a study session to have that discussion and then a follow-up could be included in the February 23rd community meeting if there was an interest in discussing the ordinance as well as the incentives.

Board Member Wimmer thought the Board should continue to discuss just the incentives and not add to that meeting. But as a follow-up Board meeting they should continue to discuss the ordinance and the effectiveness of the ordinance.

Ms. French advised pushing the ordinance goal item back to a March date.

Board Member Wimmer remarked that maybe Page and Turnbull could help the Board discuss the ordinance because they add another layer of expertise. She also mentioned the four Board members with terms expiring in March.

Ms. French stated that she would reach out to the City Clerk and ask what the timeline is for recruitment and urge recruitment early and often.

Approval of Minutes

4. Approval of Historic Resources Board Draft Minutes of November 9, 2023

Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz asked if there were any corrections or comments for the meeting from November 9, 2023.

Board Member Willis stated that the minutes documented her as being Chair on page 603, fourth paragraph.

Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz told Board Member Heinrich that the minutes do state that she was absent that day.

MOTION

Motion by Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz to approve the meeting minutes for the November 9, 2023 meeting as corrected. Seconded by Board Member Willis, the motion carried (6-0-1).

Board Member Questions, Comments, Announcements or Future Meetings and Agendas

Board Member Willis asked that an attachment be added to prior meeting minutes indicating the specific addresses that had been voted on. Ms. French shared the calendar for upcoming meetings. There was discussion during the meeting in December about potentially canceling the meeting of February 8th due to a lot of input leading up to the meeting of February 23rd. Also, as noted, there will be a lot of business in March following that meeting. The regular February 8th meeting is still being shown.

Chair Alisa Eagleston-Cieslewicz stated that she was in favor of canceling the February 8th meeting.

Board Member Willis disagreed. The meeting could be used to wrap a few things up, to explicitly understand what the process is to add a line to the ordinance regarding owner consent and clarify any incentives that could be brought forward more clearly at the February 23rd meeting.

Ms. French reminded the Board that there was a goal of having one meeting per month and the second meeting of each month could be used for subcommittee members to meet.

Board Member Willis still preferred that the February 8th meeting not be canceled. Board members need to come together and move forward with ideas.

Board Member Heinrich agreed with keeping the February 8th meeting because Board members become more informed with more discussion.

Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz requested that the item be deferred.

Adjournment

Motion by Chair Eagleston-Cieslewicz to adjourn. Seconded by Vice Chair Rohman, the motion carried unanimously, by voice vote.