

Port Orford Historic Preservation Commission

Minutes of Meeting - Friday, January 27, 2023

Commissioners Present: Rick Cook (Chair), Steve Roemen, Maurisa Markstein

Guest: Beverly Bacak

Meeting called to order by Chair Cook at 9:32 am.

1. HPC Commissioners voted by consent to appoint Beverly Bacak as Secretary to the Commission for the purpose of taking notes and creating minutes for all HPC meetings, effective immediately.

2. Old Business: Lindberg House Update: by Commissioner Markstein

Commissioner Markstein reviewed recent history of this treasured historic structure. Significantly damaged by fire in December 2021 rendering it uninhabitable. Red-tagged by Curry County in April 2022, ordering demolition due to public safety issues. Property currently owned by Puget Trust of Washington state (Lindberg descendants). In the fall of 2022, the Trust began dialogue with city seeking the go-ahead to conduct the demolition.

Commissioner Markstein conducted a review of relevant state law and local ordinances to ensure that HPC fulfills any roles and responsibilities required vis a vis the pending demolition. The review revealed that neither the approval of HPC nor the approval of SHPO is required for this demolition, and despite strong desire to save this valued historic structure, there is no way to prevent the demolition. (Information from SHPO came to Chair Cook via 1/16/23 email from Kuri Gill). The only relevant requirement is a demolition permit that is issued by the county. A letter from Chair Cook will be sent to the City Council reporting this information.

Commissioner Markstein consulted with Kuri Gill regarding the importance of obtaining, if possible, a collection of architectural artifacts that could be salvaged during the demolition. Artifacts with important, defining characteristics recommended for salvage include sampling of the various different patterned cedar shingles, the decorative edging along the bottom edge of the Queen Anne cupola, and original bricks from the central chimney. Commissioners agreed to send a letter to the City Council stressing the importance of salvaging historically important artifacts and recommending that the City ask Puget Trust for permission to salvage prior to total demolition. Markstein will draft this letter for review by the full Commission. Draft will be ready for review in the next week.

Discussion occurred regarding possible secured storage for the artifacts. Local building owner Eric Shapiro (Siren's & the Masonic Hall) may be able to offer secured temporary storage and possible long-term display of Lindberg artifacts. Commissioner Markstein will follow up when Shapiro returns to town. Discussion continued regarding HPC long-term goal of developing future museum exhibits, incorporating Lindberg artifacts and the considerable Port Orford collection currently housed at the Coast Guard Museum.

In the face of the loss of this historic treasure, HPC will review Title 17.15, with special attention to the sections regarding demolition of structures that have been named to the Port Orford Landmark Register. Currently the Landmark Registry has no entries.

3. Port Orford Historic Resource Survey: Strong interest expressed by all commissioners in prioritizing the development of the official Port Orford Historic Resource survey. Considerable work has already taken place, including collecting all local history texts and prior surveys done in the past decades, and creating a virtually complete listing of all structures and sites in Port Orford older than 45 years (SHPO requirement). Considerable historic information has been developed for many of these structures including narratives by local regarding their memories.

Discussion continued regarding ultimately making full register available to all on the City website.

SHPO has current Guidelines that must be followed regarding the details of how to create a formal historic resources registry. HPC commissioners will review these guidelines. HPC will request that the City approve request for a 2024 SHPO grant to pay for the professional surveyor to conduct the formal survey for the registry.

4. New Business: Discussion of ways to strengthen interest in local history, sites and structures. Ideas suggested included a public presentation at the library regarding HPC, it's mission, responsibilities, and accomplishments since it's creation in 2012. Presentation could include slides and information regarding the top ten historic treasures of Port Orford, along with information of how property owners can have their property named to the Landmark Register.

Commissioners also discussed recruiting more commissioners, including inviting prospects to attend monthly HPC meetings. Local resident Caroline Robert, owner of the Nygren Hotel/Inn currently undergoing restoration) has expressed interest in joining the Commission.

Also discussed was the finalizing of the Self-Guided History Tour project. This project is near completion, with the final step remaining of contacting owners of properties seeking permission to include their property on the Tour.

Commissioners revisited the idea of creating an official Historic District (discussed several years ago). Commissioners decided to consult with SHPO regarding specifics, including positive and negative aspects of declaring an official Historic District.

6. Meeting adjourned at 11:34 am.

Minutes presented for approval: February 12, 2023 by Commission Secretary, Beverly Bacak.