

Historic Preservation Process
Stakeholders Meeting
Staff Notes
May 1, 2009

Attendees' Expectations:

- Clarity: what is historic, how treat historic buildings (Joe Horwedel)
- Reduce “brain damage”: consistent expectations among stakeholders
- Seeking consensus about historic reports (Akoni Danielsen)
 - Preparation process
 - Conclusions by City/consultant
- Change report requirements; CEQA; Federal; match better (Colin Busby)
- Structure of Merit, conclusion for them & Historic Landmarks
- What does City of San Jose want? Consultant have to interpret City’s outdated historic report guidelines (Ward Hill)
- Certainty: Tally sheets are a problem (Janet Kern)
- Consensus on historic significance (less than Historic Landmarks); and then what it means/certainty
- Clarify criteria and decision-making process for Structures of Merit (Dolores Mellon)
- Increase consensus to change ordinances (Lori Moniz)
- Clarity (Bonnie Bamburg)
- Clarity, consistency (Judy Henderson)
- Cal Register & City of San Jose rating system: any differences?
- Clear and predictable development process – Find common base (e.g. Outreach policy process) (Gerry DeYoung)
- Clarity (Brian Grayson)
- Level playing for all, thru City Council level
- Clarity of what is needed from consultants to meet needs of City of San Jose, clients (Franklin Maggi)
- Streamlining to benefit all
- Consistency; what is needed to provide good services (Leslie Dill)
- Reduce confusion
- Timely and consistent process and criteria (Ray Hashimoto)

- Consistency. Predictability (Doug Jones and Robert Cartier)
- Interaction with applicant (education on scoring, Historic Landmarks Commission, etc): Can Permit Center help?
- Structures of Merit fix. Staff fighting battles for low-level buildings not of importance to community or Council (Erik Schoennauer)

Report Requirements:

- Spectacular interiors need to be recognized (e.g. train stations, theaters, etc.)
- Tally system doesn't deal with "historic landscapes"; what would work?
- Qualitative summary for less than Historic Landmarks status instead of numeric Tally?
- Tally \neq CAL Register (age, integrity).
 - Would something be left out?
 - They are separate
- If the City doesn't use the Tally to determine significance, what is point of the Tally?
- Tally most useful for non-landmarks; level of detail
- Instructions for Tally need to be improved - Others believe Tally questions are good, can be performed without numbers, make judgments first.
- State Department of Parks and Recreation form (DPR) to take that role? State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) does training on DPR; integrity, etc. Define terms used in DPR.
- Continuity with CEQA, common language with CAL Register
- Disagree: City landmarks – harder to meet this – are more special than CAL Register (low threshold)
- Disagree: Cal Register three criteria mutually exclusive; City of San Jose overlapping criteria, not flexible to bring forward City of San Jose resources
- National \approx Cal Register; locally designated \geq Cal Register. Only differences
 - Moved buildings
 - Less than 50 years
- ACTION ITEM: Comparisons: Would resources drop off? (City of San Jose and Cal)
- Consider last dozen Historic Landmarks (perform with "normalization?")
- 50 year reference to understand significance – not absolute number
- Tally gives legal coverage; if dump, how do we make up the gap?
- Normalizing:
 - Consensus
 - Teaching exercise, walk thru tighter w/ staff to bring consensus consistency
 - Annual "normalizing"; benchmark certain resources
 - City's Historic Preservation Officer – also needs to be "normalized", especially with staff changes
 - Reset Tally, if choose to continue with it
- Timely | Surveys | Mid Century Buildings:
 - Best if do city-wide survey so applicants know upfront (or at minimum Downtown, Midtown, etc.)
 - Do reports early in process
 - Well-established context statement, with representational properties (significance issues understood/agreed upon upfront)

- Sector by sector community survey
- Mid-Century Buildings
- Recognize where development is heading, and map, survey those critical buildings that might be considered significant by the community (e.g. KB Homes, Del Monte Cannery)
 - Structures at risk
 - Debate early
- LA historic survey (web)
- Scope:
 - Excellent: Likes interaction with staff
 - Need sample
 - Meet staff at the subject property
 - Talk with staff early
 - Increase continuity so long as doesn't increase cost or time
 - Look at CalTrans model, pre-screening (fee)
 - Before file planning application/pre-lim
- Facts versus Opinion:
 - Professionals apply law to the facts (concern that "opinion" undermines professionalism)
 - Professional judgment
 - Interpretation
 - Conclusion
 - Chronology
 - Separate facts from conclusions? No
 - Prefer to do it in one report combined
 - Peer review may be better if controversial
 - Who is staff to make these conclusions?
 - Benchmarking
 - Recognize political pressures (weak link), and isolate them from benchmarking, Historic Preservation Officer, etc. to maintain integrity and continuity
 - Survey criteria and stick to them
 - Consistent process, scope development. Staff talks to applicant. (Therefore consultants don't educate applicants)
 - Can't just tell if building significant from site visit
 - Keep Administrative Draft just between consultant and staff until conclusion is firm:
 - City of San Jose direct contract?
 - Similar to traffic
 - Recourse for bringing public input before report and conclusion is "cast in concrete"?

Other Issues:

- Who hires the consultants? (Now applicants own the reports)
- Mid-Century Buildings
- Seeking out good projects, connect w/ developers, incentives (tax credits) for sustainable preservation development (need for surveys)