

## Historical Landmarks & Records Advisory Commission

The regular meeting of the Historic Landmarks & Records Commission was held at the Fig Garden Swim and Racquet Club on January 21, 2010.

Members Present: Randy McFarland, Don Shantz, John Baltierra, Roger Taylor, Aileen Bos, Elizabeth Laval, Nancy Enloe, Ethan Kytile, James Kus, David Berkey, Penny Raven, Steve Barile, Bud Olson, Pat Hunter, Janice Stevens, Lou Catallo

Members absent: Susan Pappas

Others Present: Karen Bosch Cobb, Karen Coletti, Bill Secrest Jr., Roy Jimenez, Gary Nipp, Kelly Juhran, Carl Abercrombie, Suzanne Pashayan, Prudence Zalewski, Carol Putnam, Howard Putnam, Pam Wilson, James Wilson II, Glen Richards, Linda Richards, Talbert Simonian, Monica Miller, Jay Locker, David Reuland, Louise Yenovkian, Jeff Roberts, Allison Rodriguez, Henry Perea, Rebecca Lindquist, Fred Dau, Neil Dau, Arlene Motz, Wes Qualls, Mike Biglow, Merilee Amos, Larry Fortune, Frances Morrison Berdinella, Chris Hays Slater, Vernie Ruiz, Nance Espinosa, Monica Balch, Jackie Boyajian, Michael Chen, Harry Donobedian, John Tenney, Vickie Leet, Peggy Abels, Jeannie Stevens, John Downs, Sally Downs, Gene Bos

### Agenda Items

- 1) Chairman Randy McFarland called the meeting to order and explained that a formal public hearing format would be followed for the Old Fig Garden Historic District hearing. He also explained the role of the Commission to the public.
- 2) Welcome: Chairman McFarland welcomed all guests.
- 3) Adoption of Agenda: The agenda was adopted as distributed.
- 4) Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve was made by Commissioner Catallo and second by Commissioner Shantz. The motion carried.
- 5) Comments from the Public-None
- 6) California History & Genealogy Room Acquisitions-Bill Secrest Jr. brought in binders of William S. Chapman, who was a Pioneer in the agriculture and commercial development of Fresno County. A direct descendant of his called Bill Secrest and donated four binders filled with research of Fresno County.
- 7) Records-Karen Bosch Cobb explained that the Commission delegated preliminary review of records. In this case, she stated that it was a routine record and recommended approval of Schedule 1450.04.05. Gary Nipp, County Clerk's Office, and Kelly Juhran, Behavioral Health, were present to answer any questions. Motion to approve was made by Commissioner Barile and seconded by Commissioner Baltierra. The motion carried.

8) Landmarks

a) Courthouse Parks grounds markers/memorial and sculptures- Supervisor Henry Perea gave a presentation on a proposal of a Farmers Market in Courthouse Park. Supervisor Perea explained that along with Supervisor Judy Case's yearlong Fit for Life campaign, they were proposing to have a Farmers Market for healthy eating. The idea was conceived from a visit to the Los Angeles Courthouse Park and Farmers Market. This was a huge success. Commission discussion was on the site of the proposed Farmers Market and its impact on downtown and Courthouse Park. There was talk of different locations for the Market. Parking problems were discussed along with the lack of restroom facilities. Supervisor Perea explained all of the problems present were workable and that the positive would outweigh the negative. In addition, there was concern about the other Farmers Markets that are already in place. It was stated that this Farmers Market would be sensitive to that and plan for a different day of the week. The HLRC Commissioners stated the concern for the monuments, and Supervisor Perea spoke of making sure there would be no damage. There was a motion to endorse a Farmers Market with the promise of no damage to monuments in Courthouse Park. Commissioner Raven motioned for consent and seconded by Commissioner Laval. The motion carried.

b) Inventory of Historic Sites in Fresno County

1) Board of Supervisors approval of Sierra Sky Park Historic District is scheduled for January 26, 2010. All Sierra Sky Park Residents were sent a letter of information on the Board of Supervisor hearing to consider approval of Sierra Sky Park as a Historic District.

2) Approve Historic District Designation for Old Fig Garden District-Public Hearing

Chairman McFarland opened the public hearing to consider the Old Fig Garden application for Historic District 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 gave a staff procedural report on the events leading up to today's hearing, Commission procedures for Historic Districts, notification of property owners, and listed other County historic districts. The application was brought to the Commission by Louise Yenovkian. There is also supplemental information in two binders, which were circulated.

*Louise Yenovkian, 924 Gettysburg, Fresno, CA 93704*

The idea of Old Fig Garden applying for Historic District designation has been considered for years. Louise spoke of working with the City on the 20/25 year growth plan. This plan will cause high-density population on Blackstone. One of the purposes is to preserve Old Fig Garden area from the development, which will be taking place around Old Fig Garden. Designation as a Historic District will help with preservation of the area. Louise also referred to application material available in a binder. She mentioned the 88-year history of Christmas Tree Lane.

Chairman McFarland asked about the boundaries, and Karen Bosch Cobb pointed out that the boundaries are designated on the map included in the application area.

*Jeff Roberts, 1396 W. Herndon Ste. 101, Fresno, CA 93711*

Mr. Roberts questioned if the application was to go before the Board of Supervisors for approval or if this was the first step. Chairman McFarland explained that this is the first step, and that HLRC is an advisory board to the Board of Supervisors, who will make the final decision. Chairman McFarland explained that everyone who received a notice of today's meeting will receive a notice of the Board of Supervisor's hearing. There was a question about whether this was for structures or landscaping or both. Chairman McFarland explained it was both in the of Old Fig Garden District. Randy explained that there are two other districts approved by the Board and that there is one other pending. A historic district recognizes ambience and, rich history on its own. The individual structures may not themselves be historic, but taken as a whole, the landscaping, the neighborhood, appearance, and aesthetics are unique and worthy of consideration for a Historic District. There was a question about trees. Karen Bosch Cobb referred to the information provided in the letter about the establishment of a historic district. Once the ordinance is in place, if individuals want further protection they will be able to apply. Property owners who are requesting a permit to complete work that is allowed "by-right" in this residential area will not be impacted by the historic designation.

*Roy Jimenez, Fresno County Public Planning Commission*

Roy stated that the County is currently working on an ordinance. Specific things can be incorporated as a part of the Historic Ordinance if the neighborhood wishes them. Actions which now trigger a zoning review or change will also trigger a zoning review with a Historic District designation.

*Louise Yenovkian, 924 Gettysburg, Fresno, CA 93704*

Louise stated that this designation would not put any new restraints on any of the homeowners for home improvements. Particular homes are not designated as historic. This is an overlay of protection for the district. There was a question about restrictions from the Fig Garden Homeowners Association. Louise answered that this is governed by code enforcement.

*Nance Espinosa, 4655 N. Vagedes, Fresno, CA 93705*

Nance asked about the trees and whether this would have any impact on cutting them down. Roy Jimenez stated that the County had no jurisdiction over trees. Chairman McFarland pointed out that the County's zoning ordinance is not as restrictive nor is the County's ordinance on historic matters as restrictive as in some cities. If citizens want more restrictive things in the historic ordinance, they should see Roy and be engaged in the future public hearing process for the zoning ordinance.

*Mike Biglow, 1132 E. Sierra Madre, Fresno, CA 93704*

Mike pointed out an original brochure designated trees for the district. Some information on trees are a part of the application. Mike suggested it would be good to include the entire booklet.

*Birdie Rogers, 49752 Ralston, Friant, CA 93626*

She questioned the advantages and the disadvantages of being on the Historical District list.

*Chairman McFarland*

Chairman McFarland explained that Fresno County has not done the best job of preserving our past. The Landmarks list has over 200 sites. There are probably that many more which are not on the list. The County also has a list of Centennial Businesses and Centennial Farms. The City of Fresno has a historic preservation zone and strict standards. The Commission was glad to receive this application because of the large unique area with so much surviving architecture and plantings. The recognition will help in some way with preservation, and it is an honor to the area to be so designated.

*Commissioner Laval*

Commissioner Laval pointed out that this provides a layer of protection and recognition for the district without the restrictions. This is one more stopgap to leave the area the way it is now.

*Talbot Simonian, 849 E. Ashlan, Fresno, CA 93704*

Mr. Simonian questioned about four-lane expansion on Ashlan Ave. It was stated that the Commission could not offer protection from that, but it could help. .

*Chairman McFarland*

Chairman McFarland remind those present that the Commission recommends the historic designation to the Board of Supervisors. This could offer protection from annexation to the City as an environmental factor in the CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) findings.

*Jeannie Stevens, Engineer*

Jeannie explained the protection that it would provide and that it would have to come in under a Community Impact Assessment, which provides environmental documents. It also adds another layer of protection in the environmental area.

*Harry Donobedian, 725 E. Buckingham, Fresno 93704*

Mr. Donobedian questioned how many historical districts the County had.

*Chairman McFarland*

Chairman McFarland spoke of Squaw Leap Historic District and the other is Baker Valley which is the mining district. There is one pending which is Sierra Sky Park. The Old Fig Garden District is unusual due to the fact it is a County island surrounded by the City.

*Harry Donobedian, 725 E. Buckingham, Fresno 93704*

Mr. Donobedian wanted to know how many historical districts in the City.

*Commissioner Taylor*

Commissioner Taylor stated there were only two in the City: the College Tract, and the Tower District. There were questions about Fresno High neighborhood.

*Jeff Roberts, 1396 W. Herndon Ste. 101, Fresno, CA 93711*

Mr. Roberts questioned whether the formation of the district is a CEQA event. Chairman McFarland answered that it does not trigger a CEQA action on its own.

*Arleen Motts, 4461 N. Thorne, Fresno, CA 93704*

Mrs. Motts asked if there are any financial considerations for residents.

*Chairman McFarland*

Chairman McFarland stated that he was not aware of any, and that he has been on the Commission thirty years, and he has never heard of any financial impact on anything designated.

*Mike Biglow, 1132 E. Sierra Madre, Fresno, CA 93704*

Mr. Biglow asked about the map and which boundary line was being used. The dark gray area is what is under consideration. Mr. Biglow asked if this matches the Fig Garden Neighborhood Plan and the Bullard Community Plan of the Fresno County General Plan and stated that those do not include commercial frontage Shaw or Blackstone. Mr. Biglow said it looks like commercial frontage is included on the map. Mr. Biglow stated that this should be clarified and the boundaries should be the same.

*Commissioner Kus*

Commissioner Kus states that the application excludes commercial zones on Shaw. (See application Item #2, last line.)

*Barnell Keller, 4610 N. Vagedes, Fresno, CA 93705*

Mrs. Keller is very excited about the designation. Her main concern is about restrictions and said that it sounds like this is not the case. Her next consideration is the unique nature of some homes in the area and that there not be a restriction about what can be built in terms of design. Chairman McFarland said this was not the intent of the application. This is a recognition of the historic nature of the district. Mrs. Keller if this would help prevent annexation. Chairman McFarland explained that is not a consideration for the Commission, but this could be a consideration. An audience member commented that annexation has to go before the voters.

*Roy Jimenez, Fresno County Public Planning Commission*

Mr. Jimenez explained that the County is working on specific guidelines for a historic ordinance

*Louise Yenovkian, 924 Gettysburg, Fresno, CA 93704*

Louise spoke of a verbal commitment from the City that they do not have intent to annex Fig Garden and that it cannot be annexed without a vote. Anyone can take out a tree by going to the County and getting a permit. She pointed out that this historic application does not have anything to do with legalities of what the Old Fig Garden residence can or cannot do. Louise spoke of a number of reasons for the application, including Christmas Tree Lane, proposed high density on Blackstone, traffic calming on Ashlan, and trail development.

*Glenda Hallstone, 4040 N. Wilson, Fresno, CA 93704*

Mrs. Hallstone pointed out that designation as a historic district could only be good for property value.

*Chairman McFarland*

Chairman McFarland closed the public portion of the hearing and asked for comments from Commissioners.

*Commissioner Kus*

Commissioner Kus made a correction on page 2 of application that 1950 sq. acres = 3 miles not 6 miles.

*Karen Bosch Cobb, HLRC Secretary*

Karen asked that a motion refer to the legal description.

*Commissioner Taylor*

Commissioner Taylor requested more complete application information on items, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13. These items need to be more specific: the dates of construction, grading, and building. Also, list all known architects and builders and be more specific on typical lot sizes and the range of conditions of homes in Old Fig Garden. Commissioner Taylor offered to go over application with Louise Yenovkian. He referred to a survey which has done by the Association.

*Chairman McFarland* reopened the hearing and asked for comments from Louise about adding additional information. Louise clarified several issues and offered to provide other information.

*Karen Bosch Cobb, HLRC Secretary*

Karen asked how changes would be incorporated without an additional meeting and notification. It was agreed that an additional meeting was not needed.

*Commissioner Bud Olson*

Commissioner Olson motioned to approve application including changes from Commissioner Taylor and that changes be inclusive (as requested by Commissioner Catallo) and be sent to Board of Supervisors for acceptance. Commissioner Baltierra seconded the motion.

- 3) Suggestions for other applications-Commissioner Enloe spoke of Masonic buildings. National Hardware was also mentioned.
  - c) Centennial Farms-Commissioner Shantz spoke of the Lenoche Farms, located on American Ave. Off of McCall.
  - d) Centennial Businesses-None
  - e) Centennial Communities- Review is done every January; there are no new Centennial Communities.
  - f) Centennial Schools-Discussed establishment of the program. Commissioner Pappas was present at meeting.
  - g) Discussion of threatened buildings in the City of Fresno-None
  - h) Discussion of threatened buildings in the County of Fresno-Commissioner Shantz spoke of Kingsburg Depot and passed around restoration pictures.
- 9) Reports and Administrative Action Items

- a) Chairman’s Report-Commissioner Barile will be working on the Big Creek Project
- b) Vice-Chairman’s Report-Commissioner Taylor said Del Rey is moving along. He met with Mr. Penley’s daughter over the Thanksgiving holiday. The Gefvert Ranch was going to be approved by Historical Preservation Commission on January 29, 2010. There was a new owner of the Mayflower Hotel on the corner of Broadway and Tuolumne. The missing plaque at Fresno City College was found and just had been relocated.
- c) Secretary’s Report-Chairman McFarland announced Karen Bosch Cobb’s retirement. The Centennial Event of 100 years for The Fresno County Library was announced. The event is on March 12, 2010 at the Fresno County Library located at 2420 Mariposa Street.
  - 1) Attendance Report-None
  - 2) Status of Vacancies
    - a) All Vacancies filled
  - 3) Location of future meetings-Pop Laval Studio for Karen Bosch Cobb’s retirement and next meeting. Spoke of going to dinner afterward in celebration of Karen’s retirement
- d) Commissioners Report- Chairman McFarland spoke of Centennial for Fowler. Commissioner Baltierra shared postcards of Firebaugh. Commissioner Laval spoke of the future of the Fresno Metropolitan Museum. Commissioner Enloe is looking for Masonic information. Commissioner Kus mentioned his trip to Easter Island. Commissioner Catallo passed out Clovis Centennial pens. Commissioner Stevens and Commissioner Hunter will have a book out about the California Missions in June.

10) Announcements-

Future Meetings-2010		
March 18, 2010	4 p.m.	Pop Laval Studio
May 20, 2010	4 p.m.	Commercial Transfer
September 16, 2010	4 p.m.	
November 18, 2010	4 p.m.	