



Historic Resources Board

Staff Report (ID # 14105)

Report Type: Approval of Minutes **Meeting Date:** 3/10/2022

Summary Title: HRB Draft Minutes January 27, 2022

Title: Approval of Historic Resources Board Draft Minutes of January 27, 2022

From: Jonathan Lait

Recommendation

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

Background

Attached are minutes for the following meeting(s):

- January 27, 2022

Attachments:

- Attachment A: HRB Draft Minutes January 27, 2022 (DOCX)



HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD MEETING

MINUTES: January 27, 2022

Virtual Teleconference Meeting
8:30 A.M.

Call to Order/Roll Call

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

Absent:

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

MOTION

Board Member Bower moved to adopt the Resolution, seconded by Board Member Heinrich, the motion carried, 7-0, by roll call vote.

Oral Communications

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

City Official Reports

2. Historic Resources Board Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Ms. French suggested this item could be moved to the end, following the agenda review. Chair Willis concurred.

Action Items

3. Historic Resources Board Retreat: Topics Include Discussion of Work Plan Related to Existing Historic Resources Inventory and 1998-2000 Historic Survey

Ms. French presented the agenda for the retreat, introducing consultant, Christina Dikas. The retreat would be in two parts, one, a roundtable on inventory and the inventory update process. Part 2 would be a discussion of the existing work plan for 2021 which Council received last June, and the upcoming work plan due to Council in April of 2022. If time permitted, there would be a brief showing of the Preservation webpages, which help to make sure that the public is aware of all the resources available.

The retreat began with member introductions. Chair Willis shared that she thinks it is good to consider why they are there once in a while. She grew up and went to school on the East Coast, and moved to Palo Alto in her 30's. She said it took her awhile to appreciate the history in the city. In time, she became part of the first group of docents for PAST Heritage, and she discovered that it was fun learning about Professorville, Downtown, and the beginnings of the utilities being a City-owned municipality. She thinks Palo Alto, from its earliest conception, was very unusual, and people looked at things differently. She felt this helps explain why they have struggled sometimes to change their path and why Palo Alto is such a special place. She feels strongly that it is valuable to preserve their historic places.

Board Member Bower said he lived in Palo Alto for 70 years. Since moving to San Mateo he is no longer a Palo Alto resident, but he grew up with the Palo Alto history as it was both being developed and being removed. His interest was sparked by his early training as a carpenter in San Francisco, restoring Victorian houses. He owned a house with his daughter in the Liberty Hill Historic District and worked on many houses in Palo Alto as a general contractor. He developed an appreciation and understanding of

how to renovate and repair historic properties and how valuable it is to have those buildings as part of the community, because they are their history, and once it's gone, it's gone forever.

Board Member Wimmer said it is vital to communities to retain the historic feeling. She concurred that this is what gives Palo Alto its character and its charm, and also a real feeling of presence. She shared that she attended college in Arizona, where communities are relatively new, so every subdivision is basically a cookie cutter repeat of cheap building design put up by developers. While in college, she had the opportunity to work at Taliesin West, at the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation. Being in that environment, so different and unlike any other structure, set in place a love for things that are old. She shared that moving to Palo Alto and starting to work on design and renovation of older homes she was also impressed by the fact that it cannot be replaced or even emulated in character, feeling and quality of construction, because the materials just don't exist. She felt it is important to preserve and restore, even where it is easier now to rip out the old things and put new ones in. She feels the secret to preservation is having homeowners that understand and respect the history of a property and are willing to preserve it.

Board Member Pease said whether it is a culture or a nation-state, he feels that even at a community level history is what allows people to coalesce and have cohesion. He prefers the "real deal" in reality, but in the absence of that he can appreciate the historic record as well. It's not the same, but it's better than nothing. He said after hearing previous comments, it is hard to articulate much more value.

Board Member Makinen shared that his career started in 1997, when he came to Palo Alto as a job transfer from another NASA center in Cleveland, Ohio. He was offered the job of Chief of the Planning Office at NASA Ames, dealing with newly-acquired Navy historic properties such as the Shenandoah Historic Plaza, and given the task of deciding what to do with them. NASA was given stewardship of the Navy's properties, and he became interested in adaptive reuse possibilities, which was a gold mine in terms of reusing some of the properties. They established Carnegie Mellon and some of the buildings there and restored many derelict building that he thought would never see the light of day. This led to the reuse and preservation of the three hangars at Moffett Field, which involved a lot of work with the State Historic Preservation Office, crafting agreements that would be enforceable by law on how properties are treated. His work included development of adaptive reuse guidelines for all of the buildings in the Shenandoah Plaza Historic District. Ms. Makinen became Dennis Backlund's replacement on the Board around 1998, and has continued on the Board much longer than he ever anticipated. He said it has been an enjoyable ride, although he thinks he is on his last term and will be termed out shortly. He hoped to bring some of his experience and knowledge of adaptive reuse in putting older structures into modern use and still preserving the historic integrity of the buildings. He said he is not a historian by training, but as a mechanical engineer, at some point he was converted into a historic preservation officer.

Board Member Heinrich shared that she is an architect and grew up in Redwood City. She knows Palo Alto and the entire Peninsula quite well. She attended UC Berkley. Although she hasn't left the Bay Area for very long, she did a five-year in stint in Denver, Colorado. Her early career started in Palo Alto with John Lloyd Architects, John Cole Architect, Sigrid Rupp Architect and Gentry [phonetic] and Associates. The majority of her career has been as a project manager at the San Francisco International Airport. She has always been interested in Palo Alto and its residences, so when the opportunity came up about ten years ago, she served on the initial Professorville Guidelines Committee, helping categorize them and writing up some of the guidelines, which have since been changed and adapted. She is happy to have been a part of that. She feels Palo Alto a very charming city, and it is important to keep the history of it. She said growing up in Redwood City was a big contrast, because she grew up on nurseries, in agricultural districts. Observing how different types of housing sprouted up, she thinks it is nice to see if they can keep some of the older structures.

Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz shared her background. Growing up in Palo Alto, she graduated from Gunn High School and attended Stanford. She felt like she grew up with the history of the area and always enjoyed it. She now works in historic preservation as her day job as an art conservator. She works with the conservation of three dimensional objects and is the conservator for SFO Museum, and works at San Francisco International Airport. She has also worked at the De Young Museum, the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She completed graduate work in New York City, and had the opportunity there to experience the historic resources on the East Coast as well. She holds an MBA from UC Berkley, recently moved back to Palo Alto, and is enjoying being back. She said she lives in a Category 2 home, so she is having that experience as well. She agreed with previous comments about the importance of preserving historic resources and said the original has things to show

and teach us that can't necessarily be substituted. It is something that enhances not only our understanding of the past, but also our life now. She looked forward to meeting her fellow Board members.

Next on the agenda, Ms. French broached the first topic, which was inventory, the 511 properties on the master list for the city of Palo Alto. The properties are listed on the City's webpage and were updated in 2012. The list needs to be updated. Based on a quick look, she said category 3 and 4 properties, which are not protected by the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance outside of Professorville and Ramona Historic Districts or Downtown, make up not quite half of those on the list. She said one thing the Board needs to do is update the master list on the webpage to note the absence or demolition of the Juana Briones home, which occurred after 2012, as well as some category 3 and 4 homes that have been demolished. There have also been some of the homes demolished by fire or neglect. Other needs for updates to the inventory include upgrades to properties that were category 3 properties that are now category 2 properties as a result of Council action and HRB support. Ms. French noted that this is a 1978 survey, so there may be properties that no longer fit the categories they are in. She explained that there is a section of the Preservation Ordinance that provides the roadmap to updating the inventory or designating properties as historic resources. In this process, the owners are typically the ones that would reach out and submit the required documents, and then the Historic Resources Board would make a recommendation, after which it can be on the Council's Consent calendar to approve the nomination and recommendation of the Board to add a property to the inventory. Ms. French shared the criteria for designation to the inventory appearing in the Code.

Ms. French talked about the next steps for elevation of any properties to the inventory, or districts. The 1998 to 2000 survey identified potential districts, which the City has never taken up as a project, so one thing the HRB talks about each year is the availability of grants from the Office of Historic Preservation, for which they can submit an application. However, this requires City funding and resources that have not been identified. She said the Council noted in December that they would like to understand what is needed to update the inventory, so providing that information to them is a necessary step so that they could authorize funding and resources for it. Aside from that, a project led by Chair Willis has begun to verify the existence of those properties in the 1998 survey as National Register-eligible. Attachment A in the agenda packet showed the progress on this thus far, and there have been some demolitions off that list.

Ms. French said the work plan is an important aspect of the project. The current work plan for the HRB does not include implementation of this Comprehensive Plan program, which was established at the end of 2017. The program would place the National Register eligible properties on the City's local inventory. To begin this process would require identifying it as a priority from the Council, getting it on a work plan obtaining the resources for it. One aspect of such a project would be to do outreach to property owners regarding their eligible properties. There are the 165, of which approximately 11 have been demolished according to Chair Willis' research. There are an additional 16 or more California Register-eligible properties that staff has studied on a case-by-case basis.

Chair Willis inquired about the process for taking a building off of the list if it has been demolished. Ms. French did not believe that was enumerated in the Code, although it should be removed. Chair Willis also asked roughly the size of the state grants that are available. Ms. French thought that it depended on the project. The state doles out funding every year based on the grant applications. Ms. Dikas thought that grants often range between \$25,000 to \$50,000, which is often not quite enough to cover the full project, so then the City could do some sort of matching program to supplement what is provided.

Ms. French said this was done previously for the Professorville Guidelines that Page and Turnbull helped with. The City contributed in-kind staff services as well to supplement the grant from the OHP (Office of Historic Preservation). Chair Willis said she felt they were short-staffed and that they could use more support from the City in general. She felt good about the way the inventory survey was going, but said she didn't really have a plan for outreach and would love for the Board to come up with one. However, she said the piece she feels is really missing is the mapping. She has found that if a property is in a district 3 or 4 – many of which were probably originally 1 and 2's – they can't protect them. She didn't understand why they were not at least reviewing them, other than probably time and staffing issues. She felt it would be best to have a district, and if they could put all of their inventory on the map with their

National Register-eligible properties, it would give a strong sense of which districts might be the strongest and have the most intact story.

Board Member Bower commented that in reviewing the list of properties, a couple popped out at him, such as 567 Hale, which he said was Debbie Shepherd's house, and 1023 Forest. Both are houses that seem eligible, but are not 3's and 4's. He wondered if the list in the packet was only 3's and 4's. Chair Willis said the list she worked from is only the properties that are not on the inventory. The list in the packet are all those that were identified roughly 20 years ago as eligible for the National Register. Regarding the question of how to reach out to homeowners, Board Member Bower asked Ms. French for a reminder of the incentives for being listed. Ms. French replied that there are a number of incentives which can be found on the webpage. With floor area ratio, a home improvement exception process acknowledges the value of retaining the existing home by "giving away" floor area above the maximum that would apply for non-historic homes. This incentive applies to categories 1 through 4. There are other incentives, such as a subdivision incentive for historic preservation. A number of properties have subdivided, where there are two existing homes, one of which is historic, and they have subdivided the property where a flag lot is otherwise not allowed by the Zoning Code and Subdivision Ordinance. Other incentives include being able to use the Historic Building Code to be exempted from current California Building Code requirements if they are historic. In Downtown, there is the area where a commercial building can achieve this with historic rehabilitation. A number of projects took advantage of that program. In the past, the transferable development rights came with parking spaces, and that was done away with, so it became less of an incentive at that point, but there have been a number of projects that used the TDR in the Downtown.

Chair Willis felt that it would be good to separate the incentives out by categories, such as who they are available to, such as Downtown or commercial. They could have a category for all of the inventory buildings, a category that is for 1 and 2's, et cetera. She also felt they should start working on how to publicize the incentives and suggested perhaps getting PAST or the Historic Association to do a meeting with them where they could share these things and get ideas from them on how to get that information out to the community.

Board Member Bower thought that there were also some advantages for historic properties regarding nonconforming placement as well. He said many people are afraid of historic designations thinking that it will limit the value of their property. The value is a major driver in terms of how property is developed anywhere in the Bay Area and has to be offset by the advantages of not demolishing and building back bigger, with more units, on a property. This is another thing that the ordinance does not address.

Board Member Makinen shared a couple ideas. He felt they could mount a marketing program to the public that tells them what the advantages are of historic preservation. He agreed with Board Member Bower's assessment that people view it as a detriment to their home values. He felt they needed an aggressive marketing program, similar to what is done in Pasadena through Pasadena Heritage, as that has been very successful in convincing the general public that there is a place for historic preservation that will provide value to their own properties, and not encumbrances on what they can and cannot do. Many see historic designation as a roadblock which will cause them grief with regulations.

Chair Willis agreed and said its time to stress the positive side and be talking about it in the community. She remarked that it was a conversation that went poorly 20 years ago, and no one has really been excited about it since. She suggested reaching out to Bill Johnson and local sources to get some help with promoting the conversation.

Board Member Makinen concurred that they need someone skilled in marketing to put a package together that makes sense to the general public.

Chair Willis requested to let her know of any suggestions on someone who could do that. She also thought if they went to the Historic Association and PAST Heritage that they might be able to find a marketing guru.

Board Member Wimmer said regarding incentives such as floor area bonus, they come into play when someone wants to remodel or alter their house. When a homeowner wants to do some kind of alteration or remodel, that the designation of potentially eligible triggers them to have to do a historic evaluation.

Chair Willis clarified that the list is not the ones that are potentially eligible. They are houses that when they were surveyed were eligible for the National Register. There is another list that is potentially eligible.

They are just asking for the eligible houses to go on their inventory. She thought the big decision would be is which category they are. There are more advantages to being a 1 or 2. She said she started out just calling them all category 4, but now is thinking that they are not just State-eligible but are National Register-eligible, so there is some advantage of putting them all on as 2's unless they're obviously 1's.

Board Member Wimmer said her question is what the process is to go from their current status to being on the register status. Ms. French said it is in the Chapter 16.49 Historic Preservation Ordinance what is needed to put any property on the City's local inventory. It requires an application and requires the Historic Resources Board recommendation and Council action. Council can approve nominations and place them on the inventory on Consent calendar and doesn't have to have a public hearing on the matter.

Chair Willis said in the most streamlined case they could nominate properties where research and documentation has been done. They would need to notice it in a newspaper, and it could go to Council. She wondered if this would be the quickest scenario. Board Member Wimmer wondered if the property owner would have to be involved in this.

Ms. French explained that anybody can nominate, but the Council would not place a property on the inventory against an owner's objections. She thought an important thing with a marketing campaign would be to help people understand that they still have jurisdiction over the interior of their home. Any remodeling inside a home is not subject to review for historic, Secretary of Interior standards of compliance. They are only talking about the exterior of the home. Also, staff is constantly needing to let people know that they can add on to a historic home. It does have to be compatible with Secretary of Interior Standards, so many times they add on to the back of the home, because the character-defining features are often more on the front of the home. Ms. French said they talk with Ms. Dikas often about such things because they do have remodels and exterior additions to category 3 and 4 homes, and as long as they are compliant with Secretary of Interior standards they are fine to modify. It does not change their designation on the inventory to add on. She said there is misinformation out there, and people think that once on the category 1 through 4 list, they can't touch the inside or the outside, which is not true.

The question was asked if there is a fee required of a property owner who is open to being listed, and if it would disincentive participation. Ms. French said there is a flat fee, but she thought it was on the lower end. She said their consultant can work with staff on these things. If they were to take the whole list of National Register-eligible homes and place them on the inventory, it would be unfunded work, and they are not resourced to do that.

Regarding outreach or marketing, Board Member Pease commented on the objections and misinformation that exists. He thought they needed to think about who the audience is and who they are trying to persuade. There is a big difference between an owner/occupier of a historic property, versus someone who is a small landlord with two or three properties that they rent out, some of which may be historic-qualified, versus a commercial landlord who has multiple units. The mix of incentives and disincentives he felt would be different for each of those categories. In thinking of how they might get started, he said there is a lot of good information and questions, but some of it might need to be tested out in terms of how much effort is involved, how effective it is, and what the cost of actually doing it is. He thought that they need to create an environment where the Board or somebody can approach owners, and the owners can feel open to considering it.

Chair Willis offered a suggestion of sending out a blanket letter to the 150 or so people left on the National Register-eligible property list and just asking if they are interested in being on the inventory. She thought the feedback would give them a lot of information, and it might be a place to start. She added that they do need to address the fees. She said there is a community benefit to having an inventory, and being on the inventory provides advantages to more than the homeowners, and is primarily an advantage to the community. Many properties turn over and have multiple owners, but it only takes one owner to get rid of it. She felt they should not take people off of the list, but should go for the low-hanging fruit first and make it as low as possible. She asked Ms. French to let them know if they need to find funding for the fees, because she did not want to ask property owners for anything except permission to be on the inventory, for all the best reasons.

Board Member Bower said the elephant in the room was the fact that there is not a single Eichler house included in the list, that he could see, and there are between 2,500 to 2,700 Eichler houses in Palo Alto, the largest group of Eichlers anywhere in the world, and they were not even addressing that. He said all

of those houses now qualify because they are between 50 and 70 years old. He offered the idea of figuring out the program for those houses on the list, and then being able to ramp it up to all of the qualifying houses which they have not even inventoried yet.

Chair Willis had thought about having Eichlers as an historic district, and that it would give them some degree of protection, but there are not a lot of incentives. She reiterated that incentives need to be divided up into categories of who they apply to when going through the list. She is trying to move that project up in her head as something to look at sooner rather than later, identifying which incentives apply to which properties, and that could possibly go along with their mapping.

Ms. French said in regard to the Eichler conversation and other properties over 50 years old that they did not show up in the survey of 1998, because they weren't 50 years old at that time, and she thought that could be another conversation for another day. Regarding a way to waive the fees, she said the Council can waive fees, per the Code. It would take a request to Council. Chair Willis thought a memo to Council was definitely appropriate and that she would like this to be their goal for the day, their first step. Ms. French offered a reminder that the work plan is the vehicle to alert the Council, and currently this is not on the 2021 work plan. She said the Board could discuss the 2022 work plan during the second part of the retreat, which is due to the Council in April. Chair Willis wondered if they could ask to amend the 2021 work plan, so that they could get some support before the summer. Ms. French responded that last year the Council asked for the work plans in June, but this year they are asking for them in April, and it is already 2022, so she felt it was more appropriate to focus on the 2022 work plan, which would be discussed later in the meeting.

Board Member Pease reflected that they were all agreeing on outreach of some kind. They just didn't know how it would be paid for or how to do it, so he hoped that they continue that discussion before moving on. They had started to confirm the list, and it seemed to him like that was low enough hanging fruit. He suggested, for example, if they decided to look at people who are owner/occupiers of houses that are qualified, he would start out by going to people who have already done it and asking for testimonials about why they wanted to do it, so that they could convey that others have done it with no harm to them, and there were reasons why they did it, convey this to potential homeowners who might participate. He advocated some basic ideas of how it would work and what the incentives are; what it means and what it doesn't mean.

Chair Willis said she can't think of any individual who has come forward to say that they want to put their house on the inventory. Board Member Pease asked if there were any examples out there in the last ten years of people who have approached the City and done this proactively.

Ms. French said there were not. There were some cases of commercial properties in the Downtown that requested to upgrade categories to take advantage of the incentives and also to beautify a building that was in transition from one tenant to the next, such as the Toy and Sport World on Waverley. She said that is an example of a project that was noticed by PAST and given an award. She said it was nice to have an award program. She said she could think of some that were category upgrades or removal from the inventory for some homes that have fallen into severe disrepair.

Board Member Pease asked for clarification that there were no examples of residences since the inventory was taken in 1998 or 2000, of people who approached the City or otherwise brought their property into some list. Chair Willis thought the issue was that when the inventory was initially done it was a City project. The City identified the properties, and she didn't think most people think of it as something to go ask for. They feel that they are either designated or not designated in some regard, relying on the Board to tell them that they do have a valued property that the Board would like to have on their inventory. She didn't think it occurs to people to proactively ask to be put on the inventory.

Board Member Makinen said it might be of some benefit to conduct a survey of the public in the city of Palo Alto to see what their feelings are on some of these topics and get some guidance on what direction they're going, or if they're following the wrong road in trying to implement some of these programs. He thought they should try to get an idea of what the public thinks, maybe through a survey.

Board Member Bower agreed but said it was a broad net to cast and that it would have to be narrowed down. He thought before going out to promote an idea, they should get some idea beyond anecdotal experience that people are scared of a historic designation because they think it will adversely affect the economics of their most important and largest person asset. Board Member Makinen said that is the feeling he gets when he has talked to people. He thought they could do a more selective survey. Board

Member Bower agreed on making it more selective, as well as testing it. Since their resources are modest, he said he would rather ask Council for a modest amount of money to do something to prove a concept than to put a big plan in place that they may not be able to defend with any facts.

Board Member Wimmer suggested coming up with a mailing list of people who are on the inventory. She said Stanford Heritage does this with a newsletter to their members, but she suggested making their own “club,” consisting of people who are on the list and put out a newsletter coming from the HRB, from the City of Palo Alto that says, “Hey, you’re on the list. Your house is valuable to us,” and start a dialogue about how lucky they are to have this amazing resource, to convey that the Board wants to be in contact with them and are available to anyone who has questions. She thought could be an invitation of sorts that brings it to their attention, because people don’t think about the designation of their house or the age of their house while they’re busy with their lives. The newsletter could start small, from their own Xerox copiers, and maybe it could grow into something. She said she could even envision them saying, “You’re invited to come to City Hall for a question-and-answer period about what it’s like to have a historic house, and start creating a community of people where they can talk to each other. When COVID ends, even five people showing would be a success and something to build on.

Board Member Wimmer acknowledged that she is good about coming up with ideas that are hard to execute. She was also thinking about the problem of funding and the fact that they have no money. She said she would love the idea of having a home tour. She has one in her neighborhood, the Rose Garden neighborhood, and every year they have a home tour, and thousands of people pay money to go on the tour, which benefits a Catholic school in the area. She said people want to see these houses. She said it’s cute and sweet, and people decorate and it’s adorable. The people raised significant funds on the home tour every year. She admitted it would take a committee and an effort beyond the Board’s means, but she thought a Palo Alto historic home tour with people who are willing to put their homes on the tour might be a great idea.

Several Board members voiced that they liked the idea. Chair Willis brought up the PAST house tours, and said she has been on some good ones but didn’t know if they had done it recently. Board Member Bower said the pandemic has not helped, because they could not be together, but at their last meeting, PAST did review the tours, and they are going to start back up in the fall. There are six or seven now that are pretty well established. They’re not all offered every year. He also related an experience that PAST had last year when they received a “cease and desist” letter from an attorney demanding that their client’s house be removed from PAST’s website and any information suggesting it was historic be taken down, or PAST would be sued. They were shocked to have someone feel that strongly. He said they took it down, but it was astounding how threatening and angry they were, but said it is part of what they will have to deal with, the misinformation and frightening consequences, according to some homeowners, of being designated historic. He said when they did the Eichler design guidelines there was an Eichler homeowner who went to the Council and was vehement about not creating a district, not doing anything, because it would ruin his property values. He sent emails afterwards, telling him how wrong they were to say that historic designation increases value.

Chair Willis said that PAST no longer does the holiday house tour. She thought that was more what Board Member Wimmer was talking about, which could be an opportunity because they probably could use the PAST membership to help with it. They could organize it and get the houses and do the primary work, and just need people the day of. She thought it would be something to think about because it was a fun, community-building event. She also posed the idea of a Preservation Week and hoped that in March they could put together some kind of public outreach event.

Board Member Bower said Bo Crane had developed a downtown walking tour of historic tech company locations, and it was astounding to learn the number of tech companies – Facebook, Google, Intuit, Apple – all started in downtown Palo Alto buildings. It was an impressive tour, and they were asked to create it by a foundation in Palo Alto that brought tech people together and wanted to give them a sense of how the tech industry had developed in Palo Alto. He said such tours are available, and PAST is a good service group for that. He added that the PAST holiday tour involved going inside people’s houses to see the interior, and this is not done anymore because of the pandemic

Board Member Wimmer wondered about doing an Eichler tour, or an Eichler Day. She also thought that a sort of homespun newsletter would be good, maybe four times a year, a *Palo Alto Historic Newsletter*, just to reach out to the homeowners and start a dialogue to let them know the Board is there, since most probably aren’t even aware of it. Chair Willis recalled that she had been approached by a high school

student who wanted to do a project, and she thought a newsletter or a blog might be a good thing. She wondered about having a list of volunteer projects so when somebody does ask, they'll have an answer.

Chair Willis thanked Council Member Tom DuBois for joining the meeting.

Board Member Bower said he thought there was a big difference between inviting people to go look at somebody else's historic registered house, and asking someone to put their own property on that list. Chair Willis thought that was true. She said she wanted to try to re-focus the conversation back to the inventory update before moving on to the work plan. Board Member Bower thought they ought to build on the list that had been started, do some kind of sampling, go to a few people and put their facts out with their draft value proposition, run it by them and hear their response. He said they have little time, small resources, and a big job to do, and since they have already started validating houses they should concentrate as much as possible on that target.

Chair Willis advocated starting with a letter to these property owners and targeting exactly which incentives might apply to their properties. Board Member Bower thought if they could identify them and contact them by letter and then by phone to have an initial, structured conversation, they would learn things that they wouldn't learn by taking the other paths, which seem well-intentioned, but more like a shotgun approach. He advocated generating something more factual in order to get the support they want and have an outreach to build the inventory up, to get more and more structures listed.

Chair Willis thought there would be some people who just not respond, and those are people they would need to go back to and have conversations with. She wanted to get started and execute the process as quickly as possible. She felt they could do a letter without a lot of staff support. She urged the Board to push forward and try to generate some initial positive movement and use it to keep going.

Board Member Bower pointed out that when they had staff support in the form of a historic planner, they actually got some of these things done. He said a large portion of the Mills Act Plan, which they have been trying to finish up for their next meeting, was done with staff help. The planner met with them and wrote it up in the format required to present it to the Council. When that person left, they never got another staff person. He said it is hard to get anything done without some staff help.

Ms. French offered that since they had Christina Dikas with Page and Turnbull with them, and she has vast experience with other communities and how they have launched into putting properties on an inventory or register, she would be a good resource.

Council Member DuBois joined the conversation and affirmed the conversation about updating the historic register. He encouraged the Board to continue their efforts to move forward on this.

Chair Willis asked Ms. Dikas for her advice or tips. Ms. Dikas responded that the challenges that the City is facing are similar to many communities, with the concerns that property owners have about what it means to be listed as a historic resource. She said they did a similar project in Mill Valley that lasted a few years, taking their previously-identified historic resources not officially on an inventory and re-survey them to confirm whether they should be on a local inventory. They created a FAQ that was put up on the City's website. They had community meetings. She said it is important to educate and continually re-educate the public about the value of historic preservation and the potential incentives. She said she thinks for some other cities Mills Act is a big incentive for getting listed. This is the case in San Francisco where it is required to be a city landmark or listed in the California or National Register to be able to apply for the Mills Act, so there are property owners who seek the designation with that end in mind. She said that was probably one of the strongest kinds of incentives, but it definitely takes staff resources.

Ms. Dikas said there are rare instances of communities that very highly value their historic resources, such as Pacific Grove, where they had 1,400 properties on their local inventory and they were hired to re-survey them, because they had been put on decades ago. They found that a number of them no longer retained enough integrity to be listed. They suggested some of them be removed, with work for a future historic survey. A lot of community members were upset about removing properties, because they saw the designation of these properties as the way to preserve the character of their historic neighborhoods, which are very small-scale. Although there were other types of tools that could be used for what they were aiming for, broader, neighborhood-level protections, they were fixated on the idea of having many individual properties being listed to prevent that kind of change.

Ms. Dikas suggested there is a certain kind of mentality that needs to be developed within the community that understands not only what it means for individual properties, but the community character. One of the

things that people love about living in Palo Alto is not just their own house, but also the street that they live on and the neighborhood that they live in that has so much character. Trying to drive home those values to people who aren't familiar with the concept of historic preservation through a variety of venues, such as a newsletter or regularly-occurring public educational meetings might be the way to go to try to garner support for this type of project. She said there will always be some homeowners who are the squeaky wheel and make things difficult, but a couple of those in exchange for a bunch of people who get onboard is worth it. Board Member Wimmer said she would consider getting five to ten percent of the people to participate a success, whether it is responding to a newsletter or public outreach, and it would probably be a small number, at least in the beginning.

Ms. Dikas advised that there is definite value in updating surveys. The 1998 to 2000 is now 20 years old and, as Chair Willis found, some of those have been altered or demolished since then. She said the recommendation is for cities to update their surveys every ten years or so if they can, as things do change. She said they are not alone in having somewhat outdated information and trying to figure out how to deal with that. She thought most cities do try to take it in bite-sized chunks as they are able to obtain funding to survey certain neighborhoods or certain portions, so the approach of looking at the National Register eligible properties that were identified and re-surveying them to see if they should still be considered is a good first step in the process and helps everybody. It helps the City to know what they have out there and what the historic resources are. It helps with broader city planning as well.

Board Member Pease thought while they were at it, they should try to create something that is lasting. Currently they are using artifacts from previous surveys, going out and checking the list in several different iterations, but there has never been a systemized way to do it. If communities are encouraged to do this every ten years, it would be good if there was an established way to do that which could simply be modified from decade to decade, as opposed to a group like them trying to start all over again, every 20 years.

Chair Willis thought as they go through the process and slowly add properties to their inventory they can define how to continue the process. She thought they would learn a lot. There would be categories of people who react different ways, and if they observe what areas, what buildings, how things fall out across the city, it would teach them a lot. She suggested they could do one area of Palo Alto in a two-year span and then another area in a two-year span, something that rotates and is consistent but never overwhelming.

Board Member Makinen wondered how the original Dames and Moore survey was funded when it was undertaken, whether it was by the Council. Chair Willis thought the City had financed it, but she wasn't sure if there was a grant in conjunction with it. Board Member Pease asked what order of magnitude cost it was for Mill Valley to do the work she described. Ms. Dikas replied that they did the survey of 170 or so properties at the same time they prepared a historic context statement for the City. She thought the whole thing was possibly around \$100,000, but half of that was the survey, or something like that. There was a lot of public involvement to community meetings and hearings, which took a pretty big fee for consultants to participate in, which is something to keep in mind.

Board Member Makinen noted that it would be essential to get some funding support behind some of the projects, as nothing would move forward without some money behind it, and he didn't know how to get to the point of convincing Council to fund it, or maybe going through the Planning Department. He stressed that they can't go anywhere without money. Getting maps made and all this work requires money, so they would have to convince the Council that they need some financial support on these efforts.

Ms. French said for the 1997 survey that they made use of quite a few volunteers.

Chair Willis verified that. She thought a lot of people like to look at old houses, and it could be like an activity, adding that they all need to walk, especially with the pandemic. She thought it wouldn't be hard to get a volunteer corps, although they would need a coordinator, and maybe it would be something to set up aside from the Board. She felt they would have access to all the volunteer labor they need, but did not disagree that they also need money.

Board Member Makinen felt, however, that it needs to be done by professionals who are schooled in how to do these evaluations. He expressed that to send people out who are marginally trained with marginal knowledge and try to get the assessments is not really the proper way to go. He felt they needed one uniform body to take a look at it in its entirety with the proper funding, and do the job the right way.

Council Member DuBois joined the discussion to say he thinks it is a good year to make a budget request of Council and to get it in this year's budget. He suggested that they forward this to Council.

Board Member Bower said he thought they had a grand proposal prepared for surveying the Eichler or mid-century housing in Palo Alto, but it has not been funded. Ms. French agreed that it has not been funded, but it has been on hold, and has not been submitted to the Office of Historic Preservation. Board Member Bower wondered if it was possible to broaden the scope of that proposal to include the current discussion, or if they need to do a separate proposal to articulate what they are talking about now. Ms. French said it would need to be a separate grant proposal for re-surveying the 1998 survey, the process that has commenced, which ideally would involve a consultant and an estimate of the cost, which is not in the Planning Department budget.

Chair Willis said with the National Register-eligible properties the work has been done. Some of them did get demolished, and that is something they need to verify, but Council has already paid for the expensive part, so she said they should just move it forward. She said they learned from this experience how to move forward and update the inventory they have and add properties to the inventory. While there were many more steps ahead, she felt they had already done the majority of the work on this one and they should acknowledge that and thank Council for having done that. It is time to move to step two, and part of the reason they haven't made it there is that the public thinks that the Board controls and puts things on the inventory, but the Board expects the public to come to them and ask to be on the inventory. She thought they needed to get everything lined up and take ownership of it and ask people if they want to be on the inventory. Some people will say yes. A lot will say no, and they will learn a lot in the process.

Board Member Pease asked in terms of getting funding, how Ms. French would compare going after grants versus Council Member DuBois's suggestion that this is a good year to go directly to the City to ask for funds. He thought City funds were something they could potentially obtain quicker than going through a whole grant process.

Ms. French said they did just have the SB 9 Ordinance adopted in December, and the Council did ask staff to come back in March to let them know what it would take, in terms of funds and staff are coming back in March

Board Member Pease asked how they could best work with staff to get that ready to go. Ms. French said they do have an estimate from a consultant. They have the ability to talk with their director, as far as coming back with a proposal for Council to consider and grant general fund monies to this. Also, every May the applications for Office of Historic Preservation are due. The idea that they would consider preparing a grant application that indicates how much money the City would put into something like that, in-kind, if they got the grant, because it always has to be matched with the Office of Historic Preservation grants. This is what she recalled with the Professorville guidelines, that the City committed to staffing hours and funding, but it was mostly in-kind staffing hours.

Board Member Pease questioned if a proposal to the Council, not for a grant, but for City funds, needs to be generated by the staff or if the Board can do that. Ms. French said every year there is an opportunity to request funding as part of the fiscal year budget, as Councilmember DuBois had mentioned. She thought that was happening now, as far as putting together a budget request to the Council. If they requested \$100,000, it would explain what it is for, including a part time staff person, et cetera. Board Member Bower asked if they could find out soon if staff will be putting a draft of that together. Ms. French said she would have a conversation with Jon, the Director, when he returned next week, as well as their budget person. Ms. French reminded the Board that the next part of the retreat was to talk about the 2022 Work Plan which needs to be submitted to Council, and that is also an opportunity.

Board Member Makinen strongly recommended obtaining funding for the mapping project and having it done by a professional and not overburden the in-house GIS-T staff to try to do this. They may not be able to do it anyway, because they're too busy doing other things. If they don't have the funding, he said they just will not go anywhere on these projects. He stressed they must get a genuine proposal and not an amateur approach out and in front of Council.

Board Member Wimmer suggested instead of passing this on to staff, the Board could come up with a proposal of precisely what they need, and precisely how they want to go about doing it, and a precise estimate of the funding needed. She felt much of this is a moving target and Board Member Pease is correct in wanting to get the ball rolling, but she felt they needed to verbalize it in a document that they all take part in, to hone in on the actual scope and their plan for achieving their goal. She advocated coming

up with a request for funding which explains specifically how the funds will be allocated. Chair Willis agreed but didn't know how to come up with those numbers. Board Member Wimmer thought they could estimate a dollar amount based on what Ms. Dikas provided. Chair Willis thought, as part of what Planning is doing, they could write a memo to Council with a brief history and what they want to do now. It would be based on their work plan, but focused on a few specific things, primarily updating the inventory. Once they can start getting some things done, it will become easier to get more done.

Board Member Bower asked Ms. French how soon they would need to get a memo or proposal to staff. She replied that she doesn't know that date of the Council's budget considerations, but definitely the sooner the better as far as the unified Board request or letter. Chair Willis wondered about having a committee to write the memo, or if they should all weigh in. Board Member Pease suggested they not try to write it as entire Board, but maybe one to three people should take the lead on it. He thought it should be fairly straightforward. Board Member Makinen thought it should come from the Chair of the Board. Board Member Bower said it has to be a subcommittee, because more than three people would put them in violation of the Brown Act. Board Member Pease, Chair Willis and Board Member Wimmer all volunteered to help write the memo. Chair Willis asked the rest of the Board members to send any ideas they might have to one of them. Board Member Wimmer volunteered to come up with a first draft.

Board Member Wimmer noted that in looking at her computer she found that she had already created an outreach brochure, back in 2017, a trifold brochure. She shared the image with the Board and said Ms. French can distribute it to them. Board Member Wimmer said they were going to put these in the Planning Department. She had previously brought it to a meeting and handed it out, but it didn't get any further than that.

Chair Willis turned to the topic of the Work Plan. Ms. French shared the current work plan and advised that the Council has asked for a report that reviews the results of the 2021 plan, such as metrics of community involvement and participation, which they have not done. Every year staff does an annual CLG report in which they do review what happened in the prior year, so they can combine that effort in February. Then there is a 2022 Work Plan that they need to create based on the 2021 unfinished or ongoing activities looking at placing them on the Work Plan for updating the inventory. She pointed out that on the 2021 Work Plan most of the items are ongoing, so they can remain on the work plan. The ones looking at the second half of the current fiscal year included the flyer, the outreach, looking at incentives, and developing the future work program. The Mills Act was also shown on the current work plan. The 2022 plan is due to the Council in April. One item could be implementing the Comprehensive Plan that calls for nominating the deemed eligible resources, which is what they are discussing. Ms. French didn't know if anything should be removed from the work plan, but the steps for moving forward would be requesting assistance from the consultant, as well as some sort of staffing request to help with the effort, and then the outreach, which needs to be strategized as they started to do in their earlier discussion. Ms. French asked if anyone had thoughts about the existing work plan and what they've accomplished since June.

Chair Willis thought they should focus on their work plan for the coming year and then perhaps go back and record where they are in the current work plan. She felt there was not a huge amount of progress, but that they were on the verge of a lot of progress. Board Member Bower reported, on a positive note, that he had been working on the Mills Act, He said he needs to have a conversation with Board Member Wimmer, but it is as far along as they are going to be able to push it. He thought they could talk about it at their next meeting and then move it to staff to figure out how to handle it.

Ms. French said they would be looking at a February agenda for that. She reminded the Board that she will need to prepare the CLG report that they do every year as well, which is what she will work on for the February agenda. Chair Willis asked if she would share the CLG report with them before she submits it in February. Ms. French said that she would present it to the Board and they can comment on it. Board Member Bower said they also need to give her their training information. Ms. French said she would send out an email reminder on that and asked them to review and send her any of the trainings that they might have attended. The CLG report is from October of 2020 through September of 2021. Part of the report is sending in everyone's bio, including her own, and the trainings that folks have done. She then gives a report on properties that were elevated to a new category, or put on the inventory, et cetera.

Ms. French said March is still an opportunity to finalize the work plan for 2022 that is due in April. They can talk about the previous conversation to add that to the work plan even though it's not resourced or funded. She said they're getting their hopes up, but she thought things were happening, without

resources for now, towards this effort. Board Member Bower said it's a request for resources to the Council, so even though they don't have dollar amounts for it, he felt it demonstrates to the Council what they need the resources to accomplish.

Ms. French agreed and asked if there was a desire for a poll on bringing back a work plan in February that adds the to the current work plan. She thought a voice vote would be needed, because to add it to the current, 2021, Work Plan, they would have to submit it to the Council as an amendment to the 2021, which is mostly past. Board Member Bower said what he meant was to make this their work plan for 2022. The Board discussed which items to respond to on the 2021 and the 2022 work plans. Ms. French suggested that a straw poll be taken to request her to return in February with a modification to the 2021 work plan adding the inventory upgrade and return with a 2022 work plan that include implementing the Comp Plan program L.7.1.1 by nominating deemed eligible resources to the local inventory.

Board Member Pease felt like the draft work plan would just get done as broadly as stated. He was inclined to suggest taking the current work plan and combining it with the Mills Act incentives and the outreach as a pilot. He had trouble separating those three things. The Mills Act is one of the only financial incentives available, a lot of the work has already been done, they've already agreed on the outreach and already started on a list. He thought those could be combined into one as a pilot, a way of getting started with limited objectives that lead to larger objectives based on the results.

Ms. French asked to have a Chair and Vice Chair meeting prior to the February meeting to help her prepare a draft of a 2022 Work Plan and then bring it back for the Board to weigh in on. Board Member Pease appreciated this idea and said he keeps going back to Board Member Bower's description of the tour of the early tech company buildings and thinking that would be one that would draw a lot of people in and make money. Off all the ideas discussed for the citizens of Palo Alto, he thought if that one was recreated and publicized it would get a big audience, bigger than any audience for the current population of Palo Alto. Board Member Bower thought a focus on historic locations where important things happened is much more likely to get a great response from Palo Alto and surrounding communities. Ms. French thought it would also be nice to also have a walking tour of locations associated with musicians, such as the Grateful Dead, Janis Joplin, et cetera. Board Member Bower said that Bo Crane, past Board member, had created the tech tour. Board Member Pease wondered if there was any kind of outline existing from that. Board Member Pease thought there probably was, and he would follow up with Bo and see how they could leverage that.

Ms. French asked if anyone had a problem with either of the February meeting dates. Board Member Bower had a conflict with the 11th. Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz had a conflict with the 24th. Chair Willis thought they needed to have Board Member Bower present for Mills Act discussion and also advocated everybody being together on moving the mapping ahead and moving the inventory ahead. She wanted to possibly separate into three, two-person, committees, through which she could interact with all of them. She liked the format of the Mills Act, the inventory, as well as the mapping, which she strongly believes would be a useful tool. The smaller group could meet once a month and then have their regular meetings once a month.

Board Member Heinrich said she has been looking at the mapping situation and is willing to go ahead and start colorizing a map of the city of Palo Alto. The problem she has is the scale of the map would have to be such that it is around 4-foot by 6-foot, but using that tool they could then go into the digital GIS system and do an overlay of that. She would need to get a printout of the city properties. Ms. French said there are zoning maps which are multiple pages with a key on the front, on the webpage. She said there is no printout of the whole map, but there are printed zone maps that have 13 pages. Board Member Wimmer said for GIS they may need data only, and putting information on a paper map might not be necessary to then get it into a GIS map. The key information, addresses, APNs and other qualifiers put into an Excel spreadsheet could be imported into a GIS map. Chair Willis wondered if this was something they could give Ms. Dikas to do for them if they came up with the information for the spreadsheet.

Ms. French said Ms. Dikas is not able to manipulate their GIS system. That would be Roland. Ms. Dikas offered that if they wanted to use their resources, she could work with Roland on that. They have some GIS knowledge on staff to provide the information and a format that could be then used in GIS. Chair Willis asked to be sent a list of what would be needed for the spreadsheet. Board Member Heinrich and Ms. Dikas would follow up on this item. Ms. French said it would be okay for them to use email to continue the conversation as it is not a quorum of Board members.

Chair Willis asked if anyone else had a subcommittee they were committed to. Board Member Pease said he and Board Member Wimmer would finish on the Mills Act since they started it. Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz expressed interest in the inventory.

The schedule for February would include subcommittee meetings, and the full Board meeting on the second Thursday.

Chair Willis asked Board members to send corrections on either of the two prior sets of meeting minutes to Medina.

MOTION

Motion to move approval of the minutes to the next meeting was made by Board Member Bower. [no second]

The motion carried, 7-0, by roll call vote.

Board Member Questions, Comments or Announcement

Chair Willis shared that when she was surveying College Terrace there were a lot of little courts. One that she was enamored of was on her list. She wondered if they wanted to consider going out to such owners that seemed at risk in conjunction with the Mills Act to try to focus on certain types of properties. Board Member Bower said if they had a Mills Act in Palo Alto they could do that, but the Council would have to approve it first. He did not think the Council would approve anything because they don't have any program for that. Chair Willis said what she wondered was if they could identify ways in which they could use it that would benefit the community, instead of giving it to some homeowner who has already bought his \$12 million property and Council would not be sympathetic to. She said she would send the address to the Board members to consider if it might be a way to apply the Mills Act. Board Member Bower concurred that that is what the Mills Act is intended to do, to preserve and restore the historic properties landscape, but at this point there is no way for that to happen in Palo Alto, because there is no Mills Act program. They are working on fixing that.

Adjournment

Board Member Bower moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Board Member Pease, the motion carried unanimously by voice vote.