



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

Historic Resources Board

Staff Report (ID # 14319)

Report Type: Approval of Minutes **Meeting Date:** 4/28/2022

Summary Title: HRB Draft Minutes March 24, 2022

Title: Approval of Historic Resources Board Draft Minutes of March 24, 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):

- March 24, 2022

Attachments:

- Attachment A: HRB Draft Minutes March 24, 2022 (DOCX)



HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES: March 24, 2022
Virtual Teleconference Meeting
8:30 A.M.

Call to Order/Roll Call

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

Absent: Vice Chair Christian Pease

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 Authorizing Use of Teleconferencing for Historic Resources Board. Seconded by Board Member Heinrich, the motion carried (6-0)

Oral Communications

Von Kaenel, First Vice Commander of American Legion Post 375 and Secretary of the United Veteran's Council of Palo Alto (UVCOPA), shared that UVCOPA was incorporated in 1937 to join all of the various veteran's associations that were in the Veteran's Memorial Building. They persisted in this until 1981. Since 1981 they have been in the veteran's area of the building. They know the building very well, and it is their conception of the Veteran's Memorial Building's aesthetic and cultural heritage that the memorial dedications are integral to the building. They are unclear, however, if the HRB considered the Veteran and Memorial dedication to be in its purview. In reviewing the Municipal Code, the HRB has criteria for designation of historic structures and sites. They enumerate the criteria, and it appears that Veteran Memorial dedication should qualify. Their question was if HBR does consider the Veteran Memorial dedication to qualify for the criteria for designation and if it thus comes under HRB's protection. Or, if the dedications are separate from the structure and site's aesthetic and cultural heritage, and some other agency's responsibility. In either case, he said UVCOPA requests that HRB clarify the role of Veterans Memorial Dedication and the criteria for designation. The materials show that Veterans Memorial Dedications abound at the Hostess House, that they are foundational to it. For example, the dedication ceremonies for the Community House occurred on Armistice Day, 1919, one year after the end of World War I, at the end of a parade where they dedicated the building and put up a plaque which is today still by the entrance door. The Community House is dedicated to the spirit of willing sacrifice with which the young men of the community answered the call of the Great War, in the hope that it may perpetuate the ideals of fellowship and service. Mr. Kaenel said the founders of the building have told them what their purpose was for the building, and it had a memorial intent. It is the City of Palo Alto's First World War memorial. They believe the words on the plaque and the other memorials at the building contribute to the site's aesthetic and cultural heritage and thus should be protected by the HRB. They don't know if they are protected or not, so they seek clarification from HRB whether the HRB considers these memorials and dedications to be protected as much as the other qualities of these buildings. He was hoping to have some sort of clarification from the HRB on this.

Chair Willis thanked him for bringing this to their attention. She said they have been looking into it and will try to get back to him with what they know.

John Shenk, Thoits Brothers, said he was there for the other item, but wanted to bring something to the Board's attention. He said he was on a call the previous night in which some planners are working with a group that is doing research within the community to get back to Council on what should be done with the Interim Moratorium on In Lieu Parking Fees for Above-Ground Floor Spaces in the Downtown. One of the things brought up was that by not allowing in-lieu fees to be paid for the addition of space, if they were to reconfigure a building that has some second-floor space or would be considered second-floor, it would trigger a parking requirement. In their downtown, most of the properties are so small that it is functionally impossible to build underground, private garages. Even if one were to argue that they would be so expensive they would never do it. What that does to TDRs is make them of no value because you can't use them. You can't add a square foot, because you're not going to build this little private parking space. In doing so, there's an unintentional consequence, and it means is the TDRs really have no value. And if they don't have any value, there's a disconnect between the community's strong value of historic buildings in their Downtown and architecture. The floor area bonus – TDR – was created in a partnership of sorts. The community wants it and is willing to help offset the cost and expense of maintaining, restoring. But with the interim ordinance, it has robbed the values. Mr. Shenk said this will be going back to Council in the fall, after going to PTC on many other factors, and he wanted to make the Board aware of it and hoped it is something they can fix.

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

City Official Reports

2. Historic Resources Board Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Board Member Bower said he sent the dates that he will be absent to Ms. French and Ms. Klicheva.

Action Items

3. 526 Waverly Street: Historic Review and Architectural for Removal of Rear One-Story Addition, Installation of fence and shade structure, Replacement of existing elevator with new elevator; Installation of new interior stair, modifications to second floor and partitions. New front door. Relocation of electric and gas service, upgrading of existing HVAC equipment, installation of fire sprinklers, new lighting. New ADA restroom. New signage. Project includes request for floor area bonus(s) per PAMC 18.18.070 Floor Area Bonuses

Danielle Condit shared a PowerPoint presentation on this item. This was brought before the Board for a current minor AR application and major HR application for exterior modifications. It has been locally known as Palo Alto Sport Shop and Toy World for nearly 90 years. The site is a Category 2 resource on the City's Local Inventory. The property was also found individually significant within a local context under Criterion 3 for its Spanish Colonial Revival and commercial design. Its association is with the famous Birge Clark, and the period of significance is 1927, the year of its construction.

Ms. Condit said the application is for minor staff-level architectural review and major historic review for the exterior improvements, but also for the seismic and historic bonus floor area to be a future Sender Site. The applicant does not plan to use any of the Bonus Floor Area onsite. She noted that prior to the application in 2017, the front façade was restored through the processing of a minor architectural review and major historic review application to allow for the façade restoration. The City's Historic Consultant, Page and Turnbull, found the project compliant with Secretary of the Interior Standards for Restoration and the analysis. From the restoration, the City Council reclassified the commercial building from a Category 3 to a Category 2, and it is now a Category 2 on the City's local inventory. In the application, the project did not include any changes to the floor plan at that time. The application is currently under review for compliance with the Zoning Code. Ms. Condit said they are bringing it before the HRB to provide recommendations regarding the proposed alterations specific to compliance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards.

Ms. Condit described the project scope, which includes removal of a single-story URM rear addition which was not designed by Birge Clark. Although described as a secondary defining feature in Page and Turnbull's analysis, the overall removal of the addition will still result in compliance with the Standards as outlined in the staff report and Attachment A. Page and Turnbull recommended that a portion of the wood railing interior of the building east of the mezzanine, adjacent to where the new ramp is to be

installed, be retained. Although the applicant did not have to incorporate this change, they chose to do so. The project would still be found to be overall compliant, according to Page and Turnbull's analysis, by not retaining this, but the applicant has incorporated it into the C2 plans shown in Attachment B. Ms. Condit shared a photo of the existing conditions of the single-story addition. The project plans propose removal of this single-story addition. Some of the improvements that will be made include installation of a new fenced rear patio shade structure. The patio will be enclosed by a six-foot-tall metal fence with stucco-clad wall and metal gate; a one-story metal frame shade structure; a new ADA ramp; new planters and landscaping within the planters; a new trash enclosure; and on the façade itself will be new bi-folding doors as well as the applicant's signage.

Ms. Condit noted that in 2017 the front façade restoration was completed. In those plans, the applicant noted in a detail that "any repair or damage to the cement plaster would blend the texture and surface to match the adjacent surface in kind and paint all new and existing cement plaster." The project was approved with the condition that prior to the cement plaster work commencing the applicant would contact staff to arrange a Historic Resources Board subcommittee visit to review the proposed cement plaster, texture samples and color brush-out. She said this approach may be something the Board would like to do, similar to this applicant prior to building permit approval by staff.

Ms. Condit shared a photo of the materials sample board for reference, and a line-of-site diagram provided by the applicant, demonstrating that the new penthouse elevator shaft and rooftop equipment will not be visible from the public right-of-way. The front façade will remove a non-historic door that is central to the main entry. The new door will be fully glazed and very similar to what was there prior.

Ms. Condit shared a list of recommendations made in Page and Turnbull's review of the most recent re-submittal which includes the voluntary structural upgrade. She said in the next stage, staff will be continuing the architectural review and processing the application for compliance with the Zoning Code.

Chair Willis invited the applicant to speak.

Ms. Bremer, architect and project manager, addressed the Board regarding the project, along with Daniela, project manager, and Ken, businessowner. Ms. Bremer said that Ms. Condit had covered the things they wanted to speak to in the presentation, but they did have visuals for anyone who wanted to see more detail on what exactly they proposed, and they were happy to answer questions.

Board Member Bower said he had questions about the additions, not the historic building. He asked for some discussion of the materials on the back of the building. Ms. Bremer shared a footprint of the original addition and said all of the proposed addition occurs within the same footprint. They propose a steel fence that would be painted or powder-coated. The walls would be coated in stucco, which they have called a smooth, steel-troweled stucco. She said if it needed to be painted to match the building's stucco, it would be an easy change for them to make. On the proposed pergola is painted steel with Douglas fir wood slats. The building is board form concrete, and they propose to remove the paint to expose the existing concrete. The materials board illustrated the dark, painted steel. The existing building has some wrought iron details on the front elevation, and the painted steel would complement those details. The Douglas fir, once installed and treated, will have a grayish hue. There is concrete on the ground. The proposed windows within the patio are aluminum. These would not be visible in the public right-of-way, and would be a dark, powdered-coated aluminum. The walls would be stucco, as mentioned. The remaining materials included the glazing, the existing board form concrete, and the asphalt in the parking area. Ms. Bremer said they thought about the materials pallet in relation to the existing building and feel it complements the existing building.

Board Member Bower said he was trying to understand from the plans whether the footprint of this new space would be enclosed, with a roof, but in looking at the detail shown, saw that it is open, with metal and short stucco wall, on the same footprint as the current tile wall. Ms. Bremer replied this is correct and also mentioned regarding the fence detail that they are proposing a sort of diamond-shaped fence. The inspiration for it was a detail they had seen before in some California missions. They chose steel because it would more durable and require less maintenance.

Board Member Bower commented on the differentiation and compatibility issues that they are addressing. He felt the proposed is nicely differentiated as described, and compatible with the older part of the

building. In this building, and on the block, he said all of the rear facades are exposed by the alleyway, which is frequently used by pedestrians. He appreciated the careful detailed presented.

Chair Willis wondered if the ramp is inside the enclosure or outside. Ms. Bremer answered that it is within. The fence is on the exterior side of the ramp, and there is a wall that separates the ramp from the patio to give a layer of privacy. There is a planter behind the fence to afford some greenery in that portion of the project, because they had heard that many people use the back alley.

Board Member Wimmer was curious to know what the use will be, who the tenant is, whether it is retail or food service, et cetera. Ms. Bremer said it will be a retail furniture store, Blu Dot. They have their own line of furniture that they design, fabricate and sell. The back patio will be used for a display of their outdoor furniture collection.

Board Member Bower asked Ms. Condit about page 17 of the staff report, paragraph 2, which says, "changes proposed will not result in a re-listing to Category 3." He was interested to know how they make that determination, and also commented on what had happened with the 567 Hale Street project, which is a Category 2 building which he said will become a Category zero building after the proposed changes. He wondered why this discussion includes a category change issue, but they didn't have that on that last item.

Ms. Condit responded that it may have been because of that last meeting since it was more of a significant discussion in that meeting. In this report she was looking at the definitions of Category 2, and it is a major building that doesn't have major modifications in the sense that it is a secondary character-defining feature and that Page and Turnbull's report did find overall that the addition was not designed by Birge Clark and was something that could be removed and would not affect the category listing of the site. Board Member Bower was in agreement and said that this is a situation where the secondary materials being removed don't particularly add to the overall history of the building and are, in fact, dangerous. He said his problem was that this is an important consideration when looking at adding or changing historic buildings. While he didn't think this has any impact on the Category 2 status of this building, he was very concerned about the Hale Street project. He said he raised the question because he felt they missed it the last time, and they ought to go back and look at it again.

Chair Willis said she wished everything they saw looked this great. She was happy that the building is maintaining its historic character. She felt the addition is respectful of the building and distinctive, which she enjoys seeing. It is obvious what the historic building is, and she felt it was a lovely job. She was glad they will be able to go in it in the future and enjoy the space. She hoped they might add a few adult toys as a token to its past.

Chair Willis invited further comments.

Ms. Bremer said she had one question, or concern, with the project, regarding the interior railing which they propose to keep. If, over the course of construction they find it causes a safety hazard or there are any issues with it, she asked if there is any flexibility with regard to the interior railing. Right now it's lower than what is Code-compliant, so they will have to find a way to make it safe. She said they are not proposing any changes to their exterior plan. Chair Willis thought it was a perfect opportunity to use the Historic Building Code. If they feel that it is unsafe, that would be another issue, but having been in the building multiple times, she has never felt it to be unsafe, even when she has had young kids with her. She thought the City needed to learn to use their Historic Building Code, which is in place for just this type of thing. She said if they need the HRB to work with them and the Building Department to enable this, they would be happy to. She commented that she hoped that they would not cave to the generic but would maintain the historic character.

Board Member Bower seconded Chair Willis's thoughts and statements. He advised them to not make the mistake that was made around 465 University Avenue where, during construction, they found problems with the materials and basically took all of the historic materials off of the building and then decided to talk to someone about it. He advised them to talk about it in advance, and he was sure the Board and the City could work with them on it. He also hoped that they could maintain the railing, even though it's low, because it is the history of the building, and the fact that it is too low to meet current standards

shows how building has evolved. He said this is one of the reasons they want to preserve these buildings, to be able to see the difference between yesterday and today.

Chair Willis invited public comments.

John Shenk spoke in favor the project. He said they started pursuing this back in 2015, and it is fantastic for the Thoits Family that has been so involved in Palo Alto for 140 years, to work with the Hoffacker Family, who wanted to know if the Thoits would like to buy the building from them. He was pleased that it was handed off from one family to the other, and that the Thoits were able to work with the HRB and staff to do the historic renovation of the façade. He said they always look for opportunities to enhance Downtown with such projects. He was excited to see the URM go away and knew the Board was, too. He works on the other side of the alley behind the former Blue Chalk, and the back of that building façade is the same as this, minus the URM. He feels the architecture is fun and is excited to see it come back. He said Blu Dot is a fantastic company. He shared that they got hit with the "freeze" during COVID as they started trying to look for new tenants for the building, and then Blu Dot found them and wanted this historic building for their furniture store.

Mr. Shenk raised a concern he has related to the interior railings, assuring that they are committed to the same goals, but after this process – which has been a long time getting here – and the very big deal associated with trying to get a building permit from beginning to end. His worry was that they could go through and finalize all their structural plans, get to the Building Department and find that there is a Code problem from a building perspective with the railings. He asked what they would do then. It could be months, and he said that kills deals. He asked how to get around these kinds of things. If it's too low, it's too low. As the owner, he worries and thinks there would be worries about the liabilities, the insurance, et cetera. They want it to be historic, but worries that codes could change in the future with railings, et cetera. He said he was asking for flexibility so they wouldn't have to go through the whole process and come back to HRB because of a code problem that could come up.

Chair Willis said there should not be any reason to come back to HRB. There is a Historic Building Code in place. They don't tend to use it very often but the reason it is there is for just this kind of situation. She said if they do feel the railing is unsafe, that's different, but her recollection was that it was not, in her perception. It should just be a simple thing with the Building Department that the code that applies to this building is the Historic Building Code. When there is new construction within it, it is indeed subject to current code. Ms. Bremer said the new railing will be differentiated from the existing railing. Chair Willis reiterated that she didn't think it would be a problem but should be something handled within the building permit in a very normal manner. Mr. Shenk said that would be fantastic but his concern is that they get a decision from HRB and then as the codes evolve, they could get caught with having to go through the building planning and HRB process because of the matter. Chair Willis said the HRB does not deal with interiors on a regular basis. Mr. Shenk said only because this was brought in as Page and Turnbull's recommendation, he wondered if it could become a hook in the future where staff is caught with having to go to HRB because it was addressed here. Chair Willis said no, and said Thoits has been a good partner in preservation in Palo Alto, not just on this building, and they appreciate it.

Board Member Wimmer commented that they have a photo of the railings on page 29, and it looks like it's probably a height of more than four inches. She said she has had projects like this before. They are character-defining in the interior, and definitely worth saving. She suggested that a simple detail they could do is keep the existing railing but in front of it put a simple glass railing that you can see through, has the right height, and is completely solid. She said this is a contemporary detail that a lot of people are doing now. It would not touch the existing wood, but putting a simple glass railing in front of it could be an easy solution that would solve a lot of problems. She did understand the safety issue of the tenants and appreciated him bringing it up, because she felt there are solutions.

Board Member Bower suggested that the Board use a subcommittee to deal with any of the issues that come up like this on a project, because a subcommittee could move faster and it would not have to come back before the full Board unless the subcommittee feels there is a significant change that needs to be addressed by the whole Board. He wondered if Ms. French could advise on whether or not this could be done later. Ms. French did not think there was a condition of approval at this time because the Architecture Review application is not ready to sign off on, but they could put in a condition that says any

items related to specific things on the exterior would be something that could be handled at a subcommittee level. She didn't know if something on the interior needed a subcommittee because it is not a Secretary of the Interior Standards question, but would depend more on what the HRB would recommend. Board Member Bower said his question was related to the scenario and the applicant's concern about getting stuck in the approval loop and finding a situation in which the HRB could make a quick determination by a subcommittee. Ms. French thought it was possible to convene two members of the HRB, or three, without it being a quorum problem. They did it for this very building when they went out to take a look at the paint and tile. That is always a possibility, but it would usually be put in as a condition of approval for a specific thing, not just whatever comes up. Board Member Bower said the rail is part of the character-defining feature of the building inside or outside. It's what makes this a Category 2 building, not just who built it and who designed it. He said there is a tension between what they can do as a Board in order to preserve those features. He felt losing the rail might challenge the Category 2 listing. Ms. French suggested putting it in their motion related to the Secretary of Interior Standards compliance and any recommendation they have. Staff can then put it in the Architectural Review approval letter.

Board Member Makinen asked in regard to the ADA ramp in the rear of the building and whether it is the only ADA access point to the building. Ms. Bremer said the front door is also accessible. It is accessible through the rear entrance, through the patio, and this is also where the accessible parking space is located, as well as through the front door. They are also installing an elevator, so it will be fully accessible. Because of the existing nature of the building there are some different height levels at the second floor, and they have ramps connecting all of those levels. Board Member Makinen said his point, taught to him by Page and Turnbull, was that ADA access should be in the same door entry as a non-handicapped person would use. He was glad to hear confirmation that the front door is fully ADA accessible. He explained that compliance should be that you don't put an ADA person in a position where they feel that they are compromised and have to go around to the back and use an alley-type access, but should be treated like a normal person. Ms. Bremer agreed and said it was actually a topic of conversation with Blu Dot as well, and them wanting to make sure that the entire floor plan is ADA accessible. That is why, even though there are probably more ramps than the Code requires, it is to ensure that the building is fully ADA accessible.

Ms. Bremer pointed out on the second level where a portion of the existing railing is being removed to provide the ADA ramp; however, that portion of the existing railing was not original. At one point there was a stair at that location. She wanted to make it clear that the portion they are removing is not original.

MOTION

Board Member Heinrich moved to approve the proposed [gap in audio] . Seconded by Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz.

Chair Willis called for discussion.

Board Member Bower said he would like to see language that would capture all of the character-defining features of the building, because interior is important. Though it is not clear whether the Board has purview on the inside, he felt the picture of the railing, the beams and interior ceiling are features that make the building what it is, what makes it notable and why they want to preserve it.

AMENDED MOTION

Board Member Bower moved that if the railing and beams are to be changed, that there be HRB review of it, whether by the full Board or subcommittee of the Board.

Board Member Heinrich questioned whether they were authorized to make such a recommendation on the interior. Chair Willis felt it was not in their purview. Board Member Bower felt it was a character-defining feature, which is what they do. Ms. French weighed in to say when it comes to a building that is seeking rehabilitation and bonuses, going through discretionary review, she thought they could provide a recommendation which would be considered as they move forward with the architectural review application and approval. She added that the wording should be a "Friendly Amendment," and the original motion-maker would need to accept the friendly amendment, or not.

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT

Board Member Bower proposed a friendly amendment to Board Member Heinrich's motion that interior character-defining features that are going to be changed be reviewed by the HRB, or an HRB subcommittee. Board Member Heinrich accepted the amendment.

Chair Willis invited discussion and suggested they needed to clean up the motion. Her thought was that they really needed to start using the Historic Building Code because they are missing opportunities and this is exactly what it is for. She would like to see the amendment reference the Historic Building Code.

Ms. French weighed in that one solution could be using the word "consider" as something that staff will put earnest effort into while working with the applicant, have a meeting with the Building Official, et cetera, explore using the Historic Building or other solutions, such as the glass, that they can come to in a collaborative setting.

Board Member Bower wanted to make a stronger statement about preserving the character-defining features. He was confident that it would happen but he wanted to have some review in case there was a problem. He didn't wish to make it complicated but without review he said he didn't know why they're here. Certainly, it is not the first time this property has come before the Board, and the first project they did was excellent. He is confident this will work, but just wanted to get into the record something that says if character-defining features are going to be changed, they should be reviewed by HRB or an HRB subcommittee.

Ms. French offered a suggestion of, "Consider using the Historic Building Code regarding the railing. If the railing and beams will be changed it needs a review by HRB or HRB subcommittee." She asked who would decide that. Board Member Bower thought the applicant and their architectural team would decide that, with Page and Turnbull looking at any changes. He was troubled by the word "should" because there is nothing in the word that guarantees there will be a review. Ms. French clarified she used the word "consider." She thought the best they can do is have them consider using that. Board Member Bower agreed and said it makes sense for them to use it and he supported it. If they don't, the railing goes. He felt they shouldn't get to choose the Historic Building Code for this piece of the building.

Ms. Bremer said she thought they could incorporate something like the glass to preserve the railing. She thought they were all very respectful of the building and recognize the historic nature of it and want to respect all of the features, which is one reason why Blu Dot actually wanted to be in the building in the first place, because it has character and is not just a generic building that could be found anywhere. She felt there is a desire to preserve all of it, but she wanted to ensure that over the course of construction if unexpected happened that it could be resolved expeditiously. They don't want to be in a situation where they have to stop work because they need a determination of some kind. She requested that they take that into consideration.

Chair Willis wondered if they needed a motion that references the Historic Building Code but also established an avenue for review should unexpected demolition come up, and if there could be a subcommittee of two that the architect could call with any issue or question and they would have the HRB proxy.

Board Member Wimmer thought they should be grateful that the applicant was even discussing this with them, because it wasn't really part of the HRB purview. She had confidence that they will do the right thing. She said it does give character to the interior, and that is obviously one of the reasons why they wanted to lease this building. She suggested the motion, "I move to approve the project exterior alterations as proposed, with strong recommendation to protect the interior character-defining features, namely, the railings and beams, and encourage the applicant to use the Historic Building Code to protect those items if needed." She thought this both simplifies and divides the motion into approval as presented, and additionally their concerns about the interior elements that are outside of their review.

Board Member Bower thought this was well-stated.

REVISED MOTION

Board Member Heinrich approved the change to her motion as stated by Board Member Wimmer. Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz seconded the revised motion.

Chair Willis said the only thing she would add would be for them to have a subcommittee that would be accessible to the architects on a more immediate basis if any questions come up.

Board Member Wimmer asked if the building had any sort of plaque that identifies it as a Birge Clark. She suggested they could have a plaque stating its original designer and a few bits of its history. She thought they need those to remind themselves of these things.

Chair Willis said they could discuss that during Preservation Month.

Board Member Heinrich said PAST gives out plaques for buildings and are doing their listing right now, so they could possibly add this to their list.

Chair Willis called for a vote on the revised motion.

The motion passed (6-0) by roll call vote.

Chair Willis expressed appreciation for the project and was glad it has fallen into good hands.

Study Session

4. Review and Recommend Improvements to Outreach Materials including incentives for Rehabilitation, and consider ways Palo Alto can Participate in Historic Preservation Month (May 2022)

Ms. French presented the topic, sharing some of the Historic Preservation web pages to help convey what is available in the way of incentives. Another topic of outreach was handouts as discussed two meetings ago, as well as the review process Bulletin and the need to update that. Board Member Wimmer talked about a handout she prepared in the past. She said it could be a paper copy and also could be included on the webpage after full review. Another item for discussion was ways for Palo Alto to participate in Historic Preservation Month as another form of outreach and celebration of historic preservation. She noted that the CPF Conference has opened for registration. The theme is "Opening Doors." She said the City supports Board Members who wish to attend. It is a virtual conference, followed by tours in California. She also advised that she will be coming back in April with the Draft CLG report to work on. This report goes to the State Office of Historic Preservation in May.

A quick overview of the Department Historic Preservation webpage was shared. Ms. French said Planning and Development Services has Historic Preservation webpages which are very extensive; however they are quite buried as well, and few people know to go there, so one concept is to provide a link on the Historic Resources Board webpage to the homepage for all of the Historic Preservation pages, to help people get to the right page. The Historic Resources Board webpage currently includes only bylaws, regulations, workplans and the upcoming agendas. There could also be a short blurb about what the link contains.

The Historic Preservation webpage has links to a number of areas of work. Ms. French gave the Board a brief overview of the links and a few things they offer. All of the links lead to multiple pages about the program. She said the Historic Preservation incentives link will be very important, especially for property owners in the category of 'deemed eligible' that were previously sent to the State OHP regarding eligible properties for the National Register and California Register.

Chair Willis asked about the local development incentives applying to only locally-designated resources listed in the Palo Alto Historic Inventory. She said since their inventory is so out of date, she thought they actually have National Register properties that are not listed on their local inventory. Ms. French said there are definitely National Register-eligible properties that are not on their inventory. She said that is true considering there is a National Registered Green Meadow, Eichler Neighborhood in which the individual properties are not on individually listed on their inventory and neither is the district itself on the local inventory.

Ms. French explained that each category listed on the Incentives page has additional links within it. The Building Code Incentives link talks about the Historic Building Code with allows flexible alternatives. Next there is the Zoning Code, Title 18. These are the incentives that planners are more familiar with. The home improvement exception was bumped up to be applicable to Category 3's and 4's as well as 1's and 2's, so that they too could get that extra floor area above the maximum in their districts. There are

incentives for floor area bonus, or transferable development rights. A Downtown commercial property can transfer that bonus to another property, or use it onsite. There are other exemptions and exceptions listed on the webpage. There are several areas in the Code that provide incentives for being on the inventory as a Category 1 or 2, and many for 3 and 4.

Ms. French described the SOFA plan, which is essentially its own zoning code, with similar exemptions and bonus floor areas to the Downtown. There are also Comp Plan policies that talk about things like streamlining. The Subdivision Code also comes up when people ask about SB 9. Historic properties can't do SB 9 subdivisions but they can do flag lots, even when not allowed in the R-1, if there is a historic property. She said they have had several of those. If there are two homes and one is historic, they can split the lot and do even a small lot.

Chair Willis asked for clarification that "historic home" as used in this provision means any home on their inventory. Ms. French confirmed that it would be those on their inventory. If they are merely eligible, they are not on the inventory, and therefore this doesn't apply. This would be an incentive to be on the inventory, so that they could come through and get a lot split to make a flag lot. Incentives includes Category 3 and 4 homes as well.

The Federal Tax Investment Credit was the next incentive listed on the webpage, where people can follow a link to learn more about it. Ms. French mentioned the Bulletin that was discussed a couple weeks ago. The concept with this is that it would be one of the outreach activities on their workplan, to improve what the Bulletin says.

Chair Willis asked if there is someone in the Building Department who is well-versed in the Historic Building Code to whom they could direct all of their historic projects, someone who would have a working knowledge. Ms. French said probably the Chief Building Official is who she would go to, and he has the ability to delegate to a consultant who might have more expertise. She said David Chung is the Assistant Building Official and is also overseeing the Plans Review staff, and some of those are consultants as well. She suggested going through her counterpart in the Building Department to get people to the right person.

Chair Willis invited questions from the Board Members. She said one of the things mentioned was the brochure that Board Member Wimmer was working on. She asked if she had done further work on it. Board Member Wimmer said she has, and she needs to continue working on it. She has done a couple of other things that she was not prepared to present, but she wants to continue working on outreach. She said that during a meeting where they don't have an applicant would be a great time to talk about it, or one of their retreat meetings, when there was time to do a deeper dive into it. She said she called Pacific Grove's historic association. Christina Dikas had said they helped Pacific Grove do their Historic Context Statement and that everyone there wants to have their house on the historic register. She said she had a nice conversation with someone from there, and learned that they do something similar to PAST. They have a City-regulated board that reviews projects, very similar to Palo Alto's. However, she felt the residents have a very different mindset. There is so much history there, and people want to have their house on the register and want to have that plaque next to their front door. She found it interesting and wondered if they had some magical secret, but didn't think they did, aside from the fact that they pride themselves on their historic homes.

Chair Willis wondered if there was a chance of getting some of her materials out by Preservation Month. Board Member Wimmer said she could, and just had to have a deadline. Chair Willis offered to serve with Board Member Wimmer on a Preservation Outreach Committee. Board Member Eagleston-Cieslewicz also offered to help.

Chair Willis said in regard to Preservation Month that she thought tours would be hard to pull together, although she would talk to PAST. She said there is an original brochure for the Professorville Walking Tour that is quite dense and interesting that was produced by the Historic Resources Board in the past. She thought a re-publication of this brochure for Preservation Month would be an easy project. They could put copies in City Hall, the Library, it wouldn't involve a lot of money and she felt it might be a good place to start at least having a presence. Also, she wondered if they have anything to add for the group that is doing an awards program. Ms. French said that the group had reached out to see if they had any notable historic rehabilitation project that they would like to have them feature.

Board Member Bower said Lanning Chateau is one that comes to mind, or today's project. He said in his term on the Board they have reviewed and seen a number of significant renovations of historic buildings. President Hotel will be one, and although controversial, it will be a stellar example of renovation and will bring the hotel back to the way it was before it was converted into an apartment building. He said Stanford Theater is also an astounding example of renovation from a long time ago.

Chair Willis thought someone should reach out and maybe rather than doing an individual building, they could possibly do some type of walk down University Avenue. If it is just a visual presentation, she thought they could do a lovely one of their historic buildings on University Avenue. If it was more of an awards event, she thought it would be good to have a completed project rather than one in progress.

Board Member Bower thought it would be interesting if there was a summer intern in the Planning department go through the last 15 years of HRB project reviews for renovation. It is not a simple task in his experience, but someone could make a list of things that have been renovated from it. If they had been reviewed them by the Board, they would qualify, and they could put them on the website as buildings that have been renovated using the Secretary of the Interior Standards. Chair Willis thought they could perhaps just walk down University Avenue and identify them. Board Member Bower thought they could but there is a bigger pool than that, with Professorville having a number of them. He said 365 Lincoln was one of the first projects reviewed when he was newly-appointed to the Board. It has the original water tower that was moved around on the property and was retained. The building right next door and another one adjacent to that are old Professorville buildings. There is a Maybeck building on Bryant that is the only Maybeck-designed building in Palo Alto which was reviewed before his time, the Sunbonnet House

Chair Willis said they need to talk to the people organizing the event about what would fill in. She said she will call them.

Chair Willis moved to discussion about the decision by City Council to wholeheartedly endorse the Board's plan to expand the inventory with houses already identified as National Register-eligible. She asked for any thoughts on how to move forward on this. Ms. French said that the topic was not agendaized for that day, and she was concerned that perhaps they should agendaize it for an April meeting which would give staff some time to go through a scope of services and share it with the Board for discussion. Chair Willis said this would be perfect and asked if the Board had any requests about what they would like to get back from staff regarding adding properties to the inventory.

Board Member Heinrich asked if there was a consultant going through the current list. Ms. French said yes, the current list being the properties deemed eligible in the 2000 survey. There are a number of tasks associated with verification. The work began with Chair Willis and some Board Members who volunteered to go and see if places were still standing. She reiterated that she didn't want to get too far into discussion on it because it was not advertised for that meeting. She said they will have a follow-up report to the HRB in the month of April, with robust discussion agendaized for it. Chair Willis wanted to see the item on the first meeting in April's agenda, so they can get moving and show their enthusiasm.

Board Member Bower referred back to the links Ms. French had presented on incentives and asked if it was a page on the website. Ms. French shared her screen again to show how to get to these links from the City website. Under Planning and Development Services, go down to Planning. Click on Planning and there are the options: Current Planning, Long-Range Planning, Historic Preservation. Under Historic Preservation, there is a colorful first page that says, "Areas of Work." This brings up the links, each one with a separate webpage to go to and explore. From those pages there are further links. The only one she showed earlier was the "Preservation Incentives." Under this link there are all of the pages she showed earlier in her presentation.

Board Member Bower was aware of how complicated and broad the Planning and Development Department portfolio is, but he noted that these pages are buried in there, and it is hard for him, even as a member of the Board, to find this information.

Ms. French said what she proposes is to place a link very prominently on the HRB page to the start page for all of the historic preservation links. Board Member Bower strongly agreed, saying currently it is easier for him to find things with Google. Ms. French said she has also done a cut-and-paste of all the multiple

pages into one page which could be on the HRB page as well. Board Member Bower said it will likely be a very popular topic soon.

Chair Willis wondered if webpage design was farmed out or if there is somebody inhouse that could help them with facilitating better search results and make access easier for people who are looking for information. Ms. French said there is farming out of a certain number of things, and each time they want to upload something it has to go to the City Manager's Office for approval of each upload, so there is a process. Ms. French experimented with what came up when typing in Palo Alto Historic Preservation, and said it does go to the home page. She entered "preservation incentives," and found that it links directly to that page.

Board Member Bower said he had a conversation in the past week with a local real estate agent who was under the impression that an historic designation on your house meant you could never change it. Ms. French added this is a common misperception. Board Member Bower said that is something they need to find a way to clarify. Ms. French noted it is misinformation that is damaging because there are members of the community that might stand up in front of various boards and say just that. They need to be careful to counter that kind of information with real information.

Approval of Minutes

5. Approval of Historic Resources Board Draft Minutes of February 24, 2022

MOTION

Motion by Board Member Bower to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2022, Historic Resources Board meeting. Seconded by [REDACTED], the motion passed (6-0) by roll call vote.

Subcommittee Items

Board Member Questions, Comments or Announcements

Adjournment

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