

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE HPC MEETING ON JUNE 8, 2021

**Historic Preservation Commission Meeting
Virtual Meeting
March 9, 2020
5:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

Roll Call:

Chair McNamara called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Chair Robin McNamara; Vice Chair Joann Pavlinec; Commissioners Fatema Crane, Jonathan Haeber, Caitlin Hibma, Michael Hibma, and Gretchen M. Stromberg

Absent: None

Staff: Emily Carroll and Jonelyn Whales

Approval of Minutes:

September 10, 2019

Commissioner Haeber requested that interruptive be changed to interpretive in his statement regarding the Winehaven District and the interpretive scheme.

Commissioner M. Hibma suggested changing the end date to September 10th and not October 8th.

ACTION: It was M/S/C (Pavlinec/Hibma C.) to approve the minutes for September 10, 2019, with the suggested changes; approved by voice vote: 7-0 Ayes: McNamara, Crane, Haeber C., Hibma M. Haeber, Pavlinec, Stromberg; Noes: None.

Meeting Procedures:

Chair McNamara stated that any decision approved may be appealed in writing to the City Clerk within ten (10) days, or by Monday, March 22, 2021, by 5:00 p.m.

Public Forum:

No speakers

Liaison Reports:

There was no liaison present and no reports.

Consent Calendar:

None

Public Hearing:

None.

Commission Business:

- A. Commission member reports, requests, or announcements

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- a. Discussion of Mills Act Programs
- b. Discussion of EPS Contract and Memorandum for the Mills Act Calculator
- c. Next Steps

Ms. Whales announced that there is a request that the Commission hold a special meeting to discuss the demolition of 845 Macdonald. The date and time are to be determined.

Vice Chair Pavlinec shared that one of the Mills Act requirements is an Application Fee of \$5,000. The subcommittee felt the fee is very large and discouraged folks from applying. After further investigation of Application Fees required by other cities, the average fee cost is between \$600 and \$1,000. The subcommittee discussed this with Staff and Ms. Velasco proposed that Staff go to Council with a proposal that the Application Fee be waived for the first few applications. Then revisit and possibly reduce the \$5,000 fee when the Fee Schedule is reviewed. The subcommittee also discussed a Mills Act tax reduction calculator to help applicants see the potential reduction in taxes they may receive and to use to reductions towards their work plan. Staff reached out to Economic Planning Services (EPS) with a request for a cost estimate on creating a calculator and EPS responded with an estimate of \$5,300 for the calculator. The City of Richmond was awarded a grant from the State of California of \$5,000 and Ms. Velasco disclosed that the City could pay the extra \$300 to create the calculator if desired. The subcommittee decided that the next step is to establish a list of local and nationally designated properties and districts that are ready to apply. Ms. Velasco is working on that with the City's Data Analysis Department. Vice Chair Pavlinec is going to contact the Contra Costa County Tax Assessor Office and discuss the lower tax reductions that have been happening for Mills Act contracts. Another next step the subcommittee discussed is establishing a Selection Criteria for Mills Act applications and Vice Chair Pavlinec suggested using and/or modifying the City of Oakland's Selection Criteria.

Commissioner M. Hibma asked if there was a preference in the City of Oakland for Mills Act applications that used a consultant to assist in preparing the application. Vice Chair Pavlinec answered there was strong support to help and have applicants do their own application. Commissioner M. Hibma supported the approach of having applicants do their own research and applications. He was concerned though about Staff time and possible Commission conflicts.

Chair McNamara shared that the City lost a lot of the records pertaining to anything before the '50s and doing research for facilities that came before the '50s may be problematic for the City to help with.

Vice Chair Pavlinec continued that the Commission will need to draft a Mills Act application because there is no application in existence. A brochure is needed as well but Ms. Velasco shared that a City intern could work on it. Also, an outreach program to promote the program needed to be established.

Commissioner Haeber inquired if there is a listing fee for City landmarks and Ms. Whales answered that there is a Deposit Fee of \$2,500 for Mills Act Contracts. Commissioner Haeber suggested that the listing fee be rolled into the Mill Act Program so it does not create a burden for folks who want to list and receive a contract.

Vice Chair Pavlinec noted that any repairs to a historic structure will need to be reviewed by Staff and/or the Commission to determine if the renovation is appropriate. Chapter 15 of the City's code specified that pre-approved Mills Act projects waive the Design Review fee.

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Commissioner C. Hibma commented that in establishing the program, add-on costs should be avoided as much as possible. Chair McNamara suggested that a spreadsheet of estimated totals should be provided to applicants.

Commissioner Crane requested that an update on Miraflores take place at the next special meeting. Chair McNamara supported that request. Ms. Whales confirmed that the item can be heard at the next special meeting.

Vice Chair Pavlinec announced that the next Subcommittee meeting is on March 22, 2021 and the meeting will focus on next steps. She requested if any Commissioners have questions for the tax accessor, let her know.

Commissioner Crane mentioned that the calculators she has worked with have estimated numbers that are way different than when the contract is finalized. She emphasized that it needs to be explained to the applicant that the calculator is only an estimate. Vice Chair Pavlinec suggested having the consultants investigate why there may be discrepancies and Commissioner M. Hibma suggested asking the tax assessor as well. Ms. Whales mentioned having the consultant give a demonstration to the Commission once the calculator is finished.

Chair McNamara inquired if the City is comfortable reducing the fee for Mills Act applications and Vice Chair Pavlinec restated that Ms. Velasco is pushing to have the fee reduced but it is the Council's decision.

Vice Chair Pavlinec commented that a presentation on Mills Acts to the Commission's City Council liaison would be beneficial as well as reaching out to district Council Members and Richmond organizations for support.

The discussion commenced around when to schedule the special meeting. March 15, 2021, was agreed upon with the start time to be determined. Miraflores will be heard first before 845 Macdonald.

Adjournment - The Commission adjourned at 6:30 p.m. to March 15, 2021.