

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE HPC MEETING ON DECEMBER 14, 2021

**Historic Preservation Commission Meeting
Virtual**

October 12, 2021
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 Jonathan Haeber, Caitlin Hibma, Michael Hibma, and Gretchen M. Stromberg

Absent: Commissioner Fatema Crane

Staff: Jonelyn Whales

Approval of Minutes:

September 14, 2021

Commissioner C. Hibma commented that on Page 7 of the minutes, the motion should say “within 1-year”.

Commissioner Haeber clarified that on Page 6 his comment should be that the \$137,380 amount should not be included in the \$300,000.

ACTION: It was M/S/C (M. Hibma/Stromberg) to approve the minutes from the meeting held on September 14, 2021, as amended; approved by voice vote: 6-0-1 Ayes: McNamara, Haeber, C. Hibma, M. Hibma, Pavlinec, Stromberg; Noes: None; Absent: Crane.

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, October 25, 2021, by 5:00 p.m.

Public Forum:

CORDELL HINDLER congratulated the three Commissioners with their reappointment. He invited the Commissioners to attend the City Council meeting on October 19, 2021, where he will be presenting a surprise to the Council. He invited the Commissioners to attend the performance of Our Town at Contra Costa Civic Theatre on October 15, 16, and 17.

Liaison Reports:

There was no liaison present and no reports.

Consent Calendar:

None

Commission Business:

1. Description REPORTS OF COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF

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- a. Discussion of the Rooted in Richmond App Grant
- b. Next Steps

Location CITYWIDE

Zoning ALL ZONING DISTRICTS

Staff Contact JONELYN WHALES Recommendation: RECEIVE & PROVIDE COMMENTS

Commissioner Haeber commented that the first idea was to use the funds from the Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant to designate several properties around the city. After further research, it was discovered that the funds cannot be used for that purpose. So, now the funds will be used to facilitate an outreach and education program through an app called the Root in Richmond.

To bring the idea to life, he submitted a grant application to the State Office of Historic Preservation for the amount of \$25,000. One stipulation is that the City must provide 2/3s of that amount in volunteer time and in-kind time. He noted that that requirement will be met easily.

The concept is to build an app with a limited number of sites featured through oral histories that are collected, produced, and then mapped on a pre-determined route. He recommended that the route follow the Richmond Greenway or existing bikeway paths to pair healthy activities with history. The route would highlight the often-missed historic locations and historic culture in the downtown area. The idea is to start the route at the Bay Area Rapid Transit station and then end at the ferry to encourage public transportation usage.

The grant encouraged projects to incorporate the Statewide Historic Preservation Plan and the Richmond Historic Preservation Plan. The project will include historic eras such as the Japanese internment era and the flower nurseries of Richmond. Also, the Pullman District, the Black Panthers in Richmond, Richmond's musical history, black-owned businesses in the historic downtown, the Box Car Village, and several others. The app will focus not only on the buildings but also on the City's cultural history.

Volunteers have oversight of the project with City support and Commissioner Haeber requested that the Historic Preservation Commission be involved as well. He mentioned an important step is to engage with the public and involve them in the process. Public input and public interest will drive the interviews and oral histories. The City has committed to providing Spanish translation for the app's content and the content will be edited by a professional oral historian. The Richmond Museum of History will also provide support for the project by digitizing archival materials.

In terms of the timeline, the CLG Grant requires that the project be complete by September 2022. The majority of the work will be collecting sites, stories, checking the route of the tour, helping with written text, and finalizing the project. The goal is to complete the work by July 2022.

Commissioner Stromberg reported that her involvement so far has been providing input from the National Parks Service's perspective. This included possible app development that the Rosie Riveter's Trust may or may not be developing as well as a National Parks Service-wide mobile app that has already been developed. She mentioned that the National Parks Service is collecting history on the International Hotel and that she has contacts regarding the Box Car Village. She recommended that the volunteers work with the neighborhood councils as well to collect their recollections. Also, to explore what Pogo Park is doing with the Yellow Brick Road Project and what the Planning Department is doing with the Wellness Trail Project.

Chair McNamara asked if the community groups have been identified and if contact has been made. Commissioner Haeber clarified that Staff only recently received notice that the City has

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been issued the grant. Next steps include reaching out to various community groups. He suggested that the partner organizations draft a list of groups that should be contacted as well as work with the City through its social media and distribution list.

Commissioner M. Hibma supported the idea of having the partner organizations communicate with the Historic Preservation Commission at the Commission's monthly meetings. Also, to hold presentations at the neighborhood council's monthly meetings. He remarked that the largest component of the project will be establishing relationships and trust. He requested that Staff provide a list of active neighborhood councils to the Commission to start the conversations with them. Also, to contact each district's Council Member as the project moves forward. Ms. Whales confirmed that Staff has a list and will provide it to the Commission. Commissioner M. Hibma volunteered to speak at the neighborhood council meeting.

Vice Chair Pavlinec remarked that folks must be specific about what type of information they are asking for from the residents. Commissioner M. Hibma clarified that the discussions should start with areas that are not widely recognized.

Commissioner Haeber noted that there is already a lot of material and documentation available. He appreciated and agreed with Commissioner M. Hibma that volunteers should initiate the dialog. He requested direction on the route the tour should take and does the City's existing bike infrastructure miss any areas that should be highlighted.

Commissioner C. Hibma agreed that there are routes that are not bike safe. She mentioned that she can reach out to folks at the Point Richmond History Association and they might have volunteers willing to help with the project.

Commissioner Stromberg appreciated the comment that building the project will bring more awareness of the Historic Preservation Commission and the project can be used as a mechanism for the Commission to know the community groups better. She expressed that if the basic structure of the mobile app is created with the CLG funds, the app can be built upon for years to come.

Chair McNamara asked if using the existing bike infrastructure is a requirement of the grant. She remarked that there are folks who cannot bicycle ride and it may be worthwhile to have several routes that allow other modes of transportation. Commissioner Haeber confirmed that a large portion of the proposed route is on the Richmond Greenway. Many of the historic resources are spaced far away from each other and biking is a way for folks to see them all in one trip. He suggested that maybe the tour should focus on one area first and then grow from there in the future.

Vice Chair Pavlinec suggested the route be segmented into walkable and bikeable distances. Commissioner Haeber and Chair McNamara liked the suggestion.

Commissioner M. Hibma felt the proposed bike route is a starting point and folks can determine how much of the tour they want to see.

Vice Chair Pavlinec mentioned that there is a lot of available information about McDonald Avenue and there might be more direct ques along that path. Commissioner Haeber articulated that the tour intends to highlight the intangible side of the City of Richmond's history. He specified that there is a feature in the app that can alert folks that there is an oral history stop along the route and folks can listen to it as they bike or walk by the site.

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Vice Chair Pavlinec expressed excitement that the app will allow folks to take the tour when it is convenient for them.

Commissioner Haeber inquired if the Council has approved the grant. Ms. Jonelyn confirmed that the grant is on the agenda for the next Council meeting.

Commissioner Haeber explained that once Council approves the grant, a Request for Proposal (RFP) can be issued for an app developer. He assumed that the Commission would review the RFPs and recommend an app developer to Council. He predicted that \$16,000 of the grant would be needed for the app developer. The remainder of the grant will be portioned out to the Richmond Museum of History to digitize archival materials to allow an oral historian to produce the audio programs and interview folks. Next steps include reaching out to community groups and working with the Richmond Museum of History to identify potential items that can be incorporated into the app.

Commissioner Stromberg suggested that the Commission reach out to Betty Reid Soskin and document her stories about Macdonald Avenue and the music scene. Chair McNamara agreed.

Vice Chair Pavlinec mentioned that the Richmond Museum of History in prior years had an exhibit on Black Panthers. Commissioner Stromberg mentioned that the National Parks Conservation Association is working on a project in Oakland, California on Black Panthers in Oakland.

Commissioner Stromberg inquired if there are City Staff who are liaisons to the neighborhood councils. Ms. Jonelyn answered yes and reported that she would put together a list of people that the Commissioners can contact.

Commissioner Haeber recommended that Commissioners encourage the neighborhood council leaders to attend the next Historic Preservation Commission meeting.

Commissioner M. Hibma suggested that the Commission focus on active neighborhood councils that touch the proposed route. For neighborhood councils that are not active, he suggested reaching out to the churches in that area.

Vice Chair Pavlinec inquired if there are neighborhood councils in the industrial section between 580 and Rosie the Riveter Trust. Commissioner Stromberg supported Commissioner Haeber's suggestion to have the tour explore other areas outside of World War II because there will always be federal dollars to cover World War II in Richmond.

Vice Chair Pavlinec wanted to see the tour incorporate components that folks are interested in like the Black Panthers. She recalled that there was a lecture that Rosie the Riveter put on that had a presenter who spoke about the music in Richmond. Commissioner Haeber disclosed that the speaker's name is Doug Harris.

Commissioner Haeber articulated he would share the proposed route with the other Commissioners as well as examples of other successful historical apps.

Adjournment - The Commission adjourned at 6:38 p.m. to November 9, 2021.