

CARSON CITY HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION

Minutes of the September 9, 2003 Meeting

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A regular meeting of the Carson City Historic Resources Commission was scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 9, 2003 in the Community Center Bonanza Room, 851 East William Street, Carson City, Nevada.

PRESENT: Chairperson Michael Drews
Vice Chairperson Mark Lopiccolo
Richard Baker
Robert Darney
Rebecca Ossa
Peter Smith
Louann Speulda

STAFF: Walter Sullivan, Planning and Community Development Director
Jennifer Pruitt, Associate Planner
Joe McCarthy, Economic Development/Redevelopment Manager
Kathleen King, Recording Secretary

NOTE: A tape recording of these proceedings is on file in the Clerk-Recorder's Office and is available for review during regular business hours.

A. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM (1-0008) - Chairperson Drews called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Roll was called; a quorum was present.

B. ACTION ON APPROVAL OF MINUTES - August 12, 2003 (1-0019) - Commissioner Baker moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Speulda seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

C. MODIFICATION OF AGENDA (1-0032) - None.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS (1-0039) - None.

E. DISCLOSURES (1-0052) - Commissioner Darney advised that his firm, Hannafin-Darney Architects, was previously contracted by Cubix Corporation for a project different than that which is agendized. Hannafin-Darney Architects is not currently retained by Cubix Corporation. Chairperson Drews advised of a meeting 2-3 weeks ago between Cubix Corporation representatives, City staff, and two Commissioners to discuss the Jack's Bar building.

F. PUBLIC HEARING: ACTION ITEMS

F-1. H-03/04-5 ACTION REGARDING A REQUEST FROM JACK W. AND CHERYL J. COOKE TO CONSTRUCT A COVERED CAR PORT ON THE EAST SIDE OF PROPERTY LOCATED AT 614 WEST THIRD STREET, APN 003-133-33 (1-0077) - Ms. Pruitt provided background information on this item and reviewed the proposal. She noted that the roofing and siding materials for the proposed car port will match the existing single family dwelling and garage structure. She displayed slides of the subject residence and, in response to a question, reviewed the provisions of the Carson City Municipal Code relating to the size of accessory structures. Mr. Cooke acknowledged that a gate will be installed on the front of the car port, and that the car port will be constructed on a concrete pad.

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Commissioner Darney moved to approve H-03/04-5, a request from Jack and Cheryl Cooke to construct a car port on the east side of property located at 614 West Third Street, pursuant to the five conditions of approval. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

F-2. H-03/04-4 DISCUSSION REGARDING A REQUEST FROM LARRY TILLER, APPLICANT (PROPERTY OWNER: CUBIX ORMSBY, LLC) TO EVALUATE THE PROPERTY KNOWN AS JACK'S BAR, LOCATED AT 418 SOUTH CARSON STREET, APN 003-116-04 (1-0216) - Ms. Pruitt thanked the applicants for bringing this item before the Commission, and provided historic information and characteristics of Jack's Bar, which was depicted in displayed slides. She advised that the property has been listed in the National Registry of Historic Places since 1980, as #800043383. She provided copies of the engineering study to interested citizens.

Don Lehr, of Cubix Ormsby LLC, provided an overview of the condition of the structure, as follows: the interior walls are not original; the electrical, plumbing, gas heating, and swamp cooler were added in subsequent years; the floor has been reworked; the original bar was removed prior to purchase by the current owners; and the east wall appears to have been reworked. Mr. Lehr noted that the block walls appear to be the only historic element of the building. He advised that the east wall is leaning toward the south and that the blocks over the door are severely cracked. He further advised that the south wall is also leaning, and that debris from the north wall has fallen between it and the adjacent building. [Commissioner Ossa arrived at 5:39 p.m.] Mr. Lehr advised that the building, in its current condition, does not meet any of the current code requirements which creates additional issues associated with insuring the property. He invited suggestions and advice from the Commissioners and any other qualified individuals. Chairperson Drews thanked Mr. Lehr for bringing this item before the Commission.

(1-0473) Mr. McCarthy advised that he was representing Redevelopment Authority Chairperson Robin Williamson in expressing support for the Ormsby House renovation project. He commented that restoration of the Ormsby House is crucial to the City's redevelopment and downtown revitalization efforts. He advised of the opportunity, through the Redevelopment Incentive Program, to provide incentives which may turn the economics of stabilizing and seismically retrofitting the building to the owners' advantage. He provided background information on the Economic Vitality Coalition and read a portion of the Economic Vitality Strategic Plan into the record. He discussed the qualifications and experience of Mel Green, a renowned structural engineer, who has worked on a variety of downtown Carson City buildings with significant seismic and retrofit issues over the last twenty years. He offered to contact Mr. Green and request him to conduct seismic and retrofit analyses which may facilitate further conversation with regard to preserving the building.

(1-0628) Burt Bedeau, an architectural historian, provided background information on the newly formed Preserve Nevada, Inc., which Board of Directors he was representing. He added the Preserve Nevada, Inc. Board of Directors' encouragement and support for rehabilitating Jack's Bar. He expressed the opinion that the building "is unquestionably a worthy historic resource." He noted that the building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and retains a "high level of historic integrity both in its materials and in its association." He discussed projects addressed by Preserve Nevada, Inc. over the years and the expertise represented by its members. He recommended Mel Green as a qualified structural engineer with extensive experience in working with masonry buildings such as Jack's Bar. He expressed the opinion that the building can be economically rehabilitated and ultimately integrated into the development plans for the area. He strongly encouraged all those involved to work together toward a solution.

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(1-0712) Eileen Cohen, President of the Carson City Preservation Coalition, provided background information on the purpose and mission of the Coalition. She provided an overview of the National Register of Historic Places form for Jack's Bar, and provided a copy to Mr. Lehr. She expressed support, on behalf of the Coalition, for restoring the bar. She further expressed the desire to lease or purchase the building to be used as the Coalition Center. Once a purchase agreement or a long-term lease is entered into, the Coalition would be eligible for grant funding to be used for building restoration.

(1-0793) Jed Block, a Carson City native, expressed appreciation for the investment by Cubix Ormsby in the downtown area. He provided suggestions for restoring the building, including dismantling the walls and properly reconstructing them. He reiterated appreciation to Mr. Lehr and Mr. Fiegehan for their work on the Ormsby House and its significance to Carson City.

Mr. Lehr advised that the Capitol Motel is currently undergoing an asbestos abatement which should be completed within the week. The plan is to use the lot for parking. Mr. Bedeau requested that the Capitol Motel signage be donated to a museum, and Mr. Lehr agreed to make the signs available.

(1-0885) Susan Ballew, President of the Carson City Historical Society, expressed support for saving the building. She offered to the owners the grant writing assistance of the Historical Society.

Mr. Sullivan advised of the provisions of the Uniform Conservation Building Code, which covers historic properties.

Commissioner Ossa provided information to Mr. Lehr on three companies which insure historic properties. With regard to seismic retrofit of the building, Commissioner Ossa provided pertinent National Park Service publication briefs. She discussed retrofit alternatives and the origin of the sandstone blocks. She advised that building code applicability is dependent upon occupancy, and of alternatives to full compliance with ADA requirements in the case of a demonstrated historic building. Commissioner Ossa expressed agreement with Mr. Bedeau's earlier comments regarding the integrity of the building. She acknowledged that the interior was, at some point, remodeled but noted that the "main elements" remain. She discussed the possibility of utilizing historic photographs of the interior if the intent is toward rehabilitation. She further acknowledged that the storefront has been modified, and provided National Park Service preservation briefs on rehabilitating historic storefronts, rehabilitating historic building interiors, the maintenance and repair of architectural cast iron, and how to deal with historic masonry.

Commissioner Ossa provided an additional article entitled, "The Economics of Rehabilitation" authored by representatives of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. She suggested easements in the form of donation of the more visible portions of the building to a local preservation organization. She discussed the Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program as an additional option, and provided an information packet to Mr. Lehr. She provided an additional National Parks Service preservation brief entitled, "Mothballing Historic Buildings."

Vice Chairperson Lopiccolo discussed the rehabilitation project he and his wife did at the building on the southwest corner of Second and Carson Streets. He expressed the desire to see all those involved do everything possible to save the Jack's Bar building. Mr. Lehr discussed problems associated with the north

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wall. Commissioner Ossa discussed the efforts involved in rehabilitating Piper's Opera House in Virginia City. Chairperson Drews advised that Mr. Green would have insights into dealing with an out-of-plumb wall.

Mr. Lehr responded to questions regarding the owners' future plans for the Capitol Motel property. He expressed an interest in mothballing the Jack's Bar building in the interim between now and the time the Ormsby House renovation is completed. He expressed concern over the east wall, and discussion took place with regard to the other leaning walls. Commissioner Smith discussed the purview of the Commission and other successful seismic retrofit projects for unconsolidated masonry buildings around town. He expressed support for preserving the building. Commissioner Darney noted the public support for preserving the building, and requested Mr. Lehr to consider renovation. If renovation is not economically feasible, he expressed a preference for integrating the building or its materials into another development. Commissioner Speulda noted the possibility of stabilizing the building from the inside since it is only one story. Commissioner Baker expressed appreciation for the public comment and the discussion, and expressed support for saving the building.

In response to a question, Mr. McCarthy expressed a willingness to contact Mr. Green if Mr. Lehr is interested in having him do so. Chairperson Drews commented that Mr. Green will be able to provide a much better idea of the economics involved in rehabilitating the building. Chairperson Drews offered the Commission's assistance and referred the owners to the State Historic Preservation Office as an additional resource. Mr. Lehr expressed an interest in stabilizing the building.

In light of the Bernard/Bortolin letter included in the agenda materials, Ms. Pruitt indicated that if Mr. Green is retained, his analysis should extend to the structure to the north of the Jack's Bar building. Discussion took place regarding Mr. Green's experience and expertise. Chairperson Drews reiterated the offer of assistance from members of the Commission and Redevelopment staff. He thanked Mr. Lehr for bringing this item before the Commission.

(1-2038) Bob McFadden, owner of the St. Charles Hotel, commented that the historic buildings are an asset to downtown Carson City, and discussed the importance of preserving Jack's Bar.

Chairperson Drews and the Commissioners thanked Mr. Lehr. Chairperson Drews recessed the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and reconvened at 6:31 p.m.

F-3. DISCUSSION REGARDING GRANTS (1-2311) - Ms. Pruitt reviewed the revised grant time line which was provided to the Commissioners at the August meeting. She advised Commissioner Ossa that Mr. McCarthy would be providing information to her shortly.

G. FUTURE COMMISSION ITEMS (1-2383) - Ms. Pruitt advised that the property owner at 400 West King Street informed her that the juniper bushes near the front door will be removed due to safety concerns. The remaining juniper bushes around the building will be trimmed. Ms. Pruitt further advised that she has been working with Mr. McCarthy and Supervisor Robin Williamson regarding rezoning for portions of the west side in the residential office and historic districts. She anticipates that an item will be submitted to the Commission at the October meeting. Chairperson Drews requested staff to agendize discussion regarding priority projects and a subsequent presentation to the Board of Supervisors.

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Due to the Veteran's Day holiday, consensus of the Commission was to reschedule the November meeting to Thursday, November 13th.

H. ACTION ON ADJOURNMENT (1-2756) - Commissioner Smith moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m. Commissioner Baker seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-0.

The Minutes of the September 9, 2003 meeting of the Carson City Historic Resources Commission are so approved this 14th day of October, 2003.

MICHAEL DREWS, Chair