

Cordova Historic Preservation Commission

Meeting Minutes – Thursday, February 7, 2019

Members present: Jim Casement and Nancy Bird, and via teleconference: John Wachtel, Sylvia Lange, and Heather Hall. Absent: Cathy Sherman and Brooke Johnson.

The meeting was called to order by Chair J. Casement about 5:05 pm.
The agenda was approved without objection.

Approval of minutes

Motion by Lange, seconded by Wachtel to approve the minutes of April 5, 2018. Motion passed without objection.

Correction to December 14, 2017 minutes regarding terms of office

Bird explained that the City Clerk had notified her last fall – when terms of office were expiring – that her records showed that Bird’s term actually was completion of McGann’s term and it expired in 2018, not 2020, as our Dec. 14, 2017 minutes indicate. Bird requested a motion to amend the minutes of Dec. 14, 2017 to state: “Terms of office – Bird, Lange and Wachtel expire in Dec. 2018; Hall, Sherman and Johnson expire 12/19; and Casement expires in 12/20.”

Motion by Bird, seconded by Wachtel to amend the Dec. 14, 2017 minutes as stated above.

Motion adopted without objection.

Cordova Historic building survey update

Casement referenced the draft template Bird prepared and included in the packet (an excel spreadsheet). He thinks this template includes the basic data we should target to collect on each historic property.

Bird explained that the template is based on the “Building Inventory Form” included at the back of the *Alaska Historic Buildings Survey Manual & Style Guide*, by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Office of History & Archaeology, and the Alaska Historical Commission. The buildings listed on the draft template are copied from one of the 4 pages in the Appendix of Nicki Nielsen’s *From Fish and Copper, Cordova’s Heritage and Buildings*. Nielsen’s list of buildings would serve as a starting point for the new building survey. Bird pointed out that her draft template includes additional data points, such as including the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) number for those buildings/properties which are also in the AHRS.

Wachtel asked what geographic boundaries are intended for the new building survey. He looked at the AHRS online and described a boundary map posted that he will share to Commission members via a screenshot. Bird said his description of those boundaries sounded more limited than what we might want to include. Hall agreed. Wachtel and Hall both have access to the AHRS online and will investigate it further.

Discussion turned to funding sources to support the building survey work. Consensus reached to try to schedule a training workshop in April, May or June that could include high school students, some teachers and other interested members of the public or Historical Society. This workshop would also serve to publicize the project and try to ensure building owners are not “surprised” when students or volunteers show up outside their doorstep taking pictures, etc.

Wachtel suggested that, perhaps, a “soft launch” of the survey could start later this summer (with the start of school in mid to late August). This soft launch might include a limited area of the city with the idea to obtain further funding support from a CLG grant in 2020.

Hall suggested that assistance for the building survey project might come from an Australian group has done archaeology work in this region for several years. They may have some expertise in creating web-based forms for data collection and they’re also working on place name history.

Follow-up actions:

- Wachtel has sent the screenshots of the AHRS boundaries for review by Commission members.
- Bird will contact Summer Louthan at the Office of History & Archeology about whether she might be able to come for the training workshop this spring; Wachtel also will try to come.
- Casement will share the draft template and other information with the school superintendent; Bird said she’d like to help with that and learn more details on what more is needed to formally involve students in this project.
- Hall noted that the new Five-Year Plan for the Office of History & Archeology might be another resource we should explore. It is posted at their website.

Main St. Conference – training workshop for Preservation Commissions

Question was asked if any Commission members are interested in attending the “Main St. Conference”. Information about it was emailed to everyone last month. It was suggested that we should try to target next year to be sure additional Commission members get to attend this.

Annual Report for Certified Local Governments

Bird noted that the CLG annual report is due by the end of March. She and Casement will work on the draft and send it to other Commission members by the end of February so they have time to review and edit it prior to its submission.

Miscellaneous

The demise of the Reception Building, one of Cordova’s oldest buildings, was acknowledged on a sad note. Bird promised to forward a link to Hall and Wachtel of the Cordova Times story about the building. Written by Dick Shellhorn, it includes a lot of history. It was suggested that Shellhorn would be a great asset if he is willing to help with the historic building survey or help publicize the survey through a newspaper article. Casement will contact Shellhorn about this.

Next meeting date

The next meeting will be Thursday, March 14, beginning at 5 pm.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.

These minutes were approved March 14, 2019.