

Cordova Historic Preservation Commission

Meeting Minutes – Thursday, March 1, 2018

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

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 Johnson, seconded by Lange to approve the minutes of December 14, 2017. Motion passed without objection.

Historic building surveys

Casement began the discussion of a methodology or template to use in updating the historic building survey for Cordova. He called attention to the three resources included in the agenda and packet and emphasized one recommendation to “not reinvent the wheel” and keep the process doable for our community. He likes Nielsen’s 1984 survey and thinks it provides a good template. He also said he’s spoken about this project to the Cordova School Superintendent, Alex Russin, and the high school history teacher (Clark). They are both supportive of involving students in the survey but need to know exactly what the student’s work would entail. There is also time sensitivity for involving students and Casement said he needs a project outline detailed this spring for it be reviewed and approved by the school authorities in time for students to work on it next year.

Wachtel suggested that our outline/template be based on recommendations included in the “Alaska Historic Buildings Survey Manual & Style Guide.” He said our building survey project might best be broken into several phases and expressed a lot of excitement that the project could involve students. He also noted that he will be visiting Skagway in the coming month and said University of Oregon students have assisted in updating Skagway’s building survey. He may learn additional ideas during his Skagway trip that will help our project template/outline.

Hall said she’d also been very impressed by the state’s Survey Manual & Style Guide (by Summer Rickman). She had jotted down notes and tried to share them with the commission just prior to this meeting; she’ll send those notes to everyone after today’s meeting. Included in her notes are:

- Review SHPO guidelines for updating local records
- Perhaps, do a reconnaissance survey
- Identify the survey’s boundaries; and consider splitting it into historic districts
- Sees this project as a 2-4 year task, with a book as a final product
- Encourages looking for partners – agencies or others – to help

Later in the meeting, Hall suggested that students with IT interests/capabilities might be able to develop an app for use in completing our building surveys. She also suggested we might want to include in our overall or longer-term project plans to develop some interpretive signs for various properties.

After further discussion, there was consensus to move ahead with the following steps:

- Request access for Commission members to the state historic property database; Wachtel will email the name and contact information of the manager (Jeffrey Peterson Weinberger, Alaska Heritage Resources Survey). Bird said she will follow-up on this request.

- Invite SHPO to visit next fall and help with a training session. Bird said she will follow-up on this.
- Casement will talk again to the history teacher (Clark) and, possibly, the school superintendent (Russin) to keep them apprised of our intention to submit to them later this spring a more detailed outline of how students might be involved in the building survey.
- Bird will work with Casement to compile a first draft outline, based on the Survey Manual & Style Guide and also on the elements included in the state's database. Bird said her goal is to try to share this first draft via email prior to the next Commission meeting.

Certified Local Government Annual Report to Office of History & Archaeology

Commission members reviewed the first draft of this report included in the packet and offered several suggestions for additions:

- Note that the Commission receives and reviews Department of Transportation Section 106 notifications.
- Wachtel will send the details of his attendance of a historic resources survey workshop.

Other members will review the draft report again and notify Bird if they think of other additions for it. Bird will draft a final report to share with everyone via email prior to its submission by the March 31st deadline.

Update on status of Commission's recommendation to Planning & Zoning re. Title 18

Bird reported that she sent the recommended changes to Title 18 to the city planner and expects this to appear on a Planning & Zoning Commission meeting agenda soon.

Review plans for Nirvana Park (if available)

No information was made available; no discussion or action taken.

Discussion of potential signage project at Mile 13 airport regarding past military history

Hall recommended that everyone visit the museum in Whittier; this museum focuses on Alaska's World War II history. She said she will reach out to Ted Spencer, of the Whittier Museum, about creating signs in Cordova and/or possible funding support for such signage.

Updates on recently complete Certified Local Government Grant Projects:

- a. Red Dragon Historic District signage and website updates – Bird reported that she is still working on the website updates. The large interpretive sign is installed outside the church, and the two bronze plaques are being mounted on wood for installation on both buildings. She hopes the signs will be installed by April.
- b. Copper River Highway Milepost Guide – Sherman left a copy of the latest near-final published brochure guide. It was passed around by Commission members in Cordova.

Next meeting date

The next meeting will be April 5th, 2018, at 5 pm.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at about 6 pm.

These minutes were approved April 5, 2018.