

## **Cordova Historic Preservation Commission**

**Meeting Minutes – Thursday, Oct. 6, 2016**

**Members present:** Jim Casement, Brooke Johnson, Sylvia Lange, Tom McGann in Cordova; and John Wachtel and Heather Hall, via teleconference.

Others present: Staff support Nancy Bird.

The meeting began about 4:35 pm. Bird welcomed all as new members of this re-instated Commission and said she would serve as interim Chair until the officer elections occurred midway through the meeting. She asked all members present to sign the oaths of office and noted that she already has received signed oaths from Wachtel and Hall.

Terms of office - In future, all appointments will be for three-year terms, but in order to have staggered membership, the terms for members are as follows: Casement expires 12/17; Lange, McGann and Wachtel expire 12/18; and Hall, Sherman and Johnson expire 12/19.

The agenda was approved as presented, and is attached to these minutes.

### **Overview and brief history of the Cordova Historic Preservation Commission (CHPC)**

Cordova City Code, Chapter 18.90 - Bird explained where to find the Cordova City Code online ([https://www.municode.com/library/ak/cordova/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=TIT18ZO](https://www.municode.com/library/ak/cordova/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT18ZO)) and highlighted sections of Chapter 18.90 which established and governs the Commission's purpose and activities. McGann pointed to several inconsistencies and "problem areas" in both the Commission's section and other parts of Chapter 18. He said the Planning and Zoning Commission wants to revise and cleanup Chapter 18.

Certified Local Governments (CLGs) – The State Office of History and Archaeology has an excellent website (<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha/index>) with information on historic preservation activities and webpages detailing the CLG application process (<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha/clg/akclg.htm>). A few minutes were spent reviewing these webpages.

Past activities and initiatives – Bird noted recent activities have included rehabilitation work on several historic buildings in Cordova (the Pioneer Igloo, Red Dragon and St. George's Episcopal Church). She also highlighted past activities publishing the "Cordova Historic Buildings Walking Tour" (about 2000) and a building inventory titled "From Fish and Copper – Cordova's Heritage and Buildings," by Nicki Nielsen (1985).

There was a brief discussion about other sources of building histories. Attention was called to the publications by Dr. Rolfe Buzzell through the Office of History and Archaeology; three separate publications have documented buildings and history of (1) the former New England Cannery (now Orca Adventure Lodge), (2) Lake Avenue and (3) First Street. Additional history about our region is documented through various U.S. Forest Service publications. *Bird and Hall will try to develop a list of these resources for the Commission.*

### **Introductions and comments by CHPC members**

Each member present spoke briefly about their past experiences and interest in history and preservation.

### **Election of Officers**

Motion by McGann, seconded by Lange to *nominate Casement as Chair*. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Lange, seconded by McGann to *nominate Johnson as Vice-Chair*. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Johnson, seconded by Lange to *nominate McGann as Secretary*. Motion passed unanimously.

Bird turned over management of the meeting to the new Chair, Casement.

### **Review and approval of grant applications proposed for submittal through the CLG grant opportunity**

Casement asked if any applications are being drafted. Bird reported that she and Cathy Sherman have discussed three potential applications: (1) an education project to develop interpretive signs and webpages for the Red Dragon Historic District; (2) an education project to develop a milepost brochure detailing the histories of the individuals for whom bridges on the Copper River Highway were named; and (3) a project focused on Nirvana Park, to collaborate with the City's Parks Department on their still-developing plans for its rehabilitation.

Commission members discussed these three ideas for applications and quickly *reached consensus to support submittal of the first two project applications*. They recommended the milepost brochure project be expanded to include all historic buildings or sites along the former railway line from Mile 0 to Mile 13.

Several members thought the Nirvana Park project idea needs more time to develop specific plans. They suggested that, perhaps, by next year's application deadline it will be clearer what kind of developments the community will support.

Several Commission members offered to assist Bird in developing the milepost brochure grant application. Bird asked if it would be acceptable for her to email the two separate applications to all Commission members next week, in advance of the October 21<sup>st</sup> deadline for submittal. Everyone agreed to review these two applications and respond quickly if they have any objections. Casement will work with Bird to get the applications submitted by the deadline.

### **Discussion: Future projects/activities**

There is general support to develop a new survey and inventory of historic properties. Another future activity should be to revise and correct the inconsistencies of Chapter 18.90 of the city code. Casement said he is glad the Commission is re-activated and that the members are genuinely interested in working on preservation activities. Hall recommended that we look at a recent building survey completed by the community of Hope, Alaska.

### **Next meeting date**

After discussion, agreement reached to schedule three meetings each year between September and May (no meetings in the summer months). The next meeting will be in January; Bird will send everyone a Doodle poll to determine the best day and time.

### **Closing comments**

Bird called attention to three additional areas of the Office of History and Archaeology's website: (1) Heritage newsletter, published monthly (<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha/heritage>); (2) a short survey requesting input on the state's Historic Preservation Plan "Saving our past,"

(<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha/planning/hpplanupdate>); and (3) a photo-sharing campaign for special sites in Alaska history (<http://soa-dnr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=557602a72c064196bc919977affeeacf> ).

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at just before 6 pm.

DRAFT