

## **Cordova Historic Preservation Commission**

**Meeting Minutes – Thursday, July 16, 2020**

The meeting was held via Zoom and teleconference.

**Members present:** Nancy Bird, Sylvia Lange, Cathy Sherman and John Wachtel.

**Others present:** Robert Meinhardt and Amy Ramirez, from the firm True North Sustainable Development Solutions, LCC.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Cathy Sherman about 5:05 pm. There were no public members present to comment.

### **Approval of agenda**

**Motion by Lange**, seconded by Bird, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed without objection.

### **Approval of minutes**

**Motion by Lange**, seconded by Sherman to approve the minutes of May 20, 2020, as presented. **Motion passed** without objection.

### **Cordova Historic buildings survey project**

**Review DRAFT Cordova Historic Survey Buildings Plan and Historic Properties Roster (Draft)**

Wachtel asked Meinhardt and Ramirez to present some general comments on these draft documents. He said he's very pleased with its organization and will have a few specific comments to share later, with other Commission members.

Meinhardt said they have enjoyed pulling together the document. He spoke of some limitations they encountered, primarily in not being able to physically access the city's tax records. He asked Commission members to particularly comment on whether the plan's proposed 20 survey districts seem reasonable or whether some should be combined or broken apart in a different fashion. He said they had tried to make the districts manageable and able to be accomplished in "small bites" by community members.

Ramirez then summarized the methodology used to develop the survey districts. She said they considered a combination of building functions, historic use areas within the town, and geography. They tried to limit districts to no more than 50 buildings. She noted that there is discrepancy in the geographic size of the districts, but the districts generally have a common characteristic. That information can be used if a building is nominated for the National Register of Historic Places. Ramirez said she believes these survey plans have the advantage of helping to educate the surveyors about the district's history as they complete the building survey. Sources used were those provided by the Commission, documents from the State Office of History and Archaeology, and known cultural and historic publications. A final source used was the multiple listing service for real estate which helped greatly in dating the development of some neighborhoods and buildings.

Meinhardt said Cordova could benefit from when an agency, such as the Department of Transportation or FAA, is doing a building improvement and required to complete a Section 106 review, as the agency will have to consult with the Certified Local Government entity. The survey planning document will be of assistance to the agency and they may be able to help complete some of the survey districts as they complete their project.

The roster integrates the nomenclature as consistent with the Alaska Heritage Resource database and also with the National Park Service for the National Register. It is designed to allow easy transfer of the data to either of those databases. The survey plan and roster will be a great resource to future construction projects.

Meinhardt again reiterated that they would like to hear from Commission members or others any details or suggestions for making the survey districts manageable.

#### Discussion by Commission members

Wachtel asked if **an additional map** could be included that zooms out to show the actual entire geographic area. He also asked about **obtaining the Google Earth files**; he said that might be very useful for students involved in future surveys.

For the roster, Wachtel noted that **the tax ID number may be the critical first piece** needed to be completed. That may be the first task for the Commission to determine how to complete.

Wachtel also commented on the roster in comparison to the AHRS and National Register's spreadsheets and said he is pleased with the draft roster's focus on core data fields.

Ramirez and Meinhardt requested that the Commission review the documents and **(1) verify the date ranges that buildings** are listed in the draft plan, and **(2) let us know if you agree with the survey districts proposed** in the plan. Meinhardt also asked for **feedback on the intent and purpose of the survey. How might this survey plan help the community?**

Wachtel asked if TNSD might add to the document a section suggesting references or tips on how building surveys have been completed effectively, i.e., using mobile devices or other weblinks about white papers. Ramirez noted the availability of the State Office of History and Archaeology's "how to" document which commission members are already aware of (and have copies). Meinhardt suggested they might add a section "**How to complete a survey,**" similar to the already existing how to complete the roster. Commission members liked that idea!

Lange brought up **a missing notation of an old graveyard at the Eyak Boat Landing**, on land now owned by the U.S. Forest Service. She also noted that there are **date distinctions in some districts** that need to be noted; an example is the Copper River Highway's end which was first at the original Ocean Dock, located at the Cannery Row area. The road was extended in 1972 and the new Ocean Dock and ferry terminal area built. While that is now referenced as the "beginning" of the Copper River Highway, the highway (following the old railroad route) actually began at the original Ocean Dock (which partially burned in 1968).

Lange also noted that **McLaughlin Trailer Park**, on the shores of Eyak Lake (**House Park #2**), was the **original village site for the Native Village of Eyak**. Bird asked about another village site about a mile down the Eyak River at Mile 5; Lange responded that the two main village sites were at Alaganik and on Lake Eyak. The other sites were likely summer fish camps.

There was some discussion about archaeological sites and whether/how they fit into a building survey plan. Consensus reached that those resources probably ought to be generally left out of this survey plan, both because of their uniqueness and also because of the sensitivity of some of that information. Sherman suggested that this might be an area to pursue a future partnership with the Native of Village.

Bird complimented the consulting team on the draft plan saying it excited her as she reviewed it. She appreciates the comprehensive list of past resources. She also noted **two typo-type discrepancies** (“railway” not Railroad; and “Lake Avenue” not Lake Street). She said she likes the survey districts as proposed.

Wachtel and Sherman both said they also like the size of the survey districts. Sherman asked about **inclusion of the Fleming Spit area**, suggesting it might be added to the North Orca Road survey district. She said there were historic homesteads there. Lange wasn’t sure whether any buildings actually still exist. Ramirez and Meinhardt said they will look into it.

### **Next steps**

Meinhardt highlighted the reviews they will do:

- Review the Fleming Spit area
- Clean up the inconsistencies
- Look at the intent and purpose of the plan
- Look at developing partnerships with others in completing this plan
- Adding an education component
- On the survey map, capture all of the survey areas
- Develop a “how to conduct” the survey plan – what to do to prepare and what to do in the field; specify how to survey private property without violating laws or trespass issues
- Cannery Row – brief discussion to keep it in the current survey district

Sherman said she will try to talk with Wendy Ranney and make sure she offers any suggestions/edits she might have. Bird noted that Heather Hall had emailed an apology for not making this meeting, and said she thinks Jim Casement is having some health issues.

Meinhardt said he expects to have a 95% complete document back to the Commission within two or three weeks.

### **Commission comments**

Lange thanked Meinhardt and Ramirez for a good product. Bird echoed that and also announced the good news that the two CLG grant requests Cordova submitted last spring are being awarded! Sherman said she was very pleased with the good news. Wachtel thanked everyone for their flexibility and getting this work done.

Meinhardt and Ramirez expressed appreciation for the feedback and both said they would like to visit Cordova as soon as the pandemic is over.

**Next meeting date** will be determined as necessary to review products from this contract work. It will likely be within 3 weeks.

The meeting adjourned about 6:10 pm.

These minutes were approved XXXXXX.