

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION MEETING

City Council Chambers

May 21, 2013

CALL TO ORDER – ITEM 1:

A regular meeting of the Astoria Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) was held at the above place at the hour of 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL – ITEM 2:

Commissioners Present: President LJ Gunderson, Vice President Michelle Dieffenbach, Commissioners Jack Osterberg, Thomas Stanley, Paul Caruana, Kevin McHone and Mac Burns.

Staff Present: Building Inspector Jack Applegate and Planner Rosemary Johnson.

Guests Present: Historic Building Consultant John Goodenberger.

President Gunderson introduced Mac Burns, the newest member of the HLC. He is Executive Director of the Clatsop County Historical Society.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – ITEM 3(a):

President Gunderson asked if there were any changes to the minutes of April 16, 2013. There were none. Vice President Dieffenbach moved to approve the minutes of April 16, 2013 as presented; seconded by Commissioner Stanley. Ayes: President Gunderson, Vice President Dieffenbach, Commissioners Caruana, Osterberg, Burns, Stanley, and McHone. Nays: None.

PRESENTATIONS – ITEM 4(a):

The HLC will present the Dr. Edward Harvey Historic Preservation Honorable Mention Awards for 2013 to the following: David and Judith McElroy - 634 Grand and Peter and Jan Hackett - 1188 Harrison

President Gunderson stated that the HLC received information from staff and the community about projects that have been completed in the last two years and were eligible for the Dr. Harvey Historic Preservation Award. Mayor Van Dusen presented the awards at the City Council meeting on May 20, 2013. The HLC believed two more properties deserved honorable mentions.

The first Honorable Mention was awarded to Peter and Jan Hackett for restoration efforts at 1188 Harrison. The second Honorable Mention was awarded to David and Judith McElroy for the restoration of 634 Grand. President Gunderson presented the Honorable Mention Awards and photos were taken.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS/COMMISSIONERS – ITEM 5: No reports.

NEW BUSINESS – ITEM 6(a):

Adair-Uppertown Historic Inventory - John Goodenberger will do a presentation on the history of the Adair-Uppertown area and the different styles of buildings in that area. Planner Rosemary Johnson will do a presentation on what it means to be designated historic and what benefits and restrictions would apply. There will be an open discussion with the public concerning the Inventory and historic designation process.

The Historic Landmarks Commissioners stepped down from the dais to hear the presentation. Planner Johnson noted that City staff member John Goodenberger and volunteer Rachael Jensen have completed the inventory and assessment of properties in the Adair-Uppertown area. Staff has worked on the research and data entry.

John Goodenberger stated he had been asked to inventory the Adair-Uppertown area to update some of the designations and architectural descriptions. He presented the history of the Adair-Uppertown area with these key comments:

- Uppertown was inventoried 20 years ago in 1994, not all the houses in the neighborhood were included in the original inventory and some houses needed clarification. The prior inventory was an Intensive Level Survey, which included architectural descriptions and a history as well as an analysis of each building.
- This new historic inventory includes updates of architectural descriptions and designations, but does not include history. Some of the historical data collected during the original inventory is inaccurate and he would like to obtain accurate information to correct the forms.
- The subject inventory is a Reconnaissance Level Survey, which identifies and documents historic resources in the area. The information is used to recommend and inform future survey work, as well as establish local landmarks. Photographs of the neighborhood from various time periods are studied to show how the area has changed over time. He presented several photos to the Commission.
- He described the inventory process, noting that all houses, buildings and structures, regardless of their age, are surveyed to determine the context of the entire neighborhood, which is one way to find out if a potential future historic district might exist.
- He displayed a map of the Uppertown area that was surveyed and explained which properties were being proposed as contributing, non-contributing, and out-of-period, with respect to the historic designation. Only about half of the properties in the area could qualify as local landmarks.
- The following State standards must be met in order for a property to be eligible for a historic designation:
 - The property must be at least 45 years old.
 - The property must retain enough integrity of the historic structure and/or be associated with a locally significant person or event.
- He showed a variety of buildings in the Uppertown area that have historic significance, noting the diversity of scale, age and architectural influence.
- Integrity is determined using four factors:
 - Form - roof shape, additions that are within the scale of the building, maintenance of porches.
 - Windows - size and style consistency among the openings.
 - Materials - exterior walls, gable ends, foundation, roof.
 - Decorative Features - trim, molding, chimneys, brackets, etc.
- A building does not need to score 100% to meet landmark standards. Vinyl windows do not reduce a building's ranking as long as the size and style are consistent with historically accurate features.
 - Displayed were pictures of a house before and after restoration work was completed and he explained how the integrity of the building had been changed.
- Preservation of the Adair-Uppertown area is recommended because building resources are diminishing. There is value in working class architecture and social history. Establishment of landmarks helps stabilize building values. Preservation frequently involves local craftspeople and stimulates the local economy. Successful revitalization always includes preservation at one level or another.
- Large, highly ornamented houses are the exception to the rule in the Adair-Uppertown area. The character of these houses comes from the abundance of working class homes and commercial buildings. The simple buildings do not retain their historic character after small alterations. He showed pictures of similar houses with different levels of alterations.
 - Uppertown was and still is a working class neighborhood. The style of houses in this area has become part of the character of Astoria and of the neighborhood. While it may seem insignificant, the loss of historic detail in an area adds up. Neighbors tend to model each other. Preservation of one building can inspire others to restore and maintain their buildings. He displayed photographs of restoration work that has been completed in the Adair-Uppertown area.
- He thanked the volunteers who did data entry and inventory work. Buildings were photographed twice. Architectural analyses were written. The entire project had to be completed in five weeks. He also thanked property owners who have provided additional information and corrections to the survey. Additional information was requested to ensure more accurate records.

Planner Johnson presented information regarding Code compliance and the permit process, reviewing Article 6, the Historic Properties Ordinance, of the Development Code and described pictures of related projects with key comments:

- Historic preservation does not mean capturing a moment in time; exterior alterations are allowed.

- Designating a property as historic does not mean the property must be kept absolutely pristine in its historic condition.
- The review process ensures that restoration projects are compatible with historic accuracy. Maintenance and repair of existing structures do not require review, but must be done in compliance with City Building Codes. Paint color, interiors, fences and landscaping are not reviewed. Interiors must be Code compliant. Some review of landscaping may be necessary if the landscaping is designated historic. Some contemporary materials are allowed on exterior alterations.
 - Type 1 Administrative Review – The Planning Department can approve alterations administratively through the permit process, in person or over the phone. Mechanical equipment, like-for-like replacements, foundations, roofing materials, repairs with minor changes, and alterations that return features to original historic condition can all be approved administratively. This process may be completed via fax, email, telephone, or in person. This process is free and is usually completed within a day or two. She noted several examples that could be addressed through a Type 1 Review.
 - A Type 2 Administrative Review is being proposed. The Historic Preservation Plan (HPP) identified Code changes that will make the review process easier on property owners. The proposed Code amendment will be presented to the HLC in June 2013. The Type 2 Administrative Review is one of the changes that was proposed in the HPP that will allow administrative approval of some design and material changes on rear elevations upon completion of a public review permit process. Window and door placement on the rear of a building and minor increases in footprints would also be eligible for the Type 2 Administrative Review. This process will require an application and drawings of the project and will take about 30 days to complete. State law requires Staff to notify property owners 20 days prior to a decision. The City mails a public notice to all property owners within 250 feet of the proposed project. A notice must be published in the newspaper, which costs the City approximately \$120. A decision can be made 20 days after the notices are sent out. Decisions are based on facts, criteria in the Code, and public input. The cost for this review is currently \$100.
 - Type 3 HLC Review – The HLC is a body of seven citizens, appointed by the Mayor. Each member has some expertise in construction, historic preservation, real estate or other appropriate expertise. Changes in design or materials, additions, placement of windows and doors, and new construction on adjacent properties must be reviewed by the HLC. This review requires an application, drawings of the project and a fee of \$100. This review takes 30 to 60 days to complete as the HLC meets once a month. Notices must be sent out 20 days in advance of a decision. Applications submitted by the 13th of the month will be reviewed by the HLC on the third Tuesday of the following month.
 - She displayed pictures of a recently renovated houses, explaining which features were updated with an administrative review and which alterations required review by the HLC. She also showed drawings that the property owner submitted with his application. Pictures of new construction and other projects requiring Commission review were displayed and explained.
- She described the benefits of historic designation as follows:
 - Preservation of the appearance of the neighborhood.
 - Assistance from the City – State Historic Preservation Office grant money is being used to conduct the new inventory of the Adair-Uppertown area. Grant funds are also used to assist property owners with the permit process and design consultation.
 - Review of adjacent new construction gives property owners protection from non-compatible development.
 - Heritage tourism - Astoria is a historic community that visitors enjoy. Tourists bring money into the community.
 - Environmental issues - Materials in historic houses are often preserved, rather than replaced. This reduces solid waste and the energy and material waste related to new product production.
 - Property values and resale - Reports show that there are economic benefits to historically restoring a property. Some buyers seek historic properties and neighborhoods.
 - Stewardship and pride - Property owners take pride in preserving the history of the community through restoration of a historic building. Property owners are stewards caring for the house for future generations.
 - Flexibility in building codes.

Building Inspector Applegate discussed building codes as follows:

- Most building codes are created in response to disasters. The insurance industry works with governments to create standard codes in America. Oregon began to create building codes in 1974. Residential dwellings

built prior to 1978 are not in compliance with State codes. Remodels, repairs, and alterations must be done in complete compliance with the current City Building Code. Properties designated historic are allowed to keep features installed prior to the Code.

- Commercial buildings also benefit from historic designations. He encourages property owners to get the designation because it is easier to complete projects. Bringing a building up to Code can be expensive, while preservation can cost much less. Oregon has the strictest energy Code in the country and exceeds Federal standards.
- He compared costs involved and compliance issues with projects on historic properties versus non-historic properties. Building officials can waive requirements for historic properties as long as the project brings the building as close to Code compliance as possible. Exceptions are allowed to preserve the historic nature of the building as long as hazards will not be increased.
 - His job is to protect State laws, the property owners, and the City. Historic designations should not be feared by property owners. The regular residential Code contains more requirements. The last time the State codes were updated for commercial properties, the changes resulted in a 15% increase in costs. The State now considers how Code changes will affect costs.
- Saving a century old building is the best thing a property owner can do to save energy and make the building more sustainable. Glues and plastics are used in new materials. These new materials are expensive and require a lot of energy to produce. The City will approve exceptions, whenever allowed by the State, which help property owners to move forward with projects. Property owners can appeal to the State any time they disagree with the Building Inspector's decision. The State wants to be notified of any issues so they can be resolved.
- He encourages property owners to call him with questions about historic designation, noting the advantages allowed with respect to the Building Code. Historic designations allow for simple changes to the exterior of residential properties without full Code compliance and additional costs.

The Historic Landmarks Commissioners returned to the dais. Staff called for public questions and comments.

Chris Ferrar, 3023 Harrison Avenue, Astoria, asked how the boundaries of the Adair-Uppertown area were determined and where the name Adair originated. John Goodenberger responded that the City began an inventory process of seven areas in Astoria in the 1980s; Downtown, Shively-McClure, Uniontown-Alameda, Hobson-Flavel, Adair-Uppertown, and Alderbrook. The current inventory of the Adair-Uppertown area includes the boundaries defined on the original plat map. John Adair was the first customs officer in Astoria in 1849 and helped lay out the Adair-Uppertown area. The area was originally named Adairsville and Uppertown. The neighborhood is well defined between Marine Drive on the north, the Irving Street woods on the south and east, and Old Scowl Bay on the west. The area was inventoried again to determine the possibility of designating the district as historic. There are currently no plans for the historic designation. Planner Johnson added that this is the first step towards a historic designation. Interest from the community would be required to complete the next step.

Paul Masin, 785 30th Street, Astoria, asked if there are any tax advantages to owning a historic property. Planner Johnson stated that the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) manages the Special Assessment Program. The program requires the property owner to agree to make certain improvements to the property. The tax value of the property is frozen for ten years. This provides significant savings on properties that need a lot of work. This program only applies to properties on the National Register of Historic Properties. If the neighborhood were to receive a historic designation, it would be a National designation. This would allow each historic property within the neighborhood to qualify for all benefits offered to properties on the National Register. The City does not intend to process a National Register Historic District designation for the Adair-Uppertown area at this time.

Curtis Roegner, 843 35th Street, Astoria, asked if solar roof panels would be acceptable on a historic property. Planner Johnson explained the City is currently in the process of writing a solar energy ordinance that will include outright uses, uses requiring an administrative review, as well as uses that require review by the HLC. The State and National Parks Service have developed guidelines that define appropriate and inappropriate uses of solar energy fixtures. Currently, solar roof panels are allowed upon approval of the HLC. The proposed ordinance is being drafted and is expected to be reviewed by the Planning Commission before the end of 2013.

Kimberly Chaput, 3931 Franklin, Astoria, asked if historic designation of the Adair-Uppertown area as a district is contingent upon community support. Planner Johnson replied the City would like support from property owners

within the neighborhood. An additional intensive level survey would have to be completed that would include review of the history of the homes. A more specific smaller boundary would be designated.

Ms. Chaput asked how property owners would need to express support or opposition. Planner Johnson explained that property owners in the Shively-McClure National Historic District collectively contacted the City to express support for the designation. Property owners attended public meetings to speak in favor of or against the designation. A grant would need to be obtained because the City does not have the funds to prepare the historic designation nomination. This would only be done after the community expressed interest. The City would need to complete another inventory, present the request to the HLC, then present the request to City Council. SHPO and the National Parks Service would complete reviews prior to final adoption of the request to designate the area as a historic district. Property owners received a letter notifying them of their right to opt out of the historic designation. This inventory and designation as a local landmark allows individual property owners to decide if their property should be designated historic. Designation as a National Historic District depends on a majority rule of the property owners within the district. Any property within that district that has been proposed to be historic must receive the designation. Individual properties cannot opt out.

Ms. Chaput asked which designation Planner Johnson would like the property owners to support. Planner Johnson stated that the designation of a local landmark is up to individual property owners. The City is not currently proposing the designation of a National Historic District. The City requires property owners to opt out in writing prior to the next HLC meeting on June 18, 2013. Historic designation of these properties will be decided upon at this meeting.

Planner Johnson explained that letters sent to the property owners included information regarding the eligibility of their properties. Properties designated "eligible/contributing" and "eligible/significant" may be designated historic. She confirmed that Ms. Chaput's property was scheduled to be designated historic. She noted that tax records do not always include accurate data on construction dates. John Goodenberger said that anytime the tax records do not match the data in the inventory, he does additional research. He attempts to find historic photographs of the property and considers the style of the building. The State recommends 12 minutes be spent on researching and writing a report for each property; he usually spends 15 hours on each property. He uses maps, photographs, and library records to complete his research. He urged property owners to give him any additional information they have on their properties so that the reports be as accurate as possible.

Questions and comments from the Commission continued as follows.

Commissioner Osterberg stated the HLC is charged with conducting a public hearing on the proposal, which is scheduled for June 18, 2013. He understood that the designation of a historic district is not being proposed. Within the Development Code, the inventory and Inspector Applegate's presentation, several different terms have been used to describe a property's eligibility for designation as a local landmark. He wanted to know if the terms used in the Development Code, "primary" and "secondary", would be used as classifications for the purposes of designating a local landmark. Planner Johnson explained that the State considers the historic building period of the area. Properties built within the primary construction period have been labeled "primary". Properties built during secondary construction periods are labeled "secondary". The classification of "contributing historic building" means that the building is historic, but does not add to the district with regards to when it was built. These classifications have been replaced by the State with the following terms: eligible/significant, meaning the building is significant to the area; eligible/contributing, the building is historic and of value to the neighborhood; non-contributing, the building does not contribute to the history of the area; out of period – newer homes built less than 45 years ago. Eligible/significant and eligible/contributing properties may be designated historic. The new inventory classifies properties using the new classifications. The Code amendment to amend the review processes will also include these new classifications. This Code amendment will allow properties classified as eligible/significant and eligible/contributing to automatically receive the historic designation after the public hearing process.

Commissioner Osterberg stated he did not see criteria for landmark designation in the Development Code and asked what the approval criteria were. Planner Johnson said the City uses the criteria set by the State with regards to the integrity of the building, architectural style, age of the building, and alterations. Mr. Goodenberger added the HLC will rely on the recommendations of Staff. Years ago, the HLC attached a ranking system to these criteria and mandated that each property reach a certain percentage to be designated as a local landmark. Mr. Goodenberger used this ranking system when researching the Shively-McClure District. He also invited the

Commissioners and City Councilors to visit properties where the ranking was questionable. The ranking system was done well and eliminates any bias the inspector may have for a particular style.

Commissioner Osterberg said he wanted to make sure that the HLC uses criteria that are clear and easily understood by everyone, including the public. He looks forward to seeing this information in the Staff report for the hearing on June 18, 2013. Mr. Goodenberger stated that hundreds of buildings go before a State Commission in order for the district to be designated as historic. As Chairman of the State Commission, he assured that each building is considered by the Commission. The Commission determines if the application for historic designation is appropriate. If buildings in the proposed district do not meet basic standards, the application will be returned. Planner Johnson added that Staff will be presenting the HLC with the criteria. She noted there are approximately 510 properties in the Adair-Uppertown area so the criteria would be available in the agenda packet so the HLC will have the opportunity to review it before the public hearing.

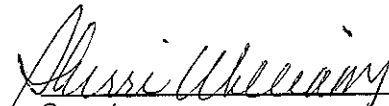
Commissioner Stanley thanked Inspector Applegate, Planner Johnson, and Mr. Goodenberger for giving great presentations.

Garrett Reeves, 3931 Franklin Avenue, Astoria, understood this is the first step towards establishing individual properties as historic. Then, the neighborhood can proceed further to have the area designated a National Historic District. He asked what Code restrictions were required under the National designation. Planner Johnson replied that obtaining the National designation will take several years, but there are no additional Code requirements. The National Register has the same constraints as a local landmark. The National historic designation does qualify property owners for additional Federal and State benefits, such as tax assessments, grant opportunities, and Federal tax credits. Mr. Goodenberger added that for the State of Oregon, the benefits are the same whether the historic designation is local, State or National.

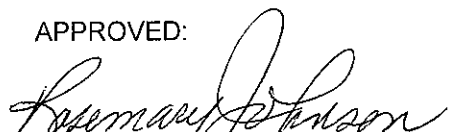
ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

ATTEST:


Secretary

APPROVED:


City Planner