



MINUTES

Historic Preservation Advisory Board

September 6, 2023 – 5:30 P.M.

Audio and Video of this meeting can be accessed at:

<http://losalamos.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

1. CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Moore called the meeting to order at 5:40 PM.

Members Present:

Patrick Moore, Chair
Nancy Bartlit, Member, Acting Chair
Robert Dryja, Member
Elizabeth Martineau, Member
Loretta Weiss, Member
Steven Laurent, Member

Staff Present:

Sobia Sayeda, Planning Manager
Jane Mathews, Senior Planner
Desirae J. Lujan, Associate Planner

Council Liaison:

Melanee Hand, County Council

** Attended virtually via Zoom*

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No comment.

3. HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

A. Approval of Agenda

Member Weiss moved to approve the Agenda. Member Dryja seconded. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0 vote.

Prior to proceeding with the Agenda, Chair Moore introduced a new member to the Board, Steven Laurent. He shared that he has met his term on the Board and will be departing. Member Laurent introduced himself and gave a brief background. It was decided that Acting Chair Bartlit would continue to chair the meeting, but Member Moore would remain and participate in discussion items. An election will be held at the next HPAB meeting.

B. Historic Preservation Advisory Board (HPAB) Minutes, August 2, 2023, Meeting

Member Weiss stated that the Minutes need to include more discussion. The Board agreed.

Member Weiss moved to postpone the Minutes to allow staff to provide a draft that includes more discussion. Member Dryja seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 5-0 VOTE.

4. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

A. Update of Historic District within Los Alamos County (Historic District Overlay)

Sobia Sayeda, Planning Manager, communicated that staff and Chair Moore met with the Olingers and O'Donnells to hear their concerns regarding the Historic Protection Overlay zone. They voiced that the Code language was concerning to them, and if it could change – they would be at ease. Ms. Sayeda explained the process to complete a text amendment. If the Board would like staff to pursue a text amendment, they would. Another option would be to exclude the properties from the proposed boundary and move forward with a new application.

Member Moore added that the property owners needed clarification. He shared that they were provided with explanations and benefits that creating the overlay could provide, such as being eligible for a variety of grants and resources. He shared some examples of questions asked and how they were answered. He stated that they have concerns with the Code, particularly with the limitations. The Code language is standard and follows the Secretary of Interior. Every State and county must follow the same process for Secretary of Interior standards. He stated that the conversation could be presented to the Board to look at areas that can be changed or removed that give the owners discomfort. He commented that it was not clear precisely which parts, which leads to Option 2: exclude those specific properties. They will not be eligible for a variety of funding – and it might not make a difference to them – but it would allow the county to move forward.

Ms. Sayeda commented that the timeline for a text amendment would be 8-10 months. She reiterated that the options were to hold the application and wait for a text amendment, or to submit a new application with a new proposed boundary. Member Moore stated that another option would be to move forward as originally presented, but having a concession to move forward in harmony and good relationship was preferred. It was reiterated that changing the boundary may be a solution to proceed and meet the County Council goals.

Member Martineau asked for the Los Alamos Historical Society's opinion. Christine Hipp, Los Alamos Historical Society President, questioned the benefits of being within the overlay. Member Moore communicated that the county is a Certified Local Government (CLG), which would make them eligible for grants and other resources. He detailed different possibilities to assist with preservation. Member Weiss included that historic advisement would be at the local level, opposed to the State, and would provide protection to the Los Alamos Historical Society. Michael Wheeler, Los Alamos Historical Society Board Member, expressed concerns that necessary renovations would not be approved and able to occur. Ms. Hipp stated that they still had to do some research, but it needs to be balanced. They asked for representation at their next Board meeting to share information and answer questions.

Member Laurent asked questions to get him up to date on the conversation. He asked if any of these properties are under any local zoning code, other than the base zones. Ms. Sayeda confirmed that they are not in any overlay. He stated, however, that they are designated on the National Capital Register of Historic Places, not a National Historical Landmark, but a standard nomination. Hypothetically, if the Los Alamos Historical Society wanted to work on the Hans Bethe House - if they do not consult anyone and begin work – the worst that can happen is that they could lose their designation. Member Moore and Ms. Sayeda acknowledged. He stated that regulatory language exists in the zoning code, but asked whether there would be additional regulatory language applied to the proposed overlay. Ms. Sayeda confirmed that there will be no additional language. Member Laurent recognized that the property owners felt that the language was too broad, he asked if working with the property owners and Los Alamos Historical Society is doable to change the language. Ms. Sayeda communicated that the language is basic and follows the Secretary of Interior

standards – it is not more restrictive. Member Laurent stated that there is a risk that if the language is changed, and not accepted by the State, the county could lose their CLG status. Member Weiss acknowledged that the language was approved by the State, and the county is not allowed to be less restrictive – so changing the language may be an unsuccessful attempt if the State does not accept it.

Member Moore gave an overview of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and creation of the county's Historic Preservation Advisory Board. Their purpose is not to dictate, but to help preserve. Ms. Hipp and Mr. Wheeler presented scenarios for the Los Alamos Historical Society properties. Member Laurent shared hypotheticals to explain how the code would apply if they were in an overlay district. Ms. Sayeda added that the Downtown zone district is allowed to build on the property line and has a maximum height of 86'. If there was a Historic District overlay – neighborhood protections standards would apply, and adjacent properties would be required to distance buildings and step back the height.

Member Bartlit shared an email from Mr. Jerry Strickfaden where he recommends that the properties go through the process as designated landmarks. She questioned the difference between an overlay district and a historic landmark. Ms. Sayeda explained that buildings within the overlay district would be designated as historic, but when there is no overlay, the buildings can individually be designated as landmarks. She shared the United Church as a historic landmark that went through that process. Member Martineau commented that the overlay would designate them all at once, but they could be designated individually as landmarks.

Member Moore stated that without the Los Alamos Historical Society's approval– there is not enough support to move the application forward. Ms. Sayeda communicated that August's meeting was a public hearing and the motion made was to continue discussion with the property owners, but not to continue the public hearing into this meeting. To move forward and act on the application – a second public hearing would need to be advertised. The Board, however, can make a motion directing staff on how to proceed.

Mr. Wheeler stated that the Women's Dormitory building should be included and designated historic. Acting Chair Bartlit shared that the proposed overlay would not add new properties at this time, but after the process is complete – a second boundary or landmark designation could be proposed for other properties. Member Moore reiterated the sentiment and added that approving the boundary with some missing properties could cripple the ability of the Board at some level moving forward.

Ms. Sayeda suggested rescinding the application, and presenting a new application when it is ready. She shared that HPAB is scheduled to update the County Council on September 19th, for their annual presentation, this discussion will be shared, and the Council can provide input and direction. Then at October's meeting, the Board can discuss the outcome of both the Council and the Los Alamos Historical Society Board's September meeting.

For the record, Ms. Sayeda stated that the application for Historic District Overlay, on behalf of Paul Andrus, has been rescinded. The Board discussed options to proceed. Member Laurent expressed that he would like to be cooperative with the property owners. Member Weiss agreed, although it could proceed with the minimum percentage, it would be great to get those outliers. She questioned if the property owners would be amenable, and the likelihood that the language could be changed and be successful. Member Laurent stated his preference was to have as much support as possible, identify problems, and reach a compromise. Acting Chair Bartlit suggested drafting language that changes the paragraph of concern and getting input from the State as to whether it would be acceptable. Acting Chair Bartlit proposed that the Board authorize staff to draft a letter to the State to seek their input on changing the language. She stated the Board would work on language for staff. The Board agreed to inquire with the State.

B. Ashley Pond Shade Structure Presentation

Wendy Parker, Parks Superintendent, presented the county's plans to construct a couple of shade structures at Ashely Pond. She shared that the shelters would be ADA accessible and will be placed at the main parking area on existing concrete pads. She communicated that they are looking to construct the pavilions to match the similarity of the Icehouse, without matching it exactly. Conceptual drawings and two examples of existing shade structures from other parks were shown. The proposed pavilion would be constructed with a metal roof and rock base. The posts could be metal or wood, in a grey shade.

Members voiced support for the project. Member Weiss accepted the conceptual design. Member Dryja commented that wood would be preferred to metal. Acting Chair Bartlit supported a rustic feeling with the stone bases. Overall Members voiced that the structures would be a benefit to the community.

C. Overview of Historic Preservation Advisory Board Meetings throughout 2023

5. BOARD/DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATIONS

A. Staff Report

B. Chair's Report

C. Board Liaison Report

D. Council Liaison Report

Melanee Hand, County Councilor, reported on items discussed at the September 5, 2023, Council meeting.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

No comment.

7. NEXT MEETING(S)/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A. October 4, 2023

8. ADJOURNMENT

7:48 PM