



CITY OF PACIFIC GROVE
300 Forest Avenue, Pacific Grove, California 93950

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Honorable Mayor and members of the City Council

FROM: Robert Huitt, City Council member, Chair of the Historic Design Review Committee
Members: Anthony Ciani, Luke Coletti, Michael Gunby and Maureen Mason

MEETING DATE: August 5, 2015

SUBJECT: Report and recommendations from the Historic Design Review Committee (HDRC)

CEQA STATUS This action does not constitute a “project” as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines section 15378

RECOMMENDATION

1. Retain the Architectural Review Board and Historic Resources Committee as two separate seven-member committees.
2. Amend the Municipal Code to reassign responsibilities for the review of properties designated historic from the Architectural Review Board to the Historic Resources Committee.
3. Amend the Municipal Code to modify certain qualifications for committee membership to make them recommended rather than required.
4. Address the recommendations in the supplement to the City’s Historic Context Statement titled “Pacific Grove Preservation Program Considerations.”

BACKGROUND

At its regular meeting of February 18, 2015, the City Council directed the City Manager to form a committee to address the structures and duties of the Architectural Review Board (ARB) and Historic Resources Committee (HRC) pertaining to the design review of properties designated historic. The ARB and HRC were asked to name representatives, and appointed Michael Gunby and Maureen Mason, respectively. The City Manager solicited applications from residents and selected Luke Coletti and Anthony Ciani as at-large members. Councilmember Robert Huitt agreed to serve as chair. The committee held four public meetings, on April 28, May 26, June 30, and July 28, each at 4:00 at City Hall Chambers. All committee members were present at all meetings. Primary staff support was provided by Assistant Planner Laurel O’Halloran.

DISCUSSION

The central issue was which committee—ARB, HRC, or some other—should have design review responsibilities for buildings that are designated as historic resources. Currently, the ARB is responsible for design review for all architectural permits, including for buildings on the Historic Resources Inventory, and for historic preservation, demolition, and relocation permits. The HRC is responsible for determining eligibility for historic designation.

The committee reviewed existing procedures, including a tabulation of the last twelve months' permit activity, received information from the City Attorney on the legal bases for the city's regulation of architectural design and historic preservation, and heard from a Carmel Planner and a Monterey Planner about the design review policies and practices in Monterey and Carmel.

Four main alternatives were identified for the purpose of analysis:

1. Continue the current arrangement, possibly with minor changes.
2. Retain the two existing committees and give the HRC design review responsibilities for historic properties.
3. Create a new combined Historic and Architectural Review Committee to replace the existing committees and assume their current duties.
4. Eliminate the ARB and HRC and have the Planning Commission assume their duties.

In assessing these alternatives, the committee took into account the following:

- Effectiveness in achieving the City's historic preservation purposes and goals
- Effect on the ability to recruit and retain qualified committee members; workload
- Public participation, transparency
- Costs to applicants, including time costs
- Staffing costs
- Eligibility for CLG status

At the May 26 meeting, the four alternatives were narrowed to two (2 and 3) for further consideration. The current arrangement (1) has at times been less than fully effective in protecting significant historic resources, and applicants have faced delays because of the scheduling requirements for multiple hearings, which also adds to staffing costs. The Planning Commission-only alternative (4) was rejected on the basis of most of the evaluation criteria.

The two remaining alternatives were considered at the June 30 meeting. Both would help ensure that sufficient attention is given to historic properties throughout multiple stages of review, from designation of historic status to consideration of permits for demolition or alteration. Both would generally be more efficient and less costly for applicants and staff. And both would satisfy requirements for CLG status. However, it was considered impractical to assign to one combined committee the full scope of responsibilities for designating historic status and conducting all reviews for architectural design as well as various historic preservation permits. Consequently, the committee was unanimous in voting to recommend the two-committee alternative.

Composition of committees. Connected to the question of committee responsibilities is the matter of composition, including the number of members and their qualifications. The committee unanimously agreed that seven-member committees will provide broader representation and greater public participation in the process, and suggests that the current membership requirements be adjusted to ensure that well-qualified individuals are not excluded.

Other issues to be addressed. The committee's discussions frequently touched on aspects of the City's historic preservation program outside the narrow scope of its charge, including the question of Certified Local Government (CLG) status and the adequacy of the existing Historic Resources Inventory. These and other matters are among the "Pacific Grove Preservation Program Considerations" submitted to the City in October, 2011 by Page & Turnbull as a supplement to the Historic Context Statement. The

committee agreed unanimously to recommend that the Considerations by addressed when the ad hoc committee is reconvened.

ATTACHMENTS

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Robert Huitt, Councilmember, Chair, HDRC

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