

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

April 1, 2020

Action Minutes

WELCOME

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Saum, Boehm, Hirst, Raynsford, and Arnold

Absent: Commissioner Polcyn and Royer

Chair Saum noted that there was a quorum of Commissioners present.

Chair Saum gave directions for speaking and public comment vis-a-vis the use of videoconferencing.

1. DEFERRALS

Any item scheduled for hearing this evening for which deferral is being requested will be taken out of order to be heard first on the matter of deferral. If you want to change any of the deferral dates recommended or speak to the question of deferring these or any other items, you should say so at this time.

- a. **HPA16-004-01, HIA86-031-01, & MA19-004.** Historic Landmark Designation Amendment (City Landmark designation #HL86-031), Historic Preservation Permit Amendment, and Historic Property Contract (California Mills Act contract) between the City of San Jose and Oakmont Senior Living of the Smith House to allow a reduction of the legal boundary of the Smith House historic landmark of 4.42 gross acre site to a smaller 0.44 gross acre site to encompass the Smith House and the associated tank house, pump house, and aviary structures and to allow a six-foot tall solid landscape wall to run

Access the video, agenda, and related reports for this meeting by visiting the City's website at:
<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments/planning-building-code-enforcement/planning-division/commissions-and-hearings/historic-landmarks-commission>

along the new lot line at the rear, with an approximate five-foot setback from the historic building. CEQA: Exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15331 for Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation. Council District 8.

PROJECT MANAGER, RINA SHAH

Recommendation: Deferred to the May 6, 2020 Historic Landmarks Commission meeting per Staff request.

The Commissioners agreed with the recommendation to defer this item to the May 6, 2020 Historic Landmarks Commission meeting.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

The consent calendar items are considered to be routine and will be adopted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a request is made by a member of the Historic Landmarks Commission, staff or the public to have an item removed from the consent calendar and considered separately. If anyone in the audience wishes to speak on one of these items, please make your request at this time

No Items

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. [H19-009 & HP19-002](#). Site Development Permit and Historic Preservation Permit to allow the conversion of a 3,647-square foot single-family residence to a 5,548-square foot duplex, with a total addition of 181 square feet to the rear second story and attic, basement improvements, and removal of a detached accessory structure, for a property listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory as a Contributor in the Reed City Landmark District, on a 0.14-gross acre site. CEQA: Exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15331 for Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation and Section 15303 for New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures. Council District: 3

PROJECT MANAGER, RINA SHAH

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Historic Landmarks Commission recommend that the Planning Director approve the Historic Preservation Permit.

Rina Shah, Project Manager, provided the staff report and presentation. She asked that the commissioners check their email for responses to the neighbor comments and documentation and revised plans sent relating to the front door and second side staircase revisions to the building.

Ms. Shah explained that a Site Development Permit is required to allow conversion of a single-family residence to a duplex. A Historic Preservation Permit is also required in a Landmark district. Ms. Shah described changes made to the plans.

Ms. Shah stated that the total rent occupancy of the duplex is limited to rental of rooms for up to two guests per unit and not more than 6 persons living in the dwelling. This is made a condition of approval of the permit. The plans call for 3-bedrooms in Unit 1 and six bedrooms in Unit 2 which require a total of six parking spaces and 3 parking spaces are provided in tandem of the total of 6 parking spaces. Two additional parking spaces are shown with the removal of the accessory structure in the rear of the property.

Ms. Shah stated that the plans conform to the requirement of the City of San Jose Residential Design Guidelines with regard to private open space for the two units. The fence in the front yard will be removed and replaced with landscaping and lawn as shown in the plans.

Ms. Shah stated that the existing structure, circa 1920, in the rear of the property had been proposed to remain. The revised plan removes it and replaces it with parking spaces to bring the total number of parking spaces to 8. Staff found the rear structure to be non-historic and outside the period of significance. The rear structure is not the original carriage house, as pointed out by a neighbor.

Ms. Shah stated that the staff responded to neighbor comments.

Ms. Shah explained that the landscaping in plant strips at sidewalk and curb is under the purview of the Department of Transportation.

Ms. Shah stated that the plan is in compliance with regulations of the zoning ordinance. The project maintains its character-defining features and does not compromise the integrity of the property. The plan meets local guidelines for adaptive reuse of historic properties, which is encouraged by the City of San Jose, and meets the Secretary of the Interior's standards for the treatment of historic properties as well as the General Plan.

Ms. Shah described the loss of interior integrity as unfortunate, but not under staff's purview.

Staff recommends that the Historic Landmarks Commission recommend that the Planning Director approve the Historic Preservation Permit.

Chair Saum asked if the applicant would like to speak or if Ms. Shah was speaking on the applicant's behalf. Ms. Shah replied that she is speaking on behalf of the applicant.

*André Luthard, representing PAC*SJ, commented that a jutting dormer sticking out in the rear addition is not consistent with the style of the house. He requested a discussion to determine if a modification would be agreeable to the applicant.*

Lei Yuan, project architect, offered possible modifications and will speak with the applicant.

*Walter Soellner, a neighbor of the project site and PAC*SJ member, expressed concerns about the inappropriateness of major changes, parking, and impact of the project on schools and the neighborhood. He expressed his opinion that the project is way overbuilt and does not retain the character of the Reed Historic District.*

David Dudek, next-door neighbor, expressed his appreciation that the developer had listened and adopted some changes. He has 2 primary concerns: 1) the private open space in the front yard vis-a-vis City of San Jose Residential Design Guidelines. Mr. Dudek believes the private open space for this development is in the front yard because the developer will pave the back yard and the reason the back yard will be paved is to allow for parking spaces because there are too many bedrooms; 2) the dining room has been remodeled to include a bathroom. This project seems to eliminate the possibility

that the home will be owner occupied in the future. He expressed that only fantastic projects, which this one is not at this point, are worthy of the approval of the Historic Landmarks Commission.

Commissioner Hirst commented that he sees some aesthetically positive improvements from the last meeting, but he still has concerns regarding the private open space vis-a-vis City of San Jose Residential Design Guidelines. He opined that the open space being in the rear is significant. He is concerned that overall the project still has loose ends.

Commissioner Raynsford commented that his main issue is with the private open space. He opined that private open space in the front is meaningless, especially with the fence being taken away. He recommended reducing the parking spaces in the back.

Rina Shah, Project Manager, explained that 2 additional parking spaces were added to allow for guest parking, etc. It could be turned into open space.

Commissioner Boehm stated that he had a hard time understanding Ms. Shah's presentation because of the videoconferencing. He experienced lapses, which impaired his comprehension to some degree. He commented about the improvements regarding reduction in number of bathrooms, no bedrooms in attic, and the 6-foot fence in front of the house removed. He opined that turning 2 of the parking spaces in the back into private open space is a good solution; it will truly be private. His vote for granting the permit is conditional upon the conversion of the 2 parking spaces.

*Commissioner Arnold stated that she was in agreement with the other commissioners regarding reducing the number of parking spaces and moving the private open space to the rear. Chair Saum stated that he emailed staff regarding his graphic concerns and that most of his concerns were addressed. He commented that the DRC meeting was helpful in truly understanding the scope of the work. Chair Saum stated his appreciation for the comments from PAC*SJ and asked Mr. Luthard to clarify his comments.*

*André Luthard, representing PAC*SJ, stated that everything in the front elevation has a flat facade or eave except for a window that juts out and the new rear dormer window should be consistent with the design of the front of the building.*

Chair Saum requested a vote to close the public hearing. The commission voted unanimously (5-0) in favor of closing the public hearing on File Nos. H19-009 & HP19-002.

Chair Saum continued stating that the recommendation from staff is that the Historic Landmarks Commission recommend that the Planning Director approve the Historic Preservation Permit. The Historic Landmarks Commission has the ability to recommend approval with conditions of approval, deny approval, or defer the item.

The Commission voted unanimously (5-0) in favor of a motion to approve the Historic Preservation Permit File No. HP19-002 with the following two conditions: 1. The dormer be rectified to make it less jutting out and more in line with historical standards; and 2. Parking spaces be reduced from 8 to 6 spaces with the reduction used for private open space.

- b. **H19-016 (City View Plaza Office Project)**, Site Development Permit to allow the demolition of City View Plaza, removal of 31 ordinance size trees, and construction of an office development totaling approximately 3.8 million square feet of office and commercial space above a subterranean parking garage on an approximately 8.1 gross-acre site. The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project is currently circulating for public comments, March 11 through April 24, 2020. As described in the Draft Supplemental EIR, the project would include the demolition of the former Bank of California building, listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory as a Candidate City Landmark Building. The former Bank building was found to be eligible for City Landmark status and eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources and the National Register of Historic Places as documented in the SEIR. City View Plaza is San Jose's first redevelopment project and was identified as eligible, as a whole, for City Landmark status. Additionally, the SEIR identified other on-site buildings including the Wells Fargo building, the former United California Bank building, and the Bank of America building/tower, as individually eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources and as Candidate City Landmarks. Council District: 3

PROJECT MANAGER, CASSANDRA VAN DER ZWEEP

Recommendation: Review the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report for the City View Plaza Office Project; receive public comments; and provide comments regarding the historic resources analysis and impacts.

Cassandra Van Der Zweep, Project Manager, provided the staff report and stated that the comments received during early deferral and tonight will be reviewed by the planning commission.

*Janette D'Elia, COO of Jay Paul Company and sponsor of City View Plaza Project, stated that Jay Paul Company continues to refine the project and continues to meet with representatives of PAC*SJ to commemorate the former Bank of California Building.*

Ben Tranel, Principal, Gensler, commended the City of San Jose for keeping business going during the COVID-19 outbreak. He commented that the proposed City View Plaza project is key in its location next to Plaza de Cesar Chavez, which is the oldest open space in California, and is the future as well. He spoke of the redevelopment of Park Avenue between San Jose State University and Diridon Station. Mr. Tranel described the project as being a catalyst for enhancing the public realm. There will be a lot of connection and activity from the plaza into the project, wide sidewalks, and corners with retail anchoring the project.

Mr. Tranel explained that Gensler drew inspiration from context buildings near the site and described how City View Plaza will incorporate some of the colors, tones, and design aspects of those buildings. He commented that Park Center Plaza is a walled compound currently. City View Plaza's proposal activates the street frontage by lowering the plaza to street level and creating a warm, inviting ground plane experience.

*Regarding the Bank of California Building, Mr. Tranel described the idea of digital scanner preservation instead of preserving the actual building. The Historic Landmarks Commission had previously asked for more alternatives. Thirteen alternatives were studied, but most were discarded due to the impact to the project area and cost constructability loss. Gensler has taken proactive steps toward digital preservation of all of Park Center Plaza. They will continue to meet with PAC*SJ regarding follow-through.*

*André Luthard, representing PAC*SJ, opined that the significance of the former Bank of California building has long been established and identified. The Historic Landmarks Commission has advocated for the preservation of the building. The State of California Office of Historic Preservation has deemed it eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources. PAC*SJ is in possession of a letter from Docomomo indicating that the building is significant locally, regionally, and internationally. There are plans to formally nominate the building as a city landmark. Mr. Luthard stated that there has been some confusion, but that the Historic Landmarks Commission has the authority. Landmark nomination file number is HL20-001. Mr. Luthard opined that it should be on the Historic Landmarks Commission's May meeting agenda and that no land use decisions should be made until the Historic Landmarks Commission fully reviews the Historic Preservation nomination.*

*Ben Leech, representing PAC*SJ, introduced himself as the incoming Executive Director of PAC*SJ. His start date was March 16 - quarantine day zero – and he stated that this wasn't the introduction to the Historic Landmarks Commission that he was expecting to make. He expressed his appreciation for the work of the Historic Landmarks Commission and noted that this is the middle of the comment period for the SEIR on this project. He stated that he was analyzing a number of preservation alternatives that were proposed. Mr. Leech commented that while the project covers an 8-acre site, the Bank of California Building occupies a mere half acre at the very corner of the site. He would like an explanation as to why the footprints of the planned buildings couldn't be adjusted. Mr. Leech suggested that for a lot of reasons the preservation of the Bank of California Building could contribute to the success of this project. As a new San Jose resident, he finds the Bank of California Building to be iconic and its location important. Mr. Leech opined that we are just beginning to appreciate architecture of this period and it will be appreciated more in the future. He would like to see the Bank of California Building incorporated into the new design. This has not been done yet.*

*John Frolli, representing PAC*SJ, reiterated his desire for the Historic Landmarks Commission to look at this project in its entirety and the total impact on the district. He commented that PAC*SJ does not oppose thoughtful development. Mr. Frolli stated that the Historic Landmarks Commission has an obligation to review buildings that do matter, and this building does matter. The former Bank of California Building is likely eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under several criteria, one of which is the building's association with a certain phase of San Jose's early development. The Historic Landmarks Commission has voiced concern about the total impact of this project on the district which includes The Tech Interactive and the Center for the Performing Arts. Mr. Frolli stated that while Lew Wolff may feel that César Pelli may not have designed the building, the members of PAC*SJ believe that Pelli's mark is on the building and that the design was directly supervised by him. Mr. Frolli finds this indisputable based on information in the historic report*

*Mike Sodergren, representing PAC*SJ, explained that the mission of PAC*SJ is to preserve as much of San Jose's culture as possible for future generations. He remarked that, sadly, much of what makes San Jose unique is gone. Mr. Sodergren referred to a March 26, 2020 email from the original developer of Park Center Plaza. The developer writes about the first phase of a large and pivotal urban redevelopment which will be a banking and financial district and writes that Pelli would have agreed that the works in the development were not worth saving. This is refuted in the Downtown San Jose Resources Survey which lists the Bank of California Building as the work of master architect César Pelli during his tenure at Gruen Associates.*

*John Mitchell, representing PAC*SJ, spoke about mail being delivered to the San Jose Museum of Art, which used to be a U.S. post office and is the only public governmental Richardsonian Romanesque building west of the Mississippi. Mr. Mitchell opined that homage and respect were due that building, which is across the street from the proposed project.*

Thang Do, CEO and principal, Aedis Architects, stated that he is the owner of several businesses near the proposed project. He is very active in the community and a former planning commissioner. Mr. Do opined that in evaluating whether the family court building should be preserved, one needs to look in a balanced way at the value of the building to the public. Mr. Do commented that the former Bank of California Building might detract from the significant benefits that the proposed project will bring to downtown.

Janette D'Elia, representing Jay Paul Company, commented that Park Center Plaza was part of major redevelopment in San Jose in the 1970s to re-energize lagging economic growth. The City View Plaza project will do the same for San Jose now. The City View Plaza project is part of a badly needed renaissance for San Jose's current and future residents. Ms. D'Elia then read a letter from Lew Wolff, the original developer of Park Center Plaza, in which Mr. Wolff dispels the idea that César Pelli was the architect of the former Bank of California Building. He added that César Pelli himself did not design the building and therefore cannot be called "César Pelli" building. He further stated that he supported Jay Paul's action in demolishing the plaza and build something that will truly identify downtown San Jose as the center of the country's tenth largest city. A hard copy of the letter is on file with the City of San Jose Planning Division.

Commissioner Raynsford commented that up until this point we haven't talked about Victor Gruen's importance in many downtowns and suburban shopping malls. Mr. Wolff's letter claims that Park Center Plaza was a mediocre project and a failure. Commissioner Raynsford questions those claims. Commissioner Raynsford stated that the current plaza itself is inaccessible from the street and so provides a conversely quiet area, a refuge. He stated that he understands the criticisms of Park Center Plaza and that urban renewal projects have become unpopular in cities. He asked: Before we rush to completely obliterate the site, are those some aspects that might be worth preserving?

*Ben Tranel, representing Gensler, stated that various preservation alternatives were discussed collaboratively with PAC*SJ, such as partial conservation, digital preservation, etc., but confirmed that the virtual version of the Bank of California building is the only alternative being considered. Mr. Tranel opined that the large, monolithic architectural style of the Bank of California building doesn't lend itself to partial preservation as would a building with more intricate detailing such as the Gamble House. He suggested that a digital version can recreate the experience of the whole plaza in its current iteration as well as earlier iterations of the site. Mr. Tranel offered to share other alternatives, all of which have been eliminated from consideration.*

*Ben Leech, representing PAC*SJ, responded to Commissioner's Raynsford's question that there are absolutely aspects of this site that are worth preserving. Mr. Leech explained that one of the Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan goals is the opportunity to integrate buildings of different materials, massing, scale, historic periods. These are all positives. Mr. Leech opined that the original sin of urban renewal was treating sites as blank canvases. Maybe architectural monocultures don't work. The towers of City View Plaza are 3 iterations of the same thing. Mr. Leech suggested that there is a lot more potential in looking at ways to integrate some of the historic context and that the*

Bank of California building would be a good place to start. It's the building in the project that is most out of the way. The current configuration of the City View Plaza towers precludes the inclusion of the Bank of California building. Mr. Leech is not totally convinced this is the only configuration possible of the tower footprints. The contrast of 1970s modernism and new modernism is seen as a positive in Mr. Leech's view. The new project could play off of the existing language of Pelli's design. Mr. Leech explained that one of the problems with advocating for brutalist buildings is that they are larger. The Bank of California building is "bite-sized." Mr. Leech stated that the comments tonight are appropriate for a SEIR review. The Historic Landmarks Commission should consider whether this is an either/or proposition.

*Mike Sodergren, representing PAC*SJ, reiterated that PAC*SJ met with Ms. D'Elia and Mr. Tranel. He stated that he is greatly concerned that this process feels backward. The project has been to the Historic Landmarks Commission before, and comments are due April 24, 2020. Mr. Sodergren stated that this process is being oversimplified and a review of the project is worthy. He stated that Commissioner Raynsford's question is the right question and needs consideration. Mr. Sodergren opined that we're not even close to being fully informed and stated that the letter from Lew Wolff should not be taken carte blanche regarding the significant comments about Pelli.*

Chair Saum commented that procedurally the Historic Landmarks Commission is taking no formal action but is providing comments on the draft SEIR. He asked Ms. Van Der Zweep to confirm the next steps. Will the project return to the Historic Landmarks Committee?

Ms. Van Der Zweep, Project Manager, confirmed that there is no Historic Preservation Permit tied to this project because it's not in a designated historic district and has no landmarked resources. As part of the SEIR, the City of San Jose wanted to take the project back to the Historic Landmarks Commission knowing there are multiple historic sites on the project. Ms. Van Der Zweep stated that ultimately the decision will be made by the City Council.

Chair Saum commented that there is some overlap between what will be heard on May 6, 2020 regarding landmark designation of the Bank of California building and the draft SEIR. Chair Saum asked: Procedurally what potential impact on a proposed project does an application for landmark status have?

Juliet Arroyo, Historic Preservation Officer, stated that the application for landmark status will be brought to the Historic Landmarks Committee at the May 6, 2020 meeting. Only owner, Historic Landmarks Commission, or City Council nominates landmarks. Then it will go before the City Council for a yes-or-no vote.

Commissioner Hirst commented that he is still listening to other questions and comments, interested in discussing further, and has no questions at this time.

*Commissioner Arnold commented that on April 24, 2020 we will know about the EIR status of this project and on May 6, 2020 we are having a nomination come to the Historic Landmarks Commission. She further commented that the applicant and PAC*SJ have met and have 13 alternatives but have only shared the digital idea. With all of these different pieces, chronologically how do tonight's comments fit in?*

Juliet Arroyo, Historic Preservation Officer, explained that we are in the 45-day period that the project EIR is being circulated. Tonight, is an opportunity for discussion and comments from the Historic Landmarks Commission. A letter may be written to serve as the official comment from the Historic Landmarks Commission.

Ms. Van Der Zweep, Project Manager, explained that the nomination for the bank building and the site development permit are running concurrently on different tracks and reiterated that the SEIR comment period closes on April 24. The project hasn't been scheduled for the planning commission or city council but is getting close; waiting for the end of comment period. If the project goes to the city council and the Historic Landmarks Commission has recommended nomination, the city council will be made aware of that.

Chair Saum asked: Whatever action is taken at the May 6 Historic Landmarks Commission meeting, running concurrently, what would be a realistic time frame for both City View Plaza and the landmark nomination to come before the city council?

Juliet Arroyo, Historic Preservation Officer, explained that while they are 2 separate actions by the city council – approval of project EIR and designation – they could come before the city council at the same meeting.

Commission Boehm commented that at the September 2019 Historic Landmarks Commission meeting the commissioners had a number of comments related to the Bank of California building and the proposed towers. He asked: Since the September meeting has the height or number of stories been reduced in the project buildings?

Ben Tranel, representing Gensler, stated that the height and number of stories have not changed. He understood the comments from the September meeting to be in the context of the project's surroundings. The project is drawing cues regarding site massing and material selection from downtown buildings in the vicinity.

Boehm commented that developers rightly looked at the Museum of Art, St. Claire Hotel, Civic Auditorium, and St. Joseph Cathedral. He appreciates the terracotta to frame the glass walls, the landscaping, hardscape, and parking below, but the height and amount of glass/ glazing in the proposed buildings are not compatible with other landmarks in the vicinity and are very objectionable. Commissioner Boehm stated that he would defer to his colleagues regarding the Bank of California.

Ben Tranel, representing Gensler, stated that the Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan changed height restrictions. The building heights in downtown San Jose are fairly homogeneous and so the applicant shaped the footprint of the buildings so there is a skyline. Mr. Tranel opined that buildings tend to reflect their uses and reiterated that Gensler drew cues from the post office/Museum of Art such as dark metals, wood, rustication, shadows.

Commissioner Hirst stated that he had no comments or questions at this time.

Chair Saum stated that there is wide expertise among the commissioners and some of his comments have been addressed already. He opined that all of the changes – color palette, materials, etc. – are improvements. The key issue is: What, if anything, could be done to preserve the Bank of California building? The applicants have looked at different alternatives. The historic resources analysis and impact has been done. Chair Saum noted that some of the proposed alternatives regarding the Bank of California building have a substantial effect on the project itself, and so have been considered and discounted. He emphasized that preserving the Bank of California building may involve trade-offs (positive or negative depending on point of view.) Chair Saum stated that a

more concerted effort to incorporate or preserve the building would be desirable. Chair Saum stated that the commission is not here to make a formal motion, but to provide additional comments on the draft SEIR regarding the historic resources impact.

The commission voted unanimously (5-0) in favor of closing the public hearing on H19-016.

Commissioner Arnold had no further comments.

Commissioner Raynsford stated that he made several comments already about the Bank of California building and he reiterated that it is worthy of consideration to preserve all or part of it. He opined that the commission needs to consider Park Center Plaza as an urban design resource vis-a-vis its function, use, aesthetic, and historic qualities in relation to what's being proposed. This is about public space and replacing public space. Is it an improvement? What is going to be lost?

Commissioner Hirst expressed his thanks to the applicant for the improvements that were made and stated that the commission has the will and needs more time to explore and consider more alternatives to feel like due diligence has been performed. He acknowledged that the applicant and PAC SJ have worked together but should continue. Commissioner Hirst suggested that possibly the footprint of the project could be reduced from 3 to 2 towers. He acknowledged this suggestion comes with costs and remarked that this project is a challenge for all.*

Commissioner Boehm commented that the applicant's presentation correctly began by harkening back to San Jose's history. This portion of downtown is the heart. Materials, massing, and compatibility should reflect historically on neighboring buildings and how well these buildings will fit into our core and our historic heritage.

Chair Saum acknowledged that there's been analysis, but the key is: Can the site project move forward without the loss of the Bank of California building? There is not a request for a formal motion. Comments will be incorporated into the draft SEIR. There will be comments regarding landmarking at the May 6, 2020 Historic Landmarks Commission. Chair Saum expressed his thanks to the applicant for the ability to have more of a conversation.

4. REFERRALS FROM CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, OR OTHER AGENCIES

No Items

5. OPEN FORUM

Members of the public are invited to speak on any item that does not appear on today's Agenda and that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission. The Commission cannot engage in any substantive discussion or take any formal action in response to the public comment. The Commission can only ask questions or respond to statements to the extent necessary to determine whether to: (1) refer the matter to staff for follow-up; (2) request staff to report back on a matter at a subsequent meeting; or (3) direct staff to place the item on a future agenda. Each member of the public may fill out a speaker's card and has up to two minutes to address the Commission.

Hellen Sims, Co-chair of the Barack Obama Boulevard Committee, stated that the application for Barack Obama Boulevard was submitted on February 14, 2020 with the support of the 4 homeowner associations in the affected area, Mayor Liccardo, Dev Davis, Raul Peralez, Jim Beall, and others. She requested planning staff to come forth with an item in regard to the application submitted.

Juliet Arroyo, Historic Preservation Officer, stated that the application could be put on the May agenda with a staff recommendation for the Historic Landmarks Commission.

Mike Sodergren expressed a personal comment that the elephant in the room is that we are in the middle of a pandemic with daily updates as to social distancing and essential activities. The commission should weigh in as to whether the schedule could be declared an essential activity.

Chair Saum commented that Mr. Sodergren raised a valid question. Chair Saum asked if the staff could comment – not necessarily about a specific project – about their ability to nimbly address these projects. Are full analysis and full discussion hindered?

Juliet Arroyo, Historic Preservation Officer, stated that City Hall is closed, but the Planning, Building and Code Enforcement Department personnel are all working remotely from home. She acknowledged that it is a challenge, but employees are in constant communication with the department director and city manager and receiving direction from them on how to proceed with these projects.

*André Luthard, representing PAC*SJ updated the commission regarding the neon sign boulevard. San Carlos Street, Monterey Highway, and First Street are being considered for a possible location. He stated that a stakeholders meeting will soon take place regarding how to move forward. He thanked Ms. Arroyo and staff for having placed some neon signs on the historic resources inventory.*

*Mr. Luthard explained that PAC*S is actively trying to seek an original use of the Century 21 theater. A parcel change is being proposed by the developer to carve the theater out of the Santana West project. PAC*SJ is concerned that the lot line adjustment may restrict the ability of the Century 21 theater to be activated in the future, and is working with the planning department and hoping to get more information about the carve-out and the resulting consequences.*

Chair Saum questioned if the Century 21 theater is in an innovation zone and stated that the Historic Landmarks Commission is interested regarding any development.

6. GOOD AND WELFARE

a. Report from Secretary, Planning Commission, and City Council

i. [Summary of communications received by the Historic Landmarks Commission.](#)

Juliet Arroyo, Historic Preservation Officer, received a letter from PAC SJ regarding nomination of the Pelli building. Nomination will be put on the May 6, 2020 agenda and there will be opportunity for the Historic Landmarks Commission to make a formal application. There will be a public hearing; the Historic Preservation Office will notify the property owner so they have an opportunity to speak. Ms. Arroyo is currently working on the staff memorandum.*

ii. Future Agenda Items: McCabe Hall, Saint James Park, CLG Report, Smith House, Citywide Design Guidelines

*Notice of preparation for McCabe Hall is circulating currently for comment on scope of work CLG Report is due in May
Chair Saum asked about the status of the materials submitted regarding the Schiele Avenue request for conservation area.*

Juliet Arroyo, Historic Preservation Officer, answered that this will probably also be on the May 6, 2020 agenda. The options are to put properties on HRI or designate as a conservation area.

Owners now must be notified when their properties are put on HRI, per the director of the Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement Department. Notices will be sent out if put on agenda. Ms. Arroyo explained that historic resources need to be put on the HRI so that there's some oversight when permit applications come in. She stated that initiating a conservation area designation and putting properties on the HRI both require owner notification. Ms. Arroyo's thought is to initially put the properties on the HRI so there's a red flag to prevent demolition. Property owners can apply, or Historic Landmarks Commission can nominate properties for landmark status. Ms. Arroyo will discuss options with the neighborhood group. At the May meeting, the Historic Landmarks Commission will be asked to put all of the said properties on the HRI. A substantial amount of data has been collected. With funding and more direction, a more formal survey will be performed regarding designation as a conservation area or historic district.

b. Report from Committees

i. Design Review Subcommittee: No meeting held on March 19, 2020. Next meeting on April 15, 2020 may be postponed.

Design Review Committee did not meet in March. No items for Design Review Committee. April meeting is cancelled. Unsure at this time about items or meeting in May.

c. **Approval of Action Minutes**

- i. **Recommendation:** [Approval of Action Minutes for the Historic Landmarks Commission Meeting of March 4, 2020.](#)

Commissioners described problems accessing minutes from meeting on March, 4, 2020. Action minutes deferred to the May 6, 2020 meeting.

d. **Status of Circulating Environmental Documents**

Notice of preparation for McCabe Hall is circulating currently for comment.
Comment period for City View Plaza project SEIR closes on April 24, 2020.

The commission voted unanimously (5-0) in favor of a motion to adjourn the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.