



El Cerrito Historical Society

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ANNUAL MEETING: Sunday, January 18, 2008 at 1:00 PM, at the Senior Center, behind the Library on Stockton Avenue. This will be a POT LUCK. Please bring a hot dish, salad or dessert to share. Coffee and tea will be provided.

AGENDA: A working session, with business items to debate, including: Election of Officers, Naming of Creeks, Committee report, and progress reports on other Society projects.

Special guest: KAREN PINKOS, City of El Cerrito, Assistant City Manager, speaking with us regarding the Historical Room in the new City Hall, and its furnishings.

HISTORIC NEWS, FROM THE CITY OF VIEWS:

Our President steps down: Tom Panas, the Society's MVP for over 5 years, submitted to the Board his resignation, as President and Director, in mid-September. He has remained available to assist the Board and the Society in our on-going projects. Everyone involved with preserving the history of our community has been touched by Tom's enthusiastic work. The depth of his knowledge has astonished many of us, and he made himself available for anything the Society needed. Even though Tom is still around, still interested, and still available, his personal, hands-on involvement is already being missed. We wish him the best.

Interim Director appointed: Upon Tom's resignation from our Board, the remaining Directors thought it best to fill the vacancy, since the next election was four months away. After discussion, David Weinstein was asked to fill in as Director, and he has done so.

Elections: At our annual meeting there will be an election of five officers who will be the Society's Board of Directors. If you have some time, and an interest in being more involved with your Society, you may wish to run for an office and a seat on the Board. (For information, call Rich Bartke, 235-1315.)

Current Officers: Grace McNeil, Vice President
Lucille Irish, Secretary
Ruth Kibby, Treasurer
David Weinstein, Director at Large
Rich Bartke, Director at Large

There are at least four Board meetings in addition to four membership meetings each year. Most of the work of the Directors, however, involves communications with the City and other agencies, care for our archives, communications with our members and other community groups, etc

Historical Room at City Hall: El Cerrito has a new City Hall, at the old location on San Pablo Avenue, corner of Manila. Construction was aided by gifts to the City by our late member, Sundar Shadi and his wife Dorothy, total over \$200,000. These gifts were made on the condition that they be used for a new city hall with a room “which is devoted to El Cerrito history”.

Board members and City Officials have had numerous communications and meetings, and the room on the second floor has been identified. It is expected that it will be a place to display some of our photo and artifacts, hold small meetings, and be a safe repository for our historic documents and artifacts. At this time, access is limited, but it is expected that Society members will have liberal use of the room once the City’s security system is working properly. The City will purchase furniture comparable to other City Hall furnishings, and has been in consultation with the Society on its needs.

Historic Resource Survey: The historic resource survey championed over the past year or two by Tom Panas has not been started. The City staff has accepted it as a project, and has ruled that it shall be done by hired professionals, not by Society volunteers. We are told the City Council in June included a seed amount of money in the City Manager’s budget.

The first step is thought to be a “historic context statement”, followed by a detailed field survey of every property in town. Obviously, most properties will be found to have no historic values, and so, under existing environmental statutes, the city could issue permits for them without an Environmental Impact Statement.

It seems clear that city staff has been overwhelmed not only the usual city business, but by the disruption caused by moving into a new building. The project, however, is expected to proceed.

Naming of El Cerrito Creeks: At our last Society membership meeting, a committee was appointed to do more work on the possibility of naming additional creeks in El Cerrito. The committee consists of Helmi Waits, Chris Conner, and Rich Bartke. The committee is making progress and will give us a report at the annual meeting.

Women in Local Politics: We are all now used to having the gentler sex in city government. Indeed, for the past 18 years, the ladies have enjoyed a majority on the El Cerrito City Council, often occupying four of the five seats. (The council for the next two years will have three females and two males, for those who are counting.)

Who started this? Doris Hormel, our first elected female Councilperson, served from 1956 to 1960. She served with distinction, but her re-election bid failed, we are told, after a contentious re-count, by six votes or less. Members of this Society are in touch with a County-wide committee which is seeking to document female city and county elected officials, and plan to submit data on El Cerrito’s first, Doris Hormel.