

El Cerrito Historical Society

Minutes of Board Meeting November 19, 2020

Present: David Weinstein, Dianne Brenner, Chris Treadway, Tom Panas, Ed Crowley, Pat Durham, Pat Shaw (briefly)

**\*\*Indicates Action Items**

- 1.) Minutes of prior meeting:** The minutes were approved with no comments or corrections.
- 2.) Treasurer's Report:** Pat Shaw provided the report, dated November 19, 2020. She reported income of \$135 from dues and a donation, and expenses of \$161.89, which was for a one-year subscription to Zoom Video Communications. The Restricted Funds balance is \$5,500.00, the Unrestricted Funds balance is \$12,154.65. The Mechanics Bank Balance was \$17,654.65 as of October 30, 2020.
- 3.) Public Comment:** There was none.
- 4.) Board Comments:**
  - a. City Council and Historic Preservation: At the City Council level, there is no talk of historic preservation, open space, etc. Dave will bring this issue to the Council. Dave says, based on his conversation with newly elected Council member Tess Rudnick, that she seems to be attuned to the need for Historic Preservation.
  - b. Documentary on Creedence Clearwater Revival: People who are making a documentary about Creedence Clearwater Revival have asked for some help, but have not made a specific request, so far.
  - c. Miraflores Greenbelt: Miraflores is the former location of the greenhouses in Richmond and northern El Cerrito. The greenhouses have been dismantled but some have been saved in containers, to be rebuilt. Historic interpretive panels for this area have been funded and exhibits are in the approval process. Tom Panas, who has researched this history, supplied E C Historical Society material for the displays. We are working with Vallier Design Associates, coordinator of the interpretive program at Miraflores, to redo their photo use license so it does not overstep the rights the Historical Society was granted by the donors of the photos. Releases are being sought from the families whose members appear in photos.
- 5.) Meet Pat Durham:** Ms. Durham is a long-time member of the community. Her father built their family home in 1959 and she graduated from El Cerrito High in 1968. She has been actively promoting Civil Rights and inclusion throughout her career. Paraphrasing her statement: "Dreams create Thoughts, Thoughts create Reality, Reality creates History." She was a leader in the El Cerrito High School archiving project.

- a. More Inclusion: **\*\*We need to reach out to the broader community,\*\*** including, for instance Americans of Japanese descent. The board can have more members than the current number, and we could also reach out to youth. We could involve new members in projects including: archiving, taking and transcribing oral histories, fundraising and other specific projects. We could expand the community through a membership drive. We could connect with city archiving. We could establish a relationship with the High School museum.

**6.) Events/Annual Meeting:**

- a. The Sorensen program in October went smoothly.
- b. The Annual meeting is scheduled for January 31 at 3 p.m. and will be virtual. In addition to the regular business of the annual meeting (board elections, etc.) Chris Sterba will present a program on Hambone Kelly's, a cooperatively run jazz club, which operated in El Cerrito in the 1940s.

**7.) Human Relations Commission:** The listening sessions began in November and are very interesting. Some of the people interviewed so far include Ray Dones and Virgil Weeks. Mr. Weeks' father was one of the first African American doctors in the East Bay. Pat Durham pointed out that some of this history is already available on-line and she referred to the Jackie Robinson Foundation, which, in addition to its Museum Initiatives, provides academic scholarships to college students and fellowships to graduate students.

**8.) Next Forge:**

- a. A draft of Joanne's article on the first African American families in El Cerrito was sent for review by the African America Museum in LA, and they provided some good suggestions. The article is awaiting Dave's corrections. There will be several photos accompanying the story. We hope to publish it this month. Extra copies will be printed for outreach to the Black Community. Pat Durham pointed out that the "Images of America – El Cerrito" book is lacking any history of the Black community. There is a need to update our perspective on the history and improve the historical record.
- b. Circulation: The Society has 180 members and 300 other people to whom we send courtesy copies. We need to reconcile Pat Shaw's member list with the email lists periodically.

**9.) Next Sparks:** The next issue will announce the slate of officers for the January Annual Meeting election. Pat Durham will be added to the slate, as candidate for Member-at-Large. **\*\*If Dave doesn't already have a brief bio of any candidates, please send him a brief bio (50-100 words).\*\***

**10.) Alvarado Adobe:** This building was reconstructed in late 1978, so it is not original, but there may be one single, original beam that remains. The re-build was designed to be true to the original adobe. The city plans to sell the building and it may be used as a café or some other use. It would no longer be used as a museum.

- 11.) Cerrito Theater award nomination:** The Cerrito was nominated for a restoration award from the Art Deco Society of California. The theater did not, ultimately, win this award, but the nomination itself was an honor. The Cerrito’s GoFundMe campaign goal has been increased to \$125,000 since the proposed re-opening date has been postponed due to the pandemic resurgence.
- 12.) Cub Scout History Trail:** The Scouts have created a map and tour of El Cerrito highlighting historical sights. **\*\* John will link to this from our website.\*\***
- 13.) Website:** The list of Famous El Cerritans needs to be updated to include representatives from the Black Community.
- 14.) Technical Assistance from the State Historical Society:** No new information on this.
- 15.) Adjourn**