

El Cerrito Historical Society

Minutes of Board Meeting

November 10, 2022

Board Members present: David Weinstein, Tom Panas, Dianne Brenner, Pat Durham, Michael Martin

Others present: none

1. Minutes of prior meeting: There were no comments, so Tom Panas moved that the minutes be approved as submitted. Dianne Brenner seconded the motion and the minutes were approved by voice vote.
2. Treasurer's Report: Interim Treasurer Tom Panas reported total revenue for the past month was \$133.41, from dues and royalties from Arcadia. Expenses were \$126, all for the most recent Forge mailing. The bank balance as of October 31 was \$20,600.89. Undesignated Assets total \$15,100.89, and Designated Assets total \$5,500.
 - a. Tom suggested that we put \$10,000 of our Undesignated Assets in a 6-month CD, which would earn about 3%. Tom made a motion that we do this, Pat Durham seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous. ****Tom will proceed with buying the CD.****
3. Comments from Board (not on agenda):
 - a. The filmmakers have not made the Creedence movie available for a local screening, as had been requested by the high school archiving project.
 - b. The exhibit of matchbox art at Elevation 66 will be going up soon. These are matchboxes from old El Cerrito businesses. The Society's collection includes some of these matchboxes as well as scans of matchboxes that are in other collections.
4. Public Comments: None
5. Old Business:
 - a. The review of our current spending for web hosting is on hold.
 - b. Brochures: The project to re-format the informational brochures is **pending with John**. He has received the electronic files for each brochure, as well as a diagram from Dianne illustrating how to arrange the panels so the cover panel will have a fold on the left edge and it will open like a book.
 - c. Security certificate: Michael has the information about the letter that is required for the Society to obtain a security certificate for the website. He also has a contact who will provide the lawyer's signature that is required. ****Michael plans to have this completed by our next meeting.****
 - d. Bylaws: We would like to revise the bylaws to move the date of the Annual Meeting to February, after the close of the fiscal year. He made a motion that the Board direct him to draft language to amend the by-laws. Pat Durham seconded the motion and the voice vote was unanimous. ****Tom agreed to draft the revision.****
6. Annual Meeting: Every annual meeting includes the election of the Board. Dave asked if everyone currently on the Board wants to continue serving, and in their current capacity or

another. Everyone present was agreeable to maintaining the current arrangements. **** Tom will ask Pat Shaw if she wants to remain as Treasurer or step down. **** Tom said he would be willing to serve as permanent treasurer, rather than the interim position he currently holds.

7. Neighborhood Preservation: Pursuant to the recent discussion during a prior meeting regarding story poles, neighborhood preservation and related issues, Dianne suggested that the Society ask EC City Council institute a design review process for residential remodels. She cited the guidelines in place in Albany, where residential remodels are subject to design review and are required to incorporate design elements that are consistent with those of the existing house. This has the effect of preserving the appearance and character of a neighborhood, even when a house is expanded. El Cerrito currently has no requirement for design review and no guidelines. Michael said the society's role is to be an advocate for such issues, even if city officials argue that such policies would be too expensive or too consuming of staff time.

- a. Dave asked for suggestions about how we could structure this issue as more specifically tied to historic preservation. There was a discussion about the definition of "historic" and that it doesn't just mean "old." It must also connect to the defined historic context as defined for El Cerrito. Could it be tied/limited to historic neighborhoods (as yet undefined)?
- b. Dave also pointed out that the city has never completed the historic survey and historic context statement (referred to above) that were started years ago, nor the Historic Preservation ordinance. Asking now for Design Guidelines might just be another thing they might or might not agree to but would not actually implement. The City's current explanation for not completing the survey or the ordinance is the current financial crisis and lack of available staff time, but those projects predate the financial crisis becoming public, and the Survey was funded.
- c. Dianne said that, nonetheless, she would like to see us advocate for design guidelines similar to what Albany has. A first step would be to follow up with city council regarding finishing the survey. ****Tom agreed to ask Sean where this stands.****

8. Events:

- a. Annual Meeting: Chris Sterba will provide a talk about the Ouija Board frenzy in El Cerrito in the 1920s. The presentation will be live with a remote (Zoom) option. The Community Center's Garden Room has been reserved. RSVPs will be required, since the room has a capacity limit (established by the Fire Dept.) and the office of the city clerk has previously cautioned us about exceeding room capacity there. There was a discussion about the possibility that members may be turned away due to the capacity limit, but they can always watch on Zoom if they don't respond early enough. The capacity limit is a safety issue and not negotiable.
- b. Martin Luther King parade: The annual parade will be in February. Pat Durham reports that planning has begun, and they have the permit from BART to use their parking lot. Fundraising is underway. Pat D. would like a representative from EC Historical Society to speak at the program, and to display the Society banner on a car in the parade. ****Dave and Pat will discuss further.****
- c. Tour of Sunset View Cemetery: Tom reports the date is set for March 18, 2023. He will lead the tour. Again, we've been asked to enforce a capacity limit, as the size of our crowd last time was disturbing to other visitors at the cemetery.

- d. Camp Herms tour: This is likely to take place in Spring. No date has been set yet, but communications are ongoing.
 - e. Earl "Flattop" Smith: This program had to be postponed with the advent of the COVID pandemic. To be re-scheduled.
 - f. Local Journalism: A topic for a future program.
9. Queries: Our archivists are working hard and making progress organizing the collection in the Shadi Room at city hall. We need more room for offsite storage. Ideas?
 10. Sparks & Forge: The next issue of the Forge is almost ready. Michael will be providing a few photos to go with his article.
 11. Website & Copyrights: Dianne reports that she and Tom recently met and began going through the website and identifying copyright credits for the photos there. The first batch has been sent to John so he can update the website. (Subsequent to this meeting, John reported that he had made those updates.) ****Tom and Dianne will continue to meet periodically to continue this work.****
 12. Adjourn.