

Anacortes Historic Preservation Board Meeting minutes
4 p.m., Wednesday, 12 September 2018
Anacortes Museum Library

Members present: Chair Bob Ross, Vice Chair Ken Hansen, Secretary Bunny Heiner, and Mark Nihart; Museum Staff: Bret Lunsford and Elaine Walker. No guests.

Chair Bob Ross called the meeting to order at 4 p.m. Mark Nihart made a motion to accept the minutes of the 13 June meeting be approved as corrected (date correction). Motion passed.

Bret Lunsford brought up his recent discussion with Joe LeBlonde of the Eagles; they discussed what needs to be done and by whom, to have the Anacortes Eagles Hall gain National Register status. (Item No. 3 on the agenda.) Mark recommended that LeBlonde be invited to a meeting to discuss what we can do to help, possibly with grant writing. Bob said he would invite LeBlonde to a future meeting.

Next up for discussion was No. 8 on the agenda, the board retreat on Monday, 15 October, scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. The six hour meeting, to be held at the Anacortes Marine Maritime Heritage Center, 703 R Avenue, will include a catered lunch. Participants will include all three museum boards (the AHPB, the Museum Advisory Board, and the Museum Foundation Board) plus Museum staff. Vicki Stasch, who was a guest at our June meeting, will facilitate the Board retreat. Bret recommended that the AHPB present its priorities in advance. Vicki will prepare the event agenda and will send it out in advance of the retreat. This will be the first all-Museum retreat; the goal is to “come together” on three or four basic goals.

Bret commented that one issue we need to discuss is storage facilities.

Agenda Item 4, the Olson Building and Marine Hardware block, was next up for discussion. The upper story windows of the Olson Building are now boarded up but the businesses on the ground floor are still active. There has been no word from Peter Bolay, a guest at our June meeting, who had mentioned that he might be interested in buying the Olson Building. The building is not for sale at the present time, and its future use by the Anacortes Housing Authority is still pending. The two small cottages on the Olson Block have not yet been demolished; the City has no local preservation foundation to preserve them.

In line with this discussion, Agenda Item No. 5, on City demolition permit procedures, was discussed. One problem is the City’s inability to provide meaningful tax benefits. Mark discussed Bothell’s situation, where some funding is available, and local architects and engineers are involved in Bothell’s demo requests. Elaine Walker commented that demo permits might be a possible source of such funding.

Bret reminded the board that we are an advisory board and as such, have no budget. The City Planning Department, with input from the public, has re-written the development codes and design codes for the City of Anacortes. Ken Hansen said the City does not any design regulations for commercial buildings.

Bret said the main charge of the AHPB is creating and updating an inventory of historic structures, to use as a local tool. He then introduced Museum intern, Corin Noronha, who has completed a promotional video for the Anacortes Historic Walking Tour brochure now online: <https://youtu.be/ZIGTDOPiPf8>.

Mark recommended that the board should become a part of the Planning Commission, to advise on historic structures. Ken said that during his three and a half years on the AHPB, so such requests had been made by the Planning Commission. He recommended that we work on our mission and do landmark inventories. Elaine said the new Comp Plan now has wordage that recognizes the AHPB. Bret said the Museum values ALL volunteer work and asked "who at this table wants to come to more than a monthly meeting?" Elaine reminded the board that we need legal authority to do anything. Bret commented that he has an "open door" policy and that we want to do as much as we can.

Bob said that we need a clear direction, that we need to re-visit goals and objectives, that the primary objective of the board is to identify historic structures and advise the City. Ken asked Bret if the City had come to him for direction on the Olson Building. Prior to the recent issue on the that building, Bret said he had already been doing research on the date of the Olson Building so the Museum's sign would be correct and had sent information to the appropriate authorities. Mark commented that we are an advisory board but need more time and assistance. Bret commented that it would be good if we had professionals come in and help with the work

At this time, the House History work gets the most attention as a local "nomination light" to get a structure included on the Anacortes Register. Perhaps we need to "lower the bar," Bret said, to accomplish this goal and that we need more involvement with the City Council. Mark recommended that we target houses that are possible Register candidates and go to the owners to encourage them to sign up. "That way we target something real," he said.

Bob asked what the impetus was to create the AHPB and Mark replied he thought that it was the very fact that the Museum is funded by the City. Bret asked if the Anacortes Register is more functional or symbolic and said he thinks it is more symbolic. If we lowered the base requirements for registration and got more houses on the Anacortes Register, demo permits could be referenced to the Register. If an owner chooses to list a property on the Register, he or she could have zoning benefits.

Bob said that at our next meeting, we need to prepare for the retreat. At 5:10 p.m., Mark made a motion to adjourn; all agreed. The next regularly scheduled AHPB meeting will be on Wednesday, 10 October 2018, at 4 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia E. (Bunny) Heiner
Secretary