



CITY *of* CLOVIS

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

TO: Mayor and City Council
 FROM: Administration
 DATE: June 6, 2022
 SUBJECT: Consider – A request from Clovis-Big Dry Creek Historical Society for the City Council to Create a Historical Preservation Commission.

Staff: Andrew Haussler, Assistant City Manager

Recommendation: Consider request and provide direction.

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Letter from Clovis-Big Dry Creek Historical Society

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

RECOMMENDATION

For the City Council to provide direction to staff based on the request from the Clovis-Big Dry Creek Historical Society to form a Historical Preservation Commission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff is in receipt of a request (attached) to the City Manager from the Clovis-Big Dry Creek Historical Society to form a historical preservation commission.

BACKGROUND

After the discussion regarding the status of the Clovis Carnegie Library Building on May 2, 2022, the Clovis-Big Dry Creek Historical Society submitted a letter on May 16, 2022, to the City Manager requesting that the City form a Historical Preservation Commission. The City currently does not have a Historical Preservation Commission. The letter from the Clovis-Big Dry Creek Historical Society refers to the Council giving verbal direction to staff at the May 2nd Council meeting to initiate the formation of a Historical Preservation Commission. However, no action was taken at that meeting. Staff now seeks Council's direction on the potential formation of such a Commission.

When the Zoning Code was updated in 2014, a definition for "Historical Preservation Board" was included in Chapter 9.120, and defined to be a *City review board designated to promote the cultural, economic, educational, and general welfare of the City through the preservation and*

protection of buildings, sites, structures, areas, and districts of historic significance and interest. Although a definition for the Board was included, no other provisions in the Zoning Code address a Historic Preservation Board or require its creation, *and* the City has not taken action to establish such a Board. To establish a Historic Preservation Commission (or Board) the City Council would need to initiate and approve an amendment to the Zoning Code to incorporate such a Board into the development review process for designated buildings and sites.

The role of a Historic Preservation Commission can vary as determined by the City Council. Many similar commissions in other cities review historic resources such as buildings, sites, structures, areas, and districts of historic significance and interest, and determine what should be recommended as designated for protection, subject to City Council approval. A commission may also serve as an additional reviewing/advisory body, reviewing and making recommendations on a designated site application to the Planning Commission. If an owner of one of those designated buildings, sites, structures, areas, and districts of historic significance and interest wants to make improvements and/or changes the Historic Preservation Commission would review and determine if the request is appropriate and then recommend approval or denial of the application to the Director, Planning Commission, and City Council, depending on the entitlement. While this would add a layer of protection to designated historic resources it may also deter investment as it could increase approval timeframes and potentially increase expenses to make improvements.

It is likely amendments and/or additions to the City's General Plan would also be required for the Historic Preservation Commission to determine standards to apply. Currently in the City of Clovis, historic preservation is governed by the General Plan in the Open Space and Conservation Element under *Goal 2: Natural, agricultural, and historic resources that are preserved and promoted as key features for civic pride and identity.* This is implemented by the following policies:

- Policy 2.9: National and state historic resources. Preserve historical sites and buildings of state or national significance in accordance with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Historic Rehabilitation.
- Policy 2.10: Local historic resources. Encourage property owners to maintain the historic integrity of the site by (listed in order of preference): preservation, adaptive reuse, or memorialization.
- Policy 2.11: Old Town. Prioritize the preservation of the historic character and resources of Old Town.
- Policy 2.12: Public education. Support public education efforts for residents and visitors about the unique historic, natural, and cultural resources in Clovis.

In addition, the Central Clovis Specific Plan further implemented the above goal and policies with design guidelines and language desiring to preserve the historic nature of the Old Town area.

Staff is currently seeking direction from Council regarding a request to establish a Historic Preservation Commission. Below are some options for Council to consider:

- 1) Keep status quo as currently determined in the General Plan as provided above.
- 2) Direct staff to review historic preservation in the General Plan Update currently underway to determine any new goals, policies, and implementation steps such as establishing a Historical Preservation Commission.
- 3) Direct staff to bring back the necessary items for Council to consider establishing a Historical Preservation Commission before completing the General Plan Update.

FISCAL IMPACT

At this point in the discussion there is no fiscal impact.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

Staff is in receipt of a request to the City Manager from the Clovis-Big Dry Creek Historical Society to form a historical preservation commission.

ACTIONS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

Staff will implement Council direction.

Prepared by: Andrew Haussler, Assistant City Manager

Reviewed by: City Manager *GH*

SAVE OUR 1914 CARNEGIE LIBRARY COMMITTEE

c/o Clovis-Big Dry Creek Historical Society

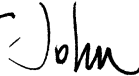
401 Pollasky Avenue
Clovis, CA 93612-1141

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11.

May 16, 2022

Mr. John Holt
City Manager
City of Clovis
1033 Fifth Street
Clovis, CA 93612

Dear Mr. Holt,



Two years ago the Clovis-Big Dry Creek Historical Society formed a committee to advocate for the preservation of the Carnegie Library building in Old Town Clovis, listed among the Fresno County Historical Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission's Inventory of Historic Sites in Fresno County.

We believe that Old Town Clovis should continue to be defined by its authentic historical buildings wherever feasible. The campaign to protect the Carnegie Library building has accentuated the absence of a City of Clovis Historic Preservation Commission to review projects and plans that may affect the City's historic and cultural heritage. Typically such commissions encourage public participation.

We believe that prompt action by the City to establish a Historic Preservation Commission will:

- discourage demolition of our cultural history
- take a vital step toward applying to be a state Certified Local Government to expedite environmental reviews and create opportunities for grant funding
- promote conservation of resources and reduce waste and expense by repairing and reusing existing buildings, greatly reducing their carbon footprint
- encourage identification of significant buildings to educate the public about local history
- contribute expertise in period architecture to maintain the authenticity of Old Town and other historical sites, and
- generate enthusiasm for Clovis' unique character, both as a destination and for the benefit of local citizens.

Many municipalities maintain a Local Register of Historic Resources. Such resources are researched and evaluated as to their significance, and often are marked by plaques or other insignia to illuminate a town's historical development. We believe that Clovis is worthy of such a project.

The Council gave verbal direction to staff at the City Council meeting on May 2, 2020, to initiate the formation of a Historic Preservation Commission. Our citizen group endorses this action with enthusiasm. In addition to the committee—comprised of seven Clovis citizens who are passionate about the preservation of historically significant landmarks—we have consulted an advisory group comprised of John Wright, former City of Clovis Planning Director; Elizabeth Laval, President, Fresno County Historical Society; Karana Hattersley-Drayton, former City of Fresno Historic Preservation Project Manager; and Chris Johnson, AIA, Principal and Project Lead for the 2005 restoration of Fresno's Santa Fe Depot. We offer our services to aid the City in the establishment of a Clovis Historic Preservation Commission.

If you would like to discuss this issue, please contact me by phone at (559) 930-3619, or by email at sayremcfarlanemiller@gmail.com.

Sincere regards,



Sayre Miller
Committee Co-chair
Past Chairman, Fresno County Historical Society

Peg Bos, Committee Co-chair
Past President, Clovis-Big Dry Creek Historical Society

Paul Halajian
Architect, Old Town Clovis

Tom Wright
Board Chairman, Clovis Veterans Memorial District

Carol Smittcamp Copeland
Business Owner, Old Town Clovis

Don Bremseth
Architect / 1979-85 Carnegie Library
Restoration Committee Member

Betsy Smittcamp Kimball
President, Smittcamp Family Foundation