



HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW COMMISSION



TERRY BREJLA, CHAIR
LISA DEHART, VICE CHAIR

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW COMMISSION
COMMISSION AND COMMITTEES ROOM, 3RD FLOOR
48 YANEY AVENUE, SONORA**

August 5, 2024

4:00 p.m.

You also may submit written comments by U.S. Mail to 2 South Green Street, Sonora, CA 95370 or email (cdd@tuolumnecounty.ca.gov) for retention as part of the administrative record. Comments will not be read during the meeting.

PUBLIC FORUM: 15 minutes

The public may speak on any item not on the printed agenda. No action may be taken by the Commission.

COMMISSION BUSINESS:

- A. Reports from Commissioners and staff
- C. Minutes of the meeting of May 6, 2024

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- 1. **Demolition Review Committee** – Committee report; take action as necessary.
- 2. **Grant Committee** – Committee report; take action as necessary
- 3. **“Preserve America” Committee** – Committee report; take action as necessary.

PUBLIC HEARING: No Public Hearing Items.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. **Stent Schoolhouse Project: Status Update**
- 2. **Groveland Community Hall Project: Status Update**
- 3. **Tuolumne Flagpole: Status Update**

OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. **Washington Street Courthouse: Status Update**
- 2. **Yaney Building Remodel: Status Update**
- 3. **Yaney Building Elevator Project: Status Update**
- 4. **Review and finalize letter to the Board of Supervisors about the Yaney Courthouse Project.**

ADJOURNMENT

The Minutes, Staff Reports, and other documents for the items referenced in this Agenda are available for review at the Tuolumne County Community Development Department, 48 Yaney, Sonora, California, and online at <https://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/140/Historic-Preservation-Review-Commission>. Any other materials related to the items referenced in this Agenda that are provided by the County to the HPRC Commissioners prior to the meeting are available for review at the Tuolumne County Community Development Department, 48 Yaney, Sonora, California, and will be available at the meeting. Any materials provided to the Commissioners during the meeting by the County will be available for review at the meeting, and materials provided by the public will be available for review at the Community Development Department the day following the meeting.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Community Development Department at (209) 533-5633. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the County to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility.

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DRAFT

13 May 2024

Board of Supervisors
County of Tuolumne

The Historic Preservation Review Commission is disappointed that the historic courthouse reuse plan has gotten so far along without comments from the public or the commission. This noble landmark, built in 1898, derives its identity and significance as a National Register building from its architectural distinction (inside and outside) and role in the administration of justice in Tuolumne County, one of California's original 27 counties.

Ord. Code Sec. 2.38.090 (J) requires the county to consult with the HPRC before it plans to make changes to county-owned buildings in excess of 50 years old:

J. Advisory Agency for Projects on County-Owned Property Involving Cultural Resources. The Commission shall act as an advisory agency to review projects with the potential to impact cultural resources on Tuolumne County-owned property and shall encourage construction or modifications of Tuolumne County-owned properties, which contain or are adjacent to cultural resources, to be accomplished in a manner that is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as defined in Section 14.04.390 of this Code.

This provision has been in the code for over 30 years and the HPRC has provided valuable input on such projects. The HPRC is the only county commission or committee that requires members to have expertise in a wide variety of areas dealing with historic preservation. For some time the HPRC has included four members with a combined 100+ years' experience in the field of historic preservation. Our commission provides the kind of advice that the county often lacks regarding historic preservation issues related to these local landmarks. We've had an excellent working relationship with the Facilities Managers, who have followed the ordinance code and consulted the HPRC on buildings and grounds issues.

The HPRC's first formal contact with the county's alternative reuse plan for the courthouse was a year ago, when an administrative analyst asked the commission where we wanted the elevator to go. Although we preferred the southwest, rather than the southeast, location, we agreed with the architect's recommendation in the end, based on the restraints imposed by the site.

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That was two years after the Board voted in April 2021 for the current reuse plans. Not only was the HPRC not informed or approached for comment then, but there was inadequate outreach to the public as to what people see as agreeable reuses for the landmark that is on the National Register of Historic Places and a point of considerable pride. At a minimum, the county should want to go forward with a project favored by a consensus of residents in the name of inclusion and transparency.

Except for the elevator, the HPRC has yet to be consulted regarding the reuse project. What we currently receive are updates on how the project is progressing.

Relative to the courthouse reuse plans, the HPRC is quite concerned that drastically altering the courtroom, jury room, and judge's chambers on the third floor is not the best use of that space. Building 16' tall walls to make offices on the second and third floors is very concerning, as is the wall demolition in the courtroom. An important design feature of the building, especially on the second and third floors, is the 16' ceilings, which were typical of the day and lend a feeling of spaciousness not found in most modern buildings. This feature would be lost among new walls to create office and conference rooms.

We favor relocating the Assessor-Recorder and Treasurer-Tax Collector's offices to the first and second floor of the courthouse and even the eastern part of the third floor, if necessary. This strategy would free up 1½ floors of the Administration Building so that Information Technology could be relocated to the third floor and save more than \$400,000 per year for lease payments at its present location, which has been stated as the reason for the current plans.

The advantages of relocating the Assessor-Recorder and Treasurer-Tax Collector's offices to the first and second floors of the courthouse would not necessitate cutting existing open space into cubicles with 16' tall walls or dropped ceilings. The two departments operate much as they did in 1898, situated in an open floor plan and few private offices. They could continue to function with efficiency in the old courthouse. With a price tag of \$11 million (2024) for the current plans, reducing expenses and time would seem to be a path the county could explore.

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The Commission makes these recommendations because certain significant, valuable, and contributing characteristics of the courthouse would be so severely impacted that it would become an office building only, devoid of its most significant part, the court suite. The court suite (courtroom, jury room, judge's chambers) is really the crown jewel of the Tuolumne County Courthouse. Moving the Board suite of offices and chambers into that space would leave the Board with less space, not only for the Board but for the public who attends your meetings. The plans for Supervisors' offices seem quite uncomfortably small. As well, the modern IT and audiovisual enhancements are much better suited to the current, recently remodeled Board chambers and would be totally out of place in such a historic space.

The HPRC opposes the changes proposed to date and would have said so if Ordinance Code Sec. 2.38.090 (J) had been followed. Left in its present configuration and spruced up, the historic Superior Court suite of rooms would be stunning places for public meetings, ceremonies, and the like, even if its use as an overflow courtroom for the superior court, a proposal that was discussed with the state, is apparently not possible based on cost.

In summary, the HPRC is opposed to the direction the county is pursuing with our historic courthouse for the following reasons: its integrity, uniqueness, and significance would be considerably diminished; and the Assessor-Recorder and Treasurer-Tax Collector's offices are a much better fit for the type of space available in the old building. The commission believes that our suggestion would save time and money by minimizing wall construction and demolition. At a minimum the "museum" shown on the plans would not be needed because nothing significant would have to be disturbed. The commission believes the "museum" is being proposed as mitigation under CEQA for the unfortunate major changes now being pursued by the county.

The commission expects updates, as Capital Projects Director Maureen Frank said she would do. She has been true to her word, but that does not constitute consultation. Our thoughts and the public's views need to be tapped and respected. We all want a courthouse we can be proud of, not an just office building that once was a courthouse.

My Comment:

* Leave the Court room & Judges Chamber unchanged, unaltered.

- The Board of Supervisor should remain in the current Administration Building.

- The current BOS chamber is nearing 50 years in this location, that is historic in nature.

- You will be losing space and will be more confined, not only for the public but also the BOS offices will be extremely uncomfortable.

- The current BOS Chambers is more convenient. For ~~it~~ alterations; they will be ~~unpleasant~~ conducting in the court room as well as ^{possibly} take up even more ~~space~~ usable space.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW COMMISSION

TERRY BREJLA, CHAIR
LISA DEHART, VICE-CHAIR



2 South Green Street
Sonora, CA 95370
209 533-5633

COMMISSIONERS

Jeannette Simons
Sharon Marovich
Kurt Bryant
Aaron Rasmussen

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES MONDAY, MAY 6, 2024

PRESENT: Chair, Terry Brejla, and Commissioners Sharon Marovich, Aaron Rasmussen, Kurt Bryant and Jeannette Simons

ABSENT: Vice-Chair Lisa Dehart

STAFF: Quincy Yaley, Community Development Department Director; Maureen Frank, Capital Projects Director; Brandon Rachac, Lionakis consultant; Aaron Jon Hyland, Historical Architect

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME:

Chair Brejla called the meeting of May 6, 2024, to order at 4:00 p.m.

PUBLIC FORUM: 15 minutes

Chair Brejla opened the 15-minute public comment period, during which anyone wishing to could come forward and address the Commission on any item not on the Agenda. She indicated that there would be a three-minute time limit. Seeing no one who wished to address the Commission at this time, Chair Brejla closed the public comment period.

COMMISSION BUSINESS:

A. Reports from Staff and Commissioners

Quincy Yaley, Community Development Director reported on the reappointment of Vice-Chair Lisa DeHart and the process of reducing the number of seated Commissioners.

Commissioner Sharon Marovich reported on the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisor's adopting Resolution 33-24, proclaiming May 2024, as Preservation Month in Tuolumne County.

B. Draft Letter from HPRC to Board of Supervisors – Review and Action

Discussion ensued on the draft letter to the Board of Supervisors and directed Ms. Yaley to bring the updated version to the next regularly scheduled meeting. a vote from the Commission.

MOTION: To update the draft letter with the revisions made by the Commission.

RESULT: Approved

MOVED: Commissioner Rasmussen

SECOND: Commissioner Bryant

AYES: Unanimous

ABSENT: Vice-Chair DeHart

C. Minutes of the meeting of February 5, 2024

MOTION: To approve the Meeting Minutes of February 5, 2024, with changes.
RESULT: Approved
MOVED: Chair Brejla
SECOND: Commissioner Marovich
AYES: Chair Brejla; Commissioners Marovich, Rasmussen, Bryant
ABSTAINS: Commissioner Simons
ABSENT: Vice-Chair DeHart

Minutes of the meeting of March 4, 2024

MOTION: To approve the Meeting Minutes of March 4, 2024, with changes.
RESULT: Approved
MOVED: Chair Brejla
SECOND: Commissioner Marovich
AYES: Chair Brejla; Commissioners Marovich, Rasmussen, Bryant
ABSTAINS: Commissioner Simons
ABSENT: Vice-Chair DeHart

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Demolition Review Committee – Committee report; take action as necessary.

Ms. Yaley reported on the upcoming demolition project.

2. Grant Committee – Committee report; take action as necessary

3. “Preserve America” Committee – Committee report; take action as necessary.

PUBLIC HEARING:

None

NEW AGENDA ITEMS:

1. YANEY BUILDING HISTORIC BUILDING ANALYSIS: REVIEW AND COMMENTS

Maureen Frank, Tuolumne County Capital Projects Director introduced herself and the consultants.

Brandon Rachac from Lionakis and the Historical Architect Aaron Jon Hyland gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Commission.

The Commission asked questions on the Yaney Building Historic Building Analysis.

2. WASHINGTON STREET BUILDING REMODEL PROJECT: STATUS UPDATE

Ms. Frank gave a status update on the Washington Street Building Remodel Project.

Chair Brejla opened the public comment period and set a three-minute time limit.

Members of the public spoke on their concerns with the Yaney elevator location and asked for a timeline on the public notification of the proposed project. They questioned if the stairs within the Yaney building were to be altered during the remodel.

Mr. Rachac responded that the stairs would not be altered.

Chair Brejla closed the public comment period.

3. YANEY BUILDING ELEVATOR PROJECT: STATUS UPDATE

Mr. Rachac and Mr. Hyland gave a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed project.

The Commission asked questions of the consultants.

Chair Brejla opened the public comment period and asked if there was anyone who wished to speak. Seeing no one, she closed the public comment period.

4. YANEY BUILDING REMODEL PROJECT: STATUS UPDATE

Ms. Frank gave a status update on the Yaney Building Remodel.

A discussion ensued on the project.

Chair Brejla opened the public comment period and asked if there was anyone who wished to speak. Seeing no one, she closed the public comment period.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Brejla adjourned the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Brejla adjourned the meeting

Respectfully,

Quincy Yaley, AICP
Community Development Department Director

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