

I. OPENING

Regular meeting called to order at 7:02 by Commissioner O'Hara. Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Susan O'Hara/Erin Dunn/Roberta Page

STAFF PRESENT:

Fortuna City Manager Regan Candelario/Recreation Office Supervisor Christina Boone/Fortuna Depot Museum Curator Alex Service

CITY COUNCIL LIAISON:

Tami Trent (portion of meeting)

GUESTS:

Robert Moeller, Mike O'Hara

II. ORAL COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 13, 2013, M/S/C, Page/O'Hara

IV. BUSINESS

A. Presentation by Robert Moeller, Graphic Designer

Mr. Moeller introduced himself to the Commission and discussed some projects in which he is involved and ideas he is working on. Working with Commissioner Dunn, he is spear-heading the revitalized "Lights Before Christmas" project, which was begun but shelved 2 years ago. He has been familiarizing himself with the technology involved. Mr. Moeller's background is as a preservationist; his father's business is Old House General, which restores antique wooden windows (since 1994). In addition, Mr. Moeller was on the Heritage Board in Petaluma. His main concern on the "Lights Before Christmas" project has been to ensure that the attachment method(s) for the lights are appropriate for the preservation of the depot building. Commissioner Dunn mentioned that Mike Flockhart has the "Lights Before Christmas" plans and will come talk with Supervisor Boone and Pierre Cousineau about it. Mr. Moeller and Curator Service have been discussing ideas for increasing foot traffic in the museum. One major element discussed is the role of the caboose as a draw for visitors. Mr. Moeller would like to volunteer his time and labor to restore the original graphics of the caboose. He also suggested potentially painting the caboose red; Commissioner O'Hara expressed herself in favor of restoring the original graphics, but not of the red coloring, as that would be historically inaccurate for the NWPRR regulation paint colors.

Discussion continued of the caboose graphics. Commissioners Dunn and Page agreed that the lettering on the caboose could make it stand out more. Manager Candelario suggested that the caboose could be painted red for a specific, limited period of time, but Commissioner O'Hara stressed again that we are a historical museum, that one of our major focuses of interpretation is the Northwestern Pacific Railroad, and that as a result it would be inappropriate to paint the caboose a historically inaccurate color.

Further ideas were discussed of sprucing up the caboose's surroundings, cleaning up the undercarriage, putting in more permanent museum parking signs, perhaps putting a railroad crossing sign on the flagpole. In this context, Supervisor Boone said that she will speak with Maintenance staff about removing the cobwebs in the caboose area.

Another idea Mr. Moeller suggested was adding a "suggested donation" element to the free admission to the museum.

Mr. Moeller is working on several events planning projects with the City of Fortuna. One is a kite exposition at the River Lodge. Another idea he would like to develop is a Fortuna Exposition of Trains, to be held in Rohner Park. There is no currently train enthusiasts' event north of San Francisco and south of Oregon. It could become the annual cornerstone event for the Depot Museum. He suggested it as an

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invitational event for NMRA modelers. When Mr. Moeller and Curator Service previously discussed this idea, a concept they favored was to hold the first Fortuna Exposition of Trains in 2014, to tie in with the 100th anniversary of the NWPRR "Golden Spike" celebration.

B. Arcadia Book Project

Commissioner O'Hara reported that the book is nearing completion. She and Curator Service took field trips to Shively, Fort Seward and other locations involved in the NWP story. The closing image of the book will be a photograph Commissioner O'Hara took on one of these expeditions, of redwood saplings growing through the disused rails. With the permission of the landowner, they took a cross-country expedition on quads to Cain Rock, the location of the October 23, 1914 driving of the golden spike.

C. Summer Volunteer Schedule

We begin our seven-days-a-week opening schedule on June 1 (running through August 31). Curator Service reported that there are still some gaps in our summer volunteer coverage. Commissioner Page offered that Curator Service can call her to fill in from time to time, but she would prefer not to have a regular time slot. There are several former summer volunteers that Curator Service is still working to contact. Curator Service also reported on work by volunteers Marline Rienks and Mike Murray to catalog and re-house the voluminous Humboldt County history archival collection assembled by Ruth Brinks and recently donated to the Depot Museum.

D. Electronic Form Purchase of *Humboldt Beacon* Archive

Curator Service reported that we have received notification that the McLean Foundation is again accepting grant applications. Commissioner Dunn shared that the grant cycle is now on a monthly basis, and the emphasis is on how the project will impact the Eel River Valley. It was also agreed that the O'Dell family should be contacted to invite them to contribute to the project. Curator Service will get contact information from Commissioner Boone.

E. "Conversations at the Depot" Programs

Commissioner Dunn would like further input on the format of these programs. She feels that the programs that have been presented to-date are good history, but could be more compelling to watch. Perhaps they should be shorter, for instance 30 minutes? Ross Rowley will not be able to record future programs, so Commissioner Dunn is now looking for the right person to fit the budget (a \$500 grant from Hops in Humboldt). The timing suggested for the next program is later in the summer. Commissioner O'Hara mentioned that Greg Rumney ("The Old Photo Guy") is in the process of purchasing equipment to shoot a documentary on the 1964 flood, so he might be a useful person to contact. Curator Service suggested contacting Wendy Lestina of the Ferndale Museum, who has directed their 9 documentary local history productions. Curator Service will get Ms. Lestina's contact information to Curator Dunn.

F. Other Potential Summer Events

An email message has been received from Humboldt area historian Jerry Rohde offering a series of local history presentations sponsored by Pierson's Building Center in Eureka, to be held during the summer and fall. The themes of the three programs are "High Seas," "High Leads" and "Highways." It was agreed that the Depot Museum would like to host either "High Leads" or "Highways," and Curator Service will contact Mr. Rohde to schedule a date for the program. We have also received two proposals from Katy Tahja, author of the 2013-released Arcadia Images of Rail book *Logging Railroads of Humboldt and Mendocino Counties*. Curator Service and Ms. Tahja have made initial plans for the Depot to host a book-signing for Ms. Tahja on the Saturday of the Redwood AutoXPo. Ms. Tahja also does a one-woman living history presentation on the 19th-century "ladies of the evening" of the Mendocino Coast, which she has proposed as a presentation to benefit the Depot Museum. It was decided that this does not match our mission well, so we will decline; however, we will move forward with the book-signing event.

G. Fortuna Depot Museum Newsletter

We have not produced an issue of the newsletter since last year, due to time commitments to multiple other projects. It was agreed to discontinue the newsletter, and focus instead on timely updates on the museum's portion of the City web site. Curator Service also mentioned that at least a portion of the museum's email mailing list, which we previously used in sending out the newsletter, seems to have been lost in the recent re-vamping of the City's computer network. Manager Candelario expressed concern at this and said that Curator Service should contact Michelle Vassel to schedule IT work to repair this.

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H. Potential Accessions/De-Accessions

No de-accessions were proposed. The following potential new donations were presented: **From Deb Chisum:** 1 chemise and 2 skirts/petticoats that belonged to Jenny Rasmussen Ericssen of Ferndale, late 1800s. *Curator's Recommendation: Do not accept unless can determine that Jenny Rasmussen Ericssen had major links to Fortuna. With donor's permission, offer to Ferndale Museum.* **From Nancy Hodgson Naismith:** Documents and photographs from the estate of Ellen Matthieson Hodgson (mother of donor), Fortuna Union High School Class of 1933. *Curator's Recommendation: Accept.* **From North Coast Repertory Theatre, Eureka:** Commemorative ash tray from Bank of Loleta 60th anniversary, 1910 – 1970. *Curator's Recommendation: Accept.* **From Janet Rutledge and Kathleen Meglemere:** Clothing from donors' family including wedding clothes of Pansy Wood Schlag and Hiram Peter Schlag, married 9/22/1917; slip, bodice, fox stole & muff, fur cape of Pansy Wood Schlag; Ruth Schlag Douglas Childs' 1933 8th grade graduation dress from Rohnerville Elementary School and Fortuna Union High School uniform (FUHS Class of 1937). *Curator's Recommendation: Accept.* **From John Taylor:** Framed newspaper *Ulster County Gazette*, Kingston, New York, 1/4/1800, reporting on the death of George Washington. In donor's family for generations; family came to Humboldt County in the mid-1800s. *Curator's Recommendation: Accept.* **From Bill Trageser:** Documents, books and photographs from the Hinckley family of Bridgeville and Rohnerville, ancestors of donor. Includes items relating to Bertha Hinckley, grandmother of donor, and school materials of Irene Hinckley, Fortuna Union High School Class of 1936, mother of donor. *Curator's Recommendation: Accept all items except for circa 1920s print of "Rebecca at the Well" and California State Series geography text book (in bad condition, already have similar items, and there are no names or annotations in the book).*

The Commission voted to accept Curator Service's recommendations, M/S/C, Dunn/Page.

I. Scheduling of July Historical Commission Meeting

In consulting the calendar, it was found that the regular date of the July Historical Commission Meeting will not conflict with the schedule of the Fortuna Rodeo, so the meeting date was left unchanged.

V. CONSENT CALENDAR

Reports submitted to the Commission were accepted.

VI. REPORTS

A. Chairman Report

Commissioner O'Hara mentioned that in working with the Humboldt Room of the Humboldt State University Library it occurred to her that local railroad-related photo reprints from their collection would make appropriate displays for the interior of the caboose. Being reprints, there would not be the same concern as with the display of original artifacts in the non-climate-controlled caboose. She suggested purchasing frames for these reprints and suggested a potential \$500 budget. There was discussion, and the general feeling that this might be too high a budget amount. In discussion, it was shared that some of the photographs displayed at the Humboldt Redwoods Visitor Center have been on display in the range of 25 years, so frequent replacement is not always required for such exhibits. Another possibility suggested was the use of foam core rather than framing. The project will be investigated further. Guest Mike O'Hara also mentioned the concept, which has also been suggested by volunteer Mike Murray, of restricting access to the caboose to make it only accessible through the museum building itself. Discussion moved to a broader examination of museum security. Councilmember Trent questioned whether there have been incidents of theft in the museum, and was told that there have. We should continue to investigate the most appropriate steps to take in the field of museum security/securing the caboose.

B. Recreation Office Supervisor Report

No further report.

C. Curator Report

Curator Service reported that the plexiglass has been installed over the accessible portions of the barbed wire exhibit, and the maintenance crew will also be installing plexiglass in the entrances to the observation tower of the caboose. Curator Service also reported that she has been done the honor of being asked to join the Board of Directors of the Humboldt County Historical Society, and she has accepted. Her first

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meeting as a Board member will be later this month.

D. Commissioner Reports or Comments:

None.

VII. Adjournment:

Next Historical Commission meeting, Wednesday, July 10, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. at the Depot Museum. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned, M/S/C, Dunn/Page