

**Minutes of the Fortuna Historical Commission**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Wednesday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015 - 6:00 p.m., Fortuna Depot Museum, 3 Park St. at Rohner Park**

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair O’Hara called the Public Session to order at 6:00 PM

**ROLL CALL:**

<u>Commissioners</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Chair Susan O’Hara	City Manager Regan Candelario
Vice Chair Toni Scolari	Development Services Manager Kevin Carter
Commissioner Jean Giannini (absent)	Depot Museum Curator Alex Service
Commissioner Mike Murray	<b><u>Council Representative</u></b>
Commissioner Pam Zana	Councilmember Linda Gardner

**II. ORAL COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**III. PRESENTATIONS**

**A. Report on *Mills of Humboldt County Arcadia Publishing Project***

Chair O’Hara and Curator Service reported on the *Mills of Humboldt* book project. The submission deadline was moved forward in order to have the book available for the holiday buying season; O’Hara and Service submitted all book materials to the publisher by June 16 instead of the original submission deadline of July 7. The proofs will be back for editing in August or September. Chair O’Hara spoke of things learned in the process of writing this book. Our area was referred to as the “great shingle-making district of Fortuna” in the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Learning the importance of shingle-manufacturing in this area has led to Depot Museum exhibit ideas. O’Hara would like to create an exhibit based around the Ole Hansen upright shingle-making machine. Ole Hansen of Eureka invented this machine; at one point a way of measuring a mill’s prosperity was by how many Hansen shingle machines the mill had. Lumber mills are well represented in museum exhibits in this region, but shingle-manufacturing is not. Discussion followed of potential sources/contacts in the search for a Hansen shingle machine to display, including the Timber Heritage Association and the Blue Ox Millworks.

**B. Update on City of Fortuna Budget, FY 2015—16**

Manager Candelario reported that the City’s budget was approved by the City Council on June 16, after a series of workshops. Once again services and programming have had to be cut. He stated that staff have worked hard to stay within budget and have spent less than projected on the items they have latitude over. There is still a \$65,000 deficit projected, necessitating utilizing savings from the general fund reserves. Costs to provide services are increasing, but revenues have not increased. The City Council is seeking new options for raising funds. Fiscal Year 2010—11 was the last time the City was able to put funds into reserves, due in large part to the discontinuation of the Redevelopment Fund in the 2012—13 fiscal year. Manager Candelario reported that a large upcoming expense will be upgrading the water treatment plant in 2016. Discussion followed of the progress of the City’s Consolidated Annual Financial Report filing and of Fortuna’s water use in light of the current drought. Fortuna has managed a 24% reduction in water use from 2013, which is the largest reduction by any California municipality; the next nearest is an 11% reduction.

**C. Cal Trans Project Involving Alton Railroad Crossing**

Curator Service reported that the museum received a telephone inquiry from Chris Cusack of Cal Trans. A safety-related project at Alton involves removing the railroad crossing infrastructure, and Cal Trans is contacting history institutions and community groups in the area to determine if there would be detrimental historical/cultural impact from removing these items. The infrastructure items in question date from after the 1964 flood. Other organizations and individuals contacted have expressed the belief that safety should be the first concern and that these items are not of major historical/cultural significance. Curator Service expressed the same opinion to Mr. Cusack, and the Historical Commission members were in agreement on this point. The items to be removed are the property of the NCRA. There was discussion of the fact that Doug Strehl is an NCRA member, and that if there were items removed which might be desirable for exhibit at the Depot Museum, there might be a possibility of Mr. Strehl facilitating the museum receiving such items on temporary

loan.

#### **E. Upcoming Events at Fortuna Depot Museum**

Curator Service reported that the museum will host a book-signing event for Jim Garrison's Arcadia Images of America book *Scotia and Rio Dell*, which features approximately 75 images from the Fortuna Depot Museum collection. This book-signing is tentatively scheduled for July 25, the Saturday of AutoXpo. The museum will also host Jerry Rohde's talk in the Cleebrating Life in Our Humboldt County series sponsored by Pierson Building Center, "Wish You Were Here: a Postcard Tour of Humboldt County," at 7:00 on Friday, August 21.

#### **IV. CONSENT CALENDAR**

##### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Review and approve minutes of Fortuna Historical Commission meeting May 13, 2015 and staff report for May-June 2015

##### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No public comment was heard.

##### **COMMISSION ACTION:**

Commission Member Zana moved, seconded by Member Murray to approve the minutes of May 13, 2015 and the staff report for May-June 2015.

AYES: Commission Members Murray, O'Hara, Scolari and Zana

NOES: None

ABSENT: Commission Member Giannini

ABSTAIN: None

Motion Carried 4-0

#### **V. BUSINESS**

##### **A. "GRAVE MATTERS AND UNTIMELY DEPARTURES" FORTUNA CEMETERY DISTRICT FUND-RAISING TOUR**

Curator Service reported that her fellow producers for the previous five years of the "Grave Matters" tour, Erin Dunn and Ross Rowley, are unable to serve on the production team this year due to their Rotary Club commitments. Unless others can be found to join the production team, the project will have to be put on hold for a year. Curator Service put out the call for Fortuna Historical Commission members and/or other interested persons to take on this responsibility. Commissioner Zana and Councilmember Gardner volunteered to join Curator Service as producers for "Grave Matters" in 2015. Other commission members expressed their thanks to Zana and Gardner for being willing to take on the project and not to let it lose momentum by skipping a year. Zana, Gardner and Service will meet with Dunn and Rowley to learn more of the logistical requirements, with one specific point to discuss being liability insurance for the event. The performance date for this year's "Grave Matters" is Sunday, October 25.

##### **B. PLANNING FOR 2015 HOLIDAY SEASON DISPLAYS**

Commissioner O'Hara discussed some of the themes used in previous years' holiday season displays. Ideas discussed for this year's displays include families and family recipes/traditions, different time periods: modern in front room and circa 1910 in the fourth room, with focus on Italian and Portuguese immigrant Humboldt families. Commissioner Scolari suggested focusing on a circa 1915 date because of the 100-years-later connection, and focusing on Christmas at the Star Hotel. The display could tie in with a specific menu for a Star Hotel Christmas dinner as reported in the *Humboldt Beacon* and include place settings from the Depot Museum's china collection.

##### **C. POTENTIAL DOWNTOWN FORTUNA "THEN AND NOW" HISTORICAL GUIDEBOOK**

In discussion, commission members emphasized that this is a project they do not want to let fall off the radar. Funding and printing options were discussed. Commissioner O'Hara mentioned the possibility of using lulu.com, which she has used to create a book for a family member. A book of up to 25 pages can be created for \$3.50 per copy, with the price lowering with larger production numbers. This project will be placed on the agenda of the January Fortuna Historical Commission meeting, after "Grave Matters" and the holiday season displays are completed.

#### **D. ACCESSIONS/DE-ACCESSIONS**

##### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Review and approve accession of proposed items into Fortuna Depot Museum collection

**STAFF REPORT:**

No de-accessions are proposed at this time. The following potential accessions have been donated to the Fortuna Depot Museum. *From Frances Smith Bagley:* early 20<sup>th</sup>-century photographs, including several from Humboldt County, as well as California history reference booklets and framed painting of mountain scene. Curator's recommendation: accept Humboldt County photographs on which people and/or locations are identified; do not accept painting, booklets or photographs of unidentified people. *From Ross Rowley:* reproductions of three early 20<sup>th</sup>-century photographs of Fortuna/Eel River Valley. *From Alex Service:* assorted pieces of sheet music from the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. *From Rodney L. Herren and the Herren Family:* WWII blackout window blind from NWP railway car and three booklets of NWP/SP rules and regulations from the 1970s and 80s. *From Theresa Aubuchon:* linens that belonged to and/or were made by Clara Craddock Johnson Zimmerman, who was born in Eureka in 1896 and taught at Ettersburg, Briceand, and for 30 years in Loleta, retiring in 1950. *From Jan Syvertson:* album of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century postcards that belonged to Virginia "Ginger" Vance. *From Dennis Finley:* Record (LP) of Fortuna Union High School Dance Band, circa 1959.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No public comment was heard.

**COMMISSION ACTION:**

Commission Member Scolari moved, seconded by Member Murray, to approve the proposed accessions to the Fortuna Depot Museum collection with the exceptions of the painting and California history booklets and the unidentified photographs. Final decision on the unidentified photographs was postponed pending further investigation. Featuring these photographs in a "Can You Identify these People?" display was suggested, as was contacting the Ferndale Museum (one photograph is by a Ferndale photographer) and Clarke Museum for potential assistance with identification. Voice Vote.

AYES: Commission Members Murray, O'Hara, Scolari, Zana

NOES: None

ABSENT: Commission Members Giannini

ABSTAIN: None

Motion Carried 4-0

**VI. STAFF REPORTS.**

**1. FORTUNA DEPOT MUSEUM CURATOR REPORT**

Curator Service expressed thanks and appreciation to Parks and Recreation Department maintenance staff for their ongoing prompt attention to Depot Museum maintenance needs. Commission Member Murray, during one of his regular volunteer shifts at the museum, received prompt assistance from maintenance staff when the security camera monitor became disconnected. Curator Service reported on Pierre Cousineau's prompt and efficient attention to a repair issue on a floorboard in the front room of the museum. Service and Cousineau are also working together to install a new hanging system for the photographs displayed in the caboose, which will be on the maintenance team's schedule after the summer special event season is over. The photographs in the caboose require re-hanging because the hanging system used was not strong enough to withstand the caboose's changes in temperature.

**2. CITY OF FORTUNA STAFF REPORT**

City Manager Candelario and Development Services Manager Carter presented the staff report. Manager Candelario expressed his happiness to hear of the responsiveness of maintenance staff, which is particularly impressive considering that July is the department's busiest month. The Fortuna City Council has named July "Parks Make Life Better" month. The LED sign proposed for the Rohner Park entrance is still under discussion; the City Council have requested more information on the proposal, which will also go to the Traffic Safety Commission for consideration. The Parks and Recreation Commission is still interested in pursuing the idea, which would give greater ability to advertise current events including events/exhibits at

the Depot Museum. The sign would be powered by wireless equipment in the park office, which would give the ability to change/update the information displayed. Funding of the sign would be by donation. Discussion followed of various reactions to the proposed sign and the question of community opinion on it. On the City web site and Facebook page, community response has been approximately 2/3 in favor, but the fact of 1/3 being against should not be discounted. Councilmember Gardner expressed mixed feelings about the proposed sign and expressed concern that it could lead to traffic accidents due to distracting drivers' attention from the road. On the flip side, people frequently say they don't know enough about what is going on in town and the information is not readily enough available, and the proposed sign could help deal with that issue. Discussion followed of other ways to deal with the issue of event information availability, including greater focus on updating online calendar listings and posting more documents to the web site. Manager Carter will investigate the options for setting up a Fortuna Depot Museum Facebook page.

## VII. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

**Commissioner O'Hara:** Reported that she and Curator Service will be meeting with Manager Carter to work on goal-setting/long-range planning for the Depot Museum. She requested the other commission members to be thinking about these questions, which will be an item of discussion at the September commission meeting. Commissioner O'Hara shared a few of her own ideas/goals. Included are revamping the logging display in the 3<sup>rd</sup> room, creating a diorama of a scene in a shingle mill and using an extra large format photograph of a shingle mill interior as backdrop. She would like to see the museum have the ability to host more changing exhibits, and wants to re-organize the 3<sup>rd</sup> room. Another goal that Commissioner O'Hara mentioned is to return to the project that was shelved several years ago to obtain the *Humboldt Beacon* archive in a searchable online platform as a research resource at the Depot Museum. Manager Carter emphasized that it is necessary to get museum projects into the City planning process and budget process, and also brought up the question of how to get more visitors into the museum. The need to include museum projects in the City planning and budget processes is one of the reasons for this upcoming initial meeting between O'Hara, Service and Carter on the museum's planning and goals. **Commissioner Murray:** Suggested that a printed reproduction of an NWPRR ticket would be a good item to sell in the museum gift shop; it could be marketed as a bookmark. **Commissioner Scolari:** Expressed thanks to Commissioner Zana and Councilmember Gardner for taking on the "Grave Matters" production responsibilities, and said that she will be happy to help out closer to the date of the event. **Commissioner Zana:** None.

## VIII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

## VI. ADJOURNMENT

Commission Member Scolari moved to adjourn, seconded by Member Murray. Voice Vote. Motion Carried 4-0. Meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Alex Service, Fortuna Depot Museum Curator  
Thru: Linda McGill, City Clerk