



**CITY OF NORCO
CITY COUNCIL / HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING
MINUTES**

**Wednesday, October 28, 2015
City Hall Conference Rooms A and B, 2870 Clark Avenue, Norco, CA 92860**

CALL TO ORDER: 4:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

City Council:

Herb Higgins, Mayor, **Present**
Kevin Bash, Mayor Pro Tem, **Present**
Kathy Azevedo, Council Member, **Present**
Berwin Hanna, Council Member, **Present**
Greg Newton, Council Member, **Present**

Historic Preservation Commission:

Matthew Potter, Chair, **Present**
Diane Stiller, Vice Chair, **Present**
Patricia Overstreet, Commissioner, **Present**
Mark Sawyer, Commissioner, **Present**
Teresa Edwards, Commissioner, **Absent**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Bash

BUSINESS ITEM:

1. Review of the Draft Norconian Property Historic Resources Survey and Evaluation Report and Authorization for National Register Nomination. (Historic Resources Consultant Bill Wilkman)

City Manager Okoro reported that at its June 4, 2014 meeting, the City Council unanimously authorized the preparation of a historic resources survey and evaluation of the Norconian property for its Naval Hospital and Guided Missile eras. Wilkman Historical Services (WHS) completed this work earlier this month and the document is ready to be submitted to the California State Historic Preservation Commission for consideration of the property's listing on the National Register of Historic Places for the significance of these eras.

Historic Resources Consultant Bill Wilkman presented a brief overview of the historic evaluation of the Norconian property. The active history of Naval Hospital Corona (NHC) extends from 1941 to 1957. The U.S. Navy created NHC by converting and expanding a massive luxury resort originally developed by entrepreneur Rex Clark in 1929.

The Resort Era was from 1929 to 1941 and the resort buildings are the hotel building, chauffeurs quarters, power house, garage/laundry building, tea house, and the pavilion/boathouse. Mr. Wilkman provided aerial photographs of the resort era national register district.

The Naval Hospital Era was from 1941-1957 and included three units. Unit 1 buildings consisted of the nurse's quarters, hotel/administration, gym/theater, hospital annex, chapel, corpsmen's quarters, wave's quarters, and garage/laundry building. Unit 2 buildings consisted of the tuberculosis wards, kitchen/mess hall, power house, command building, recreation, married officer's quarters, senior officer's quarters, and corpsmen's quarters. Unit 3 buildings consisted of a recreation hall/storage building, boiler plant, help's quarters, kitchen/mess building, hospital wards, and administration. Mr. Wilkman discussed the qualifications for National Register Listing and indicated that the buildings met the architecture and design criteria – work of a master architect and district continuity of architectural style. Designer Claud Beelman was a master architect of the twentieth century with at least a dozen building on the National Register of Historic Places representing a broad range of architectural styles.

Mr. Wilkman reported that the Naval Hospital possesses a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of sites, building, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. NHC is the only remaining, intact example in the United States of a resort based Naval hospital. All of the other resort based Naval hospitals were returned to their owners with all military improvements removed. It is also the only remaining intact example in the Western United States of a Naval general hospital that retains integrity to its World War II form. Mr. Wilkman noted that Units 2 and 3 are excellent examples of the military pavilion style site planning employed during World War II. The buildings also met the events important in history criterion with their connection to the Mayo Clinic, disease testing and treatment, and rehabilitation.

Mr. Wilkman noted that NHC is unique for having been established by the largest contingent of Mayo Clinic doctors assembled up until that time outside of the Mayo Clinic itself. Disease testing and treatment included tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, rheumatic fever, and significant research using humans and animals. There was groundbreaking work in partnership with Olive view Sanitarium and the National Institute of Public Health. The Naval Hospital was also a major center for rehabilitation.

Mr. Wilkman presented information on the Guided Missile RDT&E Era from 1951 to 1971. In 1951, the National Bureau of Standards (NBS) Guided Missile group relocated its Washington D.C. based guided missile research branch to NHC's Unit 2, bringing world renowned scientists. About a year later, the labs were transferred to the Department of Defense (DoD), became known as Naval Ordnance Laboratories (NOLC), placed under the direct command of the U.S. Navy, and made significant contributions to the Cold War, playing a prominent role in the development of effective Navy guided missiles. Mr. Wilkman went into further details about the basic functions, responsibilities and tasks. By 1964, NOLC had become the single entity to which the Navy turned for objective evaluations of missile performance and reliability.

Mr. Wilkman concluded his presentation with an overall summary of the criteria that qualifies the property for the National Register – architecture and design, events important in history, and integrity. Mr. Wilkman requested that the City Council concur in the qualification of the Norconian property for National Register listing.

Public Comments:

Linda Dixon expressed the importance of getting the Norconian property on the National Register listing and that it is the key to the future of Norco. Ms. Dixon commented on a recent presentation she and Ms. Su Bacon gave to officers and other Navy personnel at the Seal Beach base and commented on the positive feedback received. Ms. Dixon briefly commented on the Lake Norconian Club Foundation's lawsuit against the State of California and the judge's preliminary ruling. She encouraged the City Council to concur with the qualification of the property and move forward quickly.

Su Bacon commented that a significant amount of information that the City has been giving the Navy regarding the property is not being sent to Navy officials. Ms. Bacon urged the Council to move forward rapidly with the qualification for the National Register listing.

In response to Commission Member Stiller, Mr. Wilkman indicated that the State Commission decides whether or not the property qualifies for the National Register listing. The Navy could appeal the decision to the Federal level.

The Council thanked Mr. Wilkman for his thorough work on the survey.

M/S POTTER/OVERSTREET to recommend that the City Council concur in the qualification of the Norconian property for National Register listing in relation to its Naval Hospital and Guided Missile eras and that staff and the Historic Resources Consultant be directed to work with the Historic Preservation Commission in the preparation and submission of a National Register Nomination to the State Historic Preservation Commission. The motion was carried by the following roll call vote:

AYES: POTTER, STILLER, OVERSTREET, SAWYER

NOES: NONE

ABSENT: EDWARDS

ABSTAIN: NONE

M/S BASH/HANNA to receive and file the report, accept the recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission, and to move expeditiously to the State Historic Preservation Commission to overrule the previous decision by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The motion was carried by the following roll call vote:

AYES: HIGGINS, BASH, AZEVEDO, HANNA, NEWTON

NOES: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Higgins adjourned the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

Cheryl L. Link, CMC
City Clerk