



**CITY OF NORCO
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, January 14, 2020
Council Chamber, 2820 Clark Avenue, Norco CA 92860**

CALL TO ORDER: **4:05 p.m.**

ROLL CALL: **Present:**
Teresa Edwards, Chair
Diana Stiller, Vice Chair
Carolyn Morse, Commission Member

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: **Vice Chair Diana Stiller**

READ BY CHAIR: "All discretionary actions before the Historic Preservation Commission are advisory in nature and final actions will be confirmed, modified or deleted by the City Council."

1. PUBLIC COMMENTS: **None**

2. CONSENT ITEMS:

M/S EDWARDS/STILLER to approve the consent item as presented. The motion was carried by the following roll call vote:

AYES: EDWARDS, STILLER, MORSE

NOES: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

A. Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of November 12, 2019. **Recommended Action: Approved** (*Deputy City Clerk*)

3. ITEM(S) PULLED FROM HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION CONSENT ITEMS: **None**

4. DISCUSSION ITEM:

A. Review Of A Proposal by H & H Properties to Demolish the Historic Norco Egg Ranch Complex (Eisen Complex) Located at 1658 Mountain Avenue, Situated on the West Side of Mountain Avenue, Between First and Second Streets in Relation to a Proposed 110-Acre Business Park. (*Cultural Resource Consultant*)

Cultural Resource Consultant Bill Wilkman presented the staff report on file. He shared a PowerPoint covering the history of the Eisens as Holocaust survivors and eventual owners of a highly successful egg producing business. He also identified the components of the historic Eisen Egg Ranch, a site plan of the proposed project, and the historic buildings within the projected development area that includes the original 1956-farm house, garage and the original egg processing building. He noted that the Eisen property

is one of two properties in the City that qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the other being the Norconian.

The 110-acres proposed for development was once part of the Riverside Orange Heights Tract, which was subdivided in the early 1900s into small farm properties. Consultant Wilkman provided an extensive background history on Harry and Hilda Eisen, how they met, immigrated to the United States as refugees in 1948, while escaping certain death under the Nazi occupation during World War II. Both came from a small Polish village called Izbica. In the later 1940s they emigrated to Los Angeles, eventually moving to Arcadia where they established a small poultry ranch. In 1955, forced to leave Arcadia, due to changes in zoning, the Eisen Family subsequently moved to Norco, with their 100 chickens, establishing the Norco Egg Ranch. The business grew to one of the ten largest egg-producing operations in the United States.

The applicant proposes demolition of all structures currently on the property as part of their plan to build a business park. Consultant Wilkman offered two alternatives to save the Eisen farmhouse, garage, and original egg processing building. In order to allow the demolition of the structures, the City Council would need to adopt “finding of overriding considerations” whereby the decision is made that the loss of the historic buildings would be more than compensated by the value of developing the property. The preferred alternative would be to convert the farmhouse into a Holocaust educational center, the garage into its original use as a temporary egg processing building, and the permanent egg processing building for use as a City museum and related uses. This option could teach local students, visitors and residents alike, about Norco’s egg ranch history, as well as provide a focus on the Holocaust, based on the Eisen’s journey from the Holocaust to becoming the owners of a nationally prominent egg processing business.

Consultant Wilkman reviewed the two alternatives. Both provide for the preservation of the Eisen property. Under Alternative One, the developer would deed the property to the City which would operate it as a museum. Under Alternative Two, the property would remain in private ownership with all buildings preserved under private ownership and use. Both alternatives would include an interpretive feature to the front of the property telling the history of the Eisen family. Both alternatives would also call for the developer to fund the listing of the property on the National Register of Historic Places.

Consultant Wilkman stated he recommends Alternate One, the Public Option. He noted that this alternative would allow people, including schoolchildren, to learn about the Holocaust and the history of Norco as an egg production based community. It would also show how our free society would allow people to go from rags to riches based on nothing more than their own ingenuity and hard work. This alternative would also provide for much needed museum space. In closing, Consultant Wilkman quoted Harry Eisen – “There is no place like America”.

Vice Chair Stiller questioned the requirement of the engagement of a Paleontologist and Archeologist by the developer. In response, Consultant Wilkman stated it was a requirement by Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The paleontologist would monitor grading, while the Archeologist should be on-call in case anything of significance is unearthed during construction.

Mr. Wilkman introduced CapRock representative, Patrick Daniels, to make a brief presentation for informational use only.

Mr. Daniels shared the company's vision for the development of the property. He noted that currently they are talking with Norco residents to gain an understanding of the community. He stated that numerous meetings have been conducted with the surrounding property owners. They have spoken with City leaders, staff, and many community residents. Mr. Daniels showed a proposed site plan, noting no access will be allowed along Pacific Avenue and Second Street per direction of staff and residents; all ingress/egress is to be on Mountain Avenue. He provided an overview of direction received from staff as well as the Streets, Trails and Utilities Commission on street signal, horse trails along the property, and right of way. Mr. Daniels stated that his company does not agree with Consultant Wilkman's presentation and its historic value, but added they would like to work with the City to commemorate the Eisen Family. He added that the Eisen's daughter, Mary Cramer, has stated that from her perspective, there are no emotional attachments to the buildings but she would like to have her family honored in some way. Regarding the property itself, her main interest is in the revenue to be generated for the future of the family.

Vice Chair Stiller asked if when meeting with the community, were there any attempts to make them aware of its historical significance. In response, Mr. Daniels explained that those along Pacific Avenue asked if their home were considered historical, otherwise, he was unsure if the residents were told of the Eisen property's significance. Vice Chair Stiller stated that as a history teacher, she appreciates the offer of a monument, but she never would take students just to view a monument. There is no comparison to the impact a historic structure could make; invaluable and educational.

Member Morse spoke in favor of streetlights mentioned by Mr. Daniels to help with current traffic issues.

Consultant Wilkman reminded the Commission that its purview of this project is historic in nature only. He further provided his input regarding the development of the project, based on his experience, and asked that the Commission make its recommendation based on the historic value of the property.

Chair Edwards inquired if any potential tenants have been lined up to date. Mr. Daniels replied that none yet, as the project is still in development stages. He provided examples of other local companies that are similar in size as to the type of companies that may be moving in when ready. Mr. Daniels explained how widening Mountain Avenue would affect the property. Chair Edwards asked if they would be willing to move the historic structures to another location; in response, Mr. Daniels stated that the buildings are not very stable, but anything is possible.

Kathy Azevedo stated she has been working as a consultant with CapRock, assisting by providing the developer with details and information regarding the City and its history. She has spoken with Mary Cramer as well, who had only lived in the home for seven years. She shared that Ms. Cramer had stated that she did not hold any attachment to the buildings on the property.

Mrs. Azevedo indicated the garage is very dilapidated; it is not historic in nature. Adding that a museum would not be feasible on this property, primarily due to excessive commercial traffic at this corner.

Vice Chair Stiller asked Consultant Wilkman for clarification on Alternate Two.

Chair Edwards stated she would like to pursue having the home moved to a different location in the City to salvage it for historic purposes.

M/S EDWARDS/ to create a third option, to have the home salvaged and moved to a different location such as the community center area at the developer's expense.

Motion died without second.

M/S STILLER/MORSE to make the recommendation to the City Council of adopting Alternative One. The motion was carried by the following roll call vote.

AYES: STILLER, MORSE

NOES: EDWARDS

ABSTAIN: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

Vice Chair Stiller asked City Manager Okoro what the next step would be; he answered that their recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council for their consideration.

Member Morse asked about moving the egg processing building, in response, Consultant Wilkman stated that it was too dilapidated and would be difficult to move.

B. Discuss setting Regular Open Hours of the Historical Community Room
(*Economic Development Consultant*)

Consultant Roger Grody stated the Commission had previously discussed its wish to have regular open hours to the public at the Historical Community Room. Action is needed by the Commission to set a schedule, and Parks and Recreation staff will be made aware of the set schedule.

M/S EDWARDS/STILLER to open the Historical Community Room to the public on Fridays, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., to be staffed by a Commission Member and the Collection Management Consultant. The motion was carried by the following roll call vote.

AYES: EDWARDS, STILLER, MORSE

NOES: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

5. SUBCOMMITTEES / CONSULTANTS UPDATES / STAFF COMMUNICATIONS
(*ORAL REPORTS - ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA*)

A. Collection Advisory Subcommittee:

Chair Edwards reported on supplies received, thanked staff for their assistance; and shared that Consultant Wilson donated a computer at the Historical Room to assist with logging of historical items.

Chair Edwards requested funds to place an ad in the Norco Horseweek Program taking place in April 2020. Stating the cost is \$300 for a half page; and asked for Commission input on information to be advertised.

M/S EDWARDS/MORSE to approve this emergency request for funds of \$300 to place an ad in the Norco Horseweek Program, which is due February 28, 2020. The motion was carried by the following roll call vote.

AYES: EDWARDS, STILLER, MORSE

NOES: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

Chair Edwards provided an application to Consultant Roger Grody to process as soon as possible.

B. Outreach Subcommittee: Nothing to report

C. Cultural Resource Consultant:

Consultant Bill Wilkman reported on the recent stakeholders' meeting with the Navy Base, December 11, 2019. Discussions included the restoration of the Chauffeurs' quarters, removal of vegetation in the lake due to flow issues, and a proposal for fire sprinklers in the Pavilion. He stated he had no objections the sprinklers but asked that they be put in as to not to disturb the architecture of the inside and requested that the City be allowed to provide input. The Navy has responded to the National Register Nomination. The Navy noted that they found nothing to endorse the nomination and are against it. He is currently reviewing this response. Consultant Wilkman stated he plans to share the Navy comments on the historical nomination with City Council at its meeting of February 19, 2020, and invited the Commission Members to attend.

D. Collections Management Consultant:

Consultant Chuck Wilson reported on completed tasks at the Historical Community Room. Shelving supplies have been received; these will help coordinate supplies and historic items on hand. He stated the public reach out via social media has been successful; many residents come by the Historical Room and share their history in Norco. Consultant Wilson suggested advertising during the upcoming Norco Horseweek in April, and officially set opening dates during the event.

M/S STILLER/EDWARDS to hold open hours to the public on April 25 and 26, 2020, during the Norco Horseweek event. The motion was carried by the following roll call vote:

AYES: EDWARDS, STILLER, MORSE

NOES: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

E. Items for Future Consideration: **None**

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A. Next Regular Meeting March 10, 2020

ADJOURNMENT: Chair Edwards adjourned the meeting at **5:45 p.m.**