

Present: David Weinstein, Dianne Brenner, John Falconer, Pat Shaw, Tom Panas, Chris Treadway

- 1.) Minutes of prior meeting:** Approved with one correction, to spell out what "JACL" stands for, which is the Japanese American Citizens League.
- 2.) Treasurer's Report:** Pat Shaw provided a combined January/February report. She said ECHS has a Total Restricted Funds balance of \$5,500.00 and an Unrestricted Funds balance of \$11,798.78, for a grand total of \$17,298.78 in the bank. There was a discussion of the Plaques Restricted Fund, the fact that we have never used it to put a plaque on a building, and whether we needed to retain these funds for this purpose. Upon discussion, the donor who created the fund stated he prefers to leave the fund there, in case we have a worthy building some day.
- 3.) Public Comment:** There was none.
- 4.) Preservation issues:**
  - a. Tom has provided the "list of 30" to Sean Moss, the city Planning director. This is the list of 30 buildings that have been identified as priorities for preservation due to a combination of their historical significance and/or threats they are facing. As of this date, there had been no response from Sean. Tom was asked to please keep us apprised as any action evolves on this.
  - b. Dave attended a meeting with Camp Herms staff which also included Sean Moss (city of El Cerrito) and Andrew Butt, of Integrated Resources, an architectural and engineering firm that has been hired by the Boy Scout council, owner of the camp. Both Sean and Andrew made it clear to the Scouts that the property, including specifically the pool facility, is a historic resource. The Scouts have been told before that they cannot make piecemeal changes to the property without providing a master plan. The Scouts' hiring of Interactive Resources may be an indicator that a master plan is forthcoming. Public Support may be needed in the future, depending on what plans the Scouts have for the Camp Herms property.
- 5.) Events:**
  - a. **Annual Meeting:** This event drew a large (over-capacity) and very lively crowd. Attendance was estimated at 110. We probably need to find another location for future events. The Garden Room of the community center was too small for the turnout, and the larger room has terrible acoustics. Some ideas suggested include local churches, and Veterans' Memorial Hall.

1. Dave will provide to Pat his receipt for the new glasses he bought for use at our events.
- b. **April 15:** Tom Panas will present a talk on the Japanese American flower growers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This will be a lunch-time presentation at the Hana Gardens Senior Center. Everyone is encouraged to add it to their calendars and help publicize it. Tom will send a draft blurb about it and a photo to Dave for editing, who will then send it to John F. for publishing on the ECHS website.
- c. **Pioneer Day:** At the last Pioneer Day event, stories were collected from the Pioneers who were there. Mostly, however, those pioneers do not want their stories published. Joanne has custody of them; they are not available for access at the ECHS office. Tom was asked to work with Joanne to see if some kind of compromise is possible to provide access to the stories. Perhaps the stories could be published after some number of years, for example, or they might be kept in the ECHS office, for in person review only. The purpose of the ECHS is to collect history, so we are hopeful a compromise can be found.
  - i. **Future Pioneer day:** There doesn't seem to be much response from potential pioneers for another event of this type.
  - d. **Meeting Schedule for coming year:** Dave has been busy with other responsibilities, so it has been slow going to develop a list of program topics for the calendar year 2020. Ideas include:
    - i. the history of Journalism in EC,
    - ii. Earl "Flattop" Smith, a builder,
    - iii. A talk by Karen Sorenson about Albany history, but to be held in EC. This in connection with the upcoming release of an "Images of America" book on Albany.
    - iv. A walking tour of notable homes. This would not be visiting the interiors of any homes. We don't have the resources (volunteers) to organize that.
    - v. How transportation has shaped the evolution of the East Bay
    - vi. Tiny's stable
- 6.) **Forge:** The new edition, with a headline article about the Mayfair Block, is very nice. It is looking more like a small magazine. The current issue is 6 pages, some color, issued 3 x /year. Dave proposes the goal is to be 8 pages with color, stapled, folded in half, mailed in an envelope and issued 4 x /year. We reviewed the cost of this new format vs. the old one and decided the treasury can handle the additional expense, but at the next Board meeting we will also discuss fundraising options. In the next Sparks, we should make reference to the new Forge format, and ask for feedback.
  - a. Membership income is approximately \$2K per year, but we should also probably consider a fundraising effort. Supporting (annual) membership is \$60, and a Life membership is \$300. Maybe this should be raised to \$400 as an interim step, eventually going to \$500. We could give advance notice of the

impending increase in dues, to motivate people to renew. Additional fundraising ideas will be a topic on the agenda of the next meeting.

b. **Ideas for future Forge articles** include:

- i. **Bars in Town** by Marvin Collins
- ii. **Earl “Flattop” Smith** the builder
- iii. **A history of Highway 40**

**7.) Sparks:**

- a. Dave confirmed that Ed Crawley is managing the email list. Dave also said we should compile a list of organizational processes and procedures, including who does what. And we should cross-train people to handle the various responsibilities, so when someone is out, everything can still carry on. Dianne asked someone to make sure Ed has her email address, as she has not received any issues of Sparks since she joined.
- b. Items for the next issue:
  - i. an item on the Rancho movie (Dave)
  - ii. an item on Tom’s upcoming talk on the Japanese flower growers
  - iii. an item on the Albany History talk, if that is scheduled
  - iv. an item requesting feedback on the new Forge format
  - v. links to YouTube channel and Facebook page

**8.) City Newsletter:** Chris T. will contact Maya Williams on this. Dave said he will write a few items for this.

**9.) Website:** John is still working on cleaning it up and making it user friendly.

- a. All Board meeting agendas and minutes have been posted. In light of the recent election at the Annual Meeting in January, John will update the board list and bios.
- b. The YouTube channel has some videos, including the recent Creedence talk. Chris T. is still working on editing the Pumpsie Green talk, and it will be posted when ready.
- c. Our Facebook page gets lots of hits. We should think of ways to use this to recruit members. The Board was in agreement in support of this idea. We need to add a sign up page with payment options (Paypal and credit card). Chris & John will work on this.

**10.) Rotary Interpretive Trail:** Plaques are being made for this trail in the Hillside Natural Area, and they should be installed in April or March. These are descriptive plaques, not just numbers. This is an EC Trail Trekkers project.

**11.) Archiving:** John reports he has made no progress on this but plans to get to it soon.

The meeting was adjourned.