

El Cerrito Historical Society

Minutes of Annual Meeting January 31, 2021

Present:

1.) Meeting called to order at 3:05 p.m. by President David Weinstein About 35 Society members and members of the public attended, in addition to our officers.

Treasurer's Report: Pat Shaw provided the Treasurer's report, as follows:

The good news is that we're breaking even. Our income is primarily your dues, our expenditures are mainly for staying in touch with you. We spend about \$5 per year per member for postage, stationery and mailing labels. We also maintain a web site and a P. O. box. Our meeting expenses were reduced this year: Zoom costs less than renting a venue for membership meetings.

We support a few local groups in El Cerrito. The Rialto Theater, MLK Celebration, Chamber of Commerce. Our biggest expense this year has been upgrading the Forge. Generous donations from our members have helped meet this expense.

2.) Accomplishments and Goals: Dave reviewed the Society's accomplishments from 2020 and goals for 2021

a. Accomplishments in 2020

- i. Live event at January annual meeting, a talk about Pumpsie Green
- ii. Virtual event on the history of Albany, October 2020
- iii. Expanded our print newsletter, The Forge
- iv. Produced the email newsletter, Sparks, more consistently
- v. Improved website content, including the YouTube channel, Facebook page
- vi. Acquired new donations for the archive: Soroptimist Club yearbooks, Kensington Outlook, Kensington Hilltop School newspaper, El Cerrito High's Caballero paper
- vii. Began collecting photos, news clips, social media posts, etc. about the pandemic, Black Lives Matter movement, and more
- viii. Recognized the need to increase focus on the history of the Black community and other non-white communities in the area, as well as outreach to them for participation in the Society
- ix. Worked with EC Trail Trekkers and EC Rotary Club to create the Rotary Interpretive Walk in the Hillside Natural Area

- x. Received the Governor's Preservation Award for the restoration of the former Contra Costa Florist shop, and the installation of historic interpretive panels there
 - xi. Contributed research and historical materials for the Miraflores Sustainable Greenbelt in Richmond, which commemorates the site of nurseries owned and managed by Americans of Japanese descent. Some historic structures are to be restored.
 - xii. Made a contribution to and promoted the GoFundMe campaign in support of the Cerrito Theater, an effort to help the business survive the COVID-enforced, temporary closure
- b. **Goals for 2021:**
- i. Increase and improve research, oral histories, publications:
 - 1. New focus on the Black community in El Cerrito.
 - 2. Following the city's Human Relations Commission Truth and Reconciliation storytelling sessions, we intend to research and document the history of this community and add more historical articles and photos and links to films of local historical interest to our website.
 - ii. Create a historical/architectural map of El Cerrito. It will show historic places, buildings of architectural interest and important community sites.
 - iii. Programs: The society will return to presenting live programs when the course of the pandemic allows.
 - 1. Virtual program "A Co-op Night Club?? Lu Watters' Great Experiment, Jan. 31, 2021. By Chris Sterba. (See below.)
 - 2. Other potential programs:
 - a. **The Rise and Fall of Local Journalism: El Cerrito Case Study.** How local journalism has gone from a rich and competitive field to nearly dying out today. Panel: Dave Weinstein, Chris Treadway, Betty Buginas, Charles Burress.
 - b. **The History of EC's Martin Luther King Jr. Parade.** This event began 32 years ago, at a time when the city itself refused to mark the holiday or participate in the parade. By Pat Durham.
 - c. **A Concert-Talk on Lu Watters, with live musicians!** Program potentially including the EC High School Jazz Band and in cooperation with the Arts Commission. By Chris Sterba.
 - d. **The History of Japanese-American flower growers of El Cerrito and Richmond.** By Flora Ninomiya, a member of the community.

- e. **Point Isabel, from Castro's Wharf to Dog Park.** By Mary Barnsdale and possibly others
- f. **Genealogy.** How to research your family and other topics, using genealogical resources. By Barbara Hill, assisted by John Falconer
- iv. Archiving. The Society continues to collect materials, but is not currently actively archiving new acquisitions, since we currently have no volunteer archivists. It is our plan to organize an archiving team to handle this, and ultimately list our holdings online as part of the Online Archive of California.
- v. Preservation Ordinance: We will continue to monitor the city's duty to preserve historic places under the California Environmental Quality Act. We will ensure that planning staff, council members, planning commissioners and others recognize the value of places that tell the story of the past to the people who live in El Cerrito today.
- vi. A history room at the future new El Cerrito Library. As plans for the new library evolve, the society will seek to create a room in the library that is dedicated to local history and will help to run the space.

3.) Public Comments: None.

4.) Election of the Board: The proposed roster of candidates was as follows:

- a. Dave Weinstein, President
- b. Pat Shaw, Treasurer
- c. Dianne Brenner, Secretary
- d. John Falconer
- e. Joanne Rubio, At-large
- f. Chris Treadway, At-large
- g. Pat Durham, At-large
- h. Tom Panas, At-Large

There were no nominations from the floor, and this slate was elected unanimously.

5.) Presentation by Chris Sterba on Lu Watters Co-op nite club, Hambone Kelly's: The talk included a musical selection, was well received and was followed by a lively question and answer session.

6.) Adjourn.