

**NORTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FEBRUARY 2015 MEETING NOTES**

DATE: FEBRUARY 19, 2015

TIME: 6:30 PM

The first part of this meeting was a Business Meeting of the North Park Historical Society (NPHS) Board of Directors, and the second part was the activities discussion for the organization. These notes include updates as of March 6, 2015.

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY** March 19, 2015 at 6:30 pm in a second floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church, 3967 Park Boulevard.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The following members of the NPHS Board of Directors were present:

Robert Bauer	Katherine Hon
Steve Hon	Paul Spears
George Franck	Jody Surowiec
Randy Sappenfield	Sharon Turner

The following members of the NPHS Board of Directors were absent:

Michael Thornhill	Bill Vivian
Hilda Yoder	Louise Russell

Ashton and Beth, whose interest in the water tower helped us get the current multi-task project started, also joined us. Welcome!

2. AGENDA REVIEW AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Katherine announced that an article she wrote about North Park in 1915 appeared in the January issue of *North Park News* - on the front page above the fold! At the end of January, *Uptown News* published her article about the municipal pool at Morley Field opening in January 1933. As this article is a simple historical story, a vote of the Board was not requested before submittal. Also, Katherine will be submitting a new article about the history of the Western Dental building at the corner of 30th and University for publication at the end of February. George provided some good editorial comments on this article, which were incorporated. **Update:** The article about the Western Dental building appeared in the Feb. 27-Mar 12, 2015 issue of *Uptown News*, and a scan was sent to NPHS members and friends.

Katherine announced that NPHS has been accepted as an exhibitor at the North Park Festival of Arts. She also noted that on February 13, 2015, the *Union Tribune* Local Section featured an article by UT reporter David Garrick about the pending restoration of the Georgia Street Bridge. See the last page of these notes for a scan of the article. Katherine also announced that she submitted a nomination for NPHS to receive a Community History Award from the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board for NPHS's preparation of our new Arcadia book, "Images of America: San Diego's North Park." The NPHS Board approved the action of preparing an award nomination via email vote on February 5, 2015, with eight of twelve board members responding with yes votes and no responses from other board members.

Bob announced that the chapel at St. Luke's Episcopal Church has been shown to three different interested parties who may move the chapel and restore it. We remain hopeful that the chapel will find a new home and not be demolished by the church.

3. MINUTES ACCEPTANCE

The minutes from the January 15, 2015 NPHS meeting have been posted on the website.

BUSINESS PORTION OF MEETING

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The financials were sent to the Board in advance of the meeting. In the period from January 16 to February 15, 2015, the following numbers of original North Park history books were sold: 10 to Paras Newsstand, and 8 to Amazon. NPHS sold 3 guidebooks (one of each-Dryden, commercial, and Hamilton). We had 2 members renew (one with an additional donation of \$80). The total income in this time period was \$349.63. Expenses totaled \$150.00, consisting of the booth space fee for the Festival of the Arts.

ACTIVITIES PORTION OF MEETING

5. WATER TOWER RELATED ACTIVITIES

The objectives of our activities related to the Water Tower include:

1. Designation as a local civil engineering landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) San Diego Section. **SUCCESS! See photo at right of Katherine and Phil Kern with ASCE holding the proclamation.**
2. Designation as a local significant historic resource by City Historical Resources Board (HRB). **IN PROCESS.** On February 5, 2015, Steve and Katherine submitted the materials requested by the City for the water tower and surrounding district to be locally listed under the criterion of being a district on the National Register of Historic Places. The hearing should be April 23, 2015.
3. Educational public art monument installed nearby. **IN PROCESS.** Public art consultant Gail Goldman helped us refine the County Grant application for funds to have her help us strategize what a permanent educational public art installation/monument for the water tower could be, where it could be placed, and how it could be funded. The North Park Planning Committee also supported the grant application.
4. Thorough engineering condition assessment.
5. Re-coating within 10 years (Water Tower Centennial!)
6. Maintenance as needed for long-term preservation



These objectives are aimed at achieving long-term preservation and increasing public appreciation for the water tower as our community's most visible symbol of the infrastructure needed to supply water to the growing streetcar suburbs in the early 20th Century. Ashton is exploring grants that may be applicable for objectives 4, 5, and 6. Many grants have a timeline of when work needs to be accomplished, so a longer-term project has to be divided into tasks that can be completed within the designated time frames. There are both private sector and government grants. He is working on a summary matrix. Thank you, Ashton!

6. COUNTY GRANT SUBMISSION

NPBS has been fortunate to have received County Community Enhancement Grants for the past several years. As approved by the NPBS Board at the January 2015 meeting and detailed in last month's meeting notes, NPBS requested \$500 for car show support (as in past years) and \$4,500 for professional consultation to initiate planning for a water tower educational public art installation/monument. Steve prepared the application, and the electronic submittal was confirmed received by the County on February 17, 2015. Steve hand-delivered paper originals to the County on February 20, 2015.

7. DAY AT SAN DIEGO HISTORY CENTER

Steve and Katherine manned the NPBS display table on February 10, 2015 in the lobby of the San Diego History Center. A Canadian couple visiting San Diego and staying in North Park were very interested in our walking tours, and they later bought one of each guidebook. On February 23, 2015, Katherine conducted a Dryden District walking tour for them and another Canadian couple. Also at the San Diego History Center day, Katherine met the granddaughter of Pear Pearson, a designated Master Builder who constructed many beautiful homes in North Park and some commercial buildings, including the building in Hillcrest that Ace Hardware is in. Pear Pearson's brother, John Pearson, also constructed many nice homes in North Park, and NPBS is exploring nominating



John Pearson as a Master Builder. **Update:** Katherine met with Pear Pearson's granddaughter, who provided several great photos of the brothers, including this 1910 photo taken in Denver, Colorado where John Pearson is on the top row left, and Pear Pearson is on the top row right. The men in the lower row are unknown (but if you recognize them, please contact Katherine immediately!)

8. CONGRESS OF HISTORY

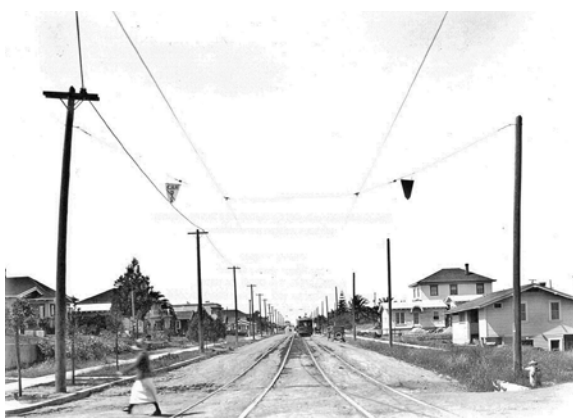
The Congress of History's annual conference is themed "Balboa Park, 1915 and Beyond" and will be held in the Balboa Park Recital Hall on March 6 and 7. Steve is presenting on Morley Field on March 7. **Update:** The conference was very interesting, as usual. There were several presentations about the streetcar, which ran right by the Exposition grounds on Park Boulevard, with an ornate and multi-story station in the general area where the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center building is now.

9. PLANNING ISSUES

George and Paul have continued to follow issues related to the community plan update (CPU). Paul has reviewed the revised Urban Design Element on the City's website and is concerned about definitions of "diverse character" as residential areas that reflect post-1960s intrusion of apartment buildings, which seems to indicate those are places suitable for further densification. This could result in even more loss of unique and irreplaceable single family homes in North Park. Paul is also questioning the design guidelines being presented in the draft Element. We will continue to monitor the drafts of these Community Plan elements and voice our concerns.

George presented a summary of his reviews of buildings where there have been permit applications to the City for changes. He recommends whether a historical report should be prepared. The four buildings he discussed are:

- "Saltbox" style building on El Cajon Boulevard at Florida Street, where designation and preservation is being pursued by the LGBT community due to the building's relatively rare "east coast" style of architecture and significance as a place where planning for the first Community Center occurred.
- Crazee Burger building on 30th Street. This brick building could become part of a historic district that includes the "Thrift Trader" building on El Cajon Boulevard and 30th.
- Two projects affecting several bungalows on Indiana Street (on the far right in the photo at left below). The charming bungalows shown in the close up photo at right below will be saved, but houses on the east side will be taken for eight townhomes.



NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY** March 19, 2015 at 6:30 pm in a second floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church, 3967 Park Boulevard, corner of Park and Lincoln Avenue.

Prepared by

Katherine Hon

Katherine Hon
Secretary, North Park Historical Society



Anthony Romero stretches on the Georgia Street Bridge, overlooking University Avenue, recently. The 1914 bridge will be restored with a fresh look and earthquake-safe construction. JOHN GASTALDO • U-T

Span to get spruced up

Historic Georgia Street Bridge will be repaired, restored in \$11.5M project this fall

DAVID GARRICK • U-T

SAN DIEGO

An iconic San Diego bridge that streetcars used to rumble underneath will be restored and renovated this fall thanks to \$9.5 million in federal funds city officials recently secured.

The Georgia Street Bridge, which crosses busy University Avenue between Park Boulevard and Florida Street, has become a key symbol and artery for residents because it links Hillcrest to North Park.

Initially constructed in 1914 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998, the two-lane bridge has begun to crumble over the years and has been deemed structurally deficient and seismically unsafe.

There had been calls to dismantle the



Source: SanGIS

U-T

bridge, but officials eventually decided it should be rebuilt. And now the roughly \$11.5 million needed for that has been gathered.

"This is something we've worked toward for a very long time," said City Councilman Todd Gloria, whose district includes the bridge. "The community has a great deal of love for it."

The bridge is only a shadow of its former self aesthetically, so a makeover is welcome news to residents, said Leo Wilson, chairman of the Uptown Community Planning Group that covers Hillcrest and some nearby areas.

"Restoring it to what it formerly was will really enhance the community," Wilson said. "It's sort of an iconic landmark. It's the delineation between Uptown and North Park."

SEE SPAN • B2



The Georgia Street Bridge links the Hillcrest neighborhood to North Park. JOHN GASTALDO • U-T

SPAN • Residents welcome plan

FROM B1

Community leaders in North Park agree.

Steve Hon, president of the North Park Historical Society, said the project was important to the community's self-image. A drawing of the bridge is featured on the society's T-shirts, and a new Images of America book about North Park has an old photo of the bridge on its cover.

The project, which is slated to begin this fall and conclude about a year later, will go beyond just restoring the bridge.

It will also include retrofitting and rehabilitating large walls that extend off the bridge and run along University between Florida and Park.

Other elements will be lowering the surface of University under the bridge by about two feet to increase vertical clearance, installing new curbs and gutters on both sides of University, upgrading sidewalks below

the bridge and painting bike "sharrows" symbols on the outside lanes of University.

The city previously received \$1.7 million in federal funds to complete engineering work for the bridge. The \$9.5 million secured this winter will cover design and construction.

Nearby residents interviewed this week said they were upbeat about the project.

Rosa Ferrer said the bridge helps her get to work quickly because it allows her to cross University without waiting.

Robert Hoogbeem said the surface of the bridge has become conspicuously shoddy because the city didn't want to make any upgrades until they could rebuild the bridge.

"It's terrible because they fix the parts of the road on both ends of it, so every time you drive by here it's always crappy and bumpy," he said.