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By James Feenan at 8:56 am, Apr 08, 2024

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To the Mendocino Historical Review Board members and Planning & Building

RE: Proposed changes to the MHRB Board

I am concerned about the proposed rule changes to the Mendocino Historical Review Board. Here are my concerns:

1. In order to be a MHRB board member one must live within and near the historical village of Mendocino, which I must stress is a volunteer position that residents gladly do for the good of our town Planning & Building officials get paid for attending meetings, however they charge for application fees. This more than compensates for the time it takes to drive to Mendocino for a meeting. In addition, the Mendocino area brings in \$2 million a year in revenue for bed tax, these funds have an allocation and duty to preserve the historical town of Mendocino. The Mendocino Historical Review Board is built into the Town Plan, and the entire town is a National Historic Town which means having MHRB Board meetings is mandated to maintain this status. It is somewhat outrageous that Planning & Building, are making meetings out to be an extreme inconvenience for them and having to drive to Mendocino, is a duty that should be celebrated as keeping Mendocino such a beautiful and historic town that brings in many visitors and much needed revenue to Mendocino County.
2. In addition, as it is imperative to live in or near the Mendocino Town to be on the MBRB Board, it is also imperative for the many of the townspeople and neighbors are able to come to meetings in Mendocino. To move the meetings to Fort Bragg citing a hardship for Planning makes no sense at all. Especially that their time is compensated with application fees. It is more of a hardship for many people to drive to Fort Bragg, than it is for one or two Planners to come to Mendocino for a meeting.
3. As a former MHRB Board member for 6 years, the final year as Chair, I attended many site visits. I always looked forward to having the Architect or Builder, and Property Owners, present to answer questions regarding their applications. This cannot be done by driving by, first as questions on site are not able to be asked, secondly that there are some applications that address changes in the back yard which may be seen from some walking or driving view points, however need to be

accessed in person. It is a huge imposition for Planning to supposed that an applicant, who is paying a large fee for their application, to be at the beck and call of board members, neighbors, and interested parties to stop by at all hours of the day or night looking at their property with no appointment for the weeks that the item is posted online and in notices around town. The way the board has enacted meetings for many years is to have a designated appointed time for the Architect or Builder, and owner to show up. If Planning feels they do not have the time for a site visit, that is their prerogative, however it would seem if the Planners want to know what is going on at the meeting that they would want to be there. As a board member, I always looked forward to be at site visits to make an informed decision, it would seem that Planning would want to have that expertise as well.

4. The Mendocino Historical Guidelines, along with the Town Plan, are easy to read and follow. The ability to make exceptions to an application as long as it is within harmony with the town has always been there, this is a moot point. Each application is carefully considered, to change the Chapter 20.760 to a relaxed viewpoint is a slippery slope. This is yet another proposed loophole by Planning to try and rubber stamp applications without review by the board.
5. It is understandable that Staff prefers daytime meetings. The issue is the Mendocino Community Center is unavailable during the day. Unless or until another venue is found and secured in the village of Mendocino that is available in the day, perhaps the Mendocino Art Center or Crown Hall, then meetings need to continue at the 7 pm hour at the Mendocino Community Center. Fort Bragg is not an option.
6. Regarding Minutes, we had a time when I was on the MHRB without minutes and it was very difficult for the board to sort through what happened at the meeting in the event of a dispute or appeal. In most boards, minutes are required. They do take time, this is the least of the worries of all of the above.
7. It is unclear as to why Planning would like to eliminate asking if Public Notice has been given. Could it be too inconvenient for them to give public notice? It is my understanding that in order for the meeting to occur legally that public notice must be given.

Thank you for your consideration and time.

Deirdre Lamb