



## Historic Preservation Commission Agenda

8. **25-0006-HPC1** - Discussion regarding Conservation Districts as they relate to historic preservation initiatives within the city of Las Vegas

### Minutes:

CHAIR STOLDAL announced that one of the responsibilities of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is to recommend changes in the zoning and building codes, ordinances and other regulations to enhance the process of the Unified Development Code of the City of Las Vegas (City). As such, the HPC started looking into the opportunities provided through the establishment of conservation districts in City code, which currently does not include neighborhood conservation districts, which do not fulfill the qualifications of a historic district, yet their distinctive character and importance could be considered as viable, contributing areas to the community at large. The Chair added that COMMISSIONER LARIME was not able to attend due to a last-minute conflict and asked for this matter to be held in abeyance to the next HPC meeting, but was in support of staff making a presentation on the subject at this meeting. The Chair pointed out that one of the ways the City is addressing conservation districts is through the creation of guidebooks for development, such is the case for the Historic Westside.

COMMISSIONER SIEBRANDT said conservation districts have been a topic of discussion for several years. The Commission for the Las Vegas Centennial (Centennial Commission) funded the creation of a guidebook for the Historic Westside to address some of the concerns of districts that do not qualify as historic districts. She introduced MICHAEL HOWE, Planning Project Manager, to expand on that concept.

MR. HOWE commented that he would not go into too much detail on the guidebook because it was still in the draft stage. He explained that in a typical historic neighborhood district process, staff starts with conducting a survey and speaking to the neighbors about areas that could qualify for historic district status. However, after further review, staff finds that the areas under review do not qualify as historic districts but some individual structures may qualify as historic. Due to Form-Based Code (FBC) rezoning and other efforts to preserve the identity of the Historic Westside, staff was able to use the North Wind Resource Consulting's survey of African-American resources in West Las Vegas to identify a handful of properties that would qualify as historic, but they also found many undeveloped properties. This presented staff with the challenge of figuring out how to guide future development in West Las Vegas while retaining its identity.

Consequently, once the survey was completed, work started with staff from the Planning Division and the Neighborhood Services and the Economic and Urban Development Departments to review the zoning code to help create guidelines that would prevent new development in the Historic Westside from resembling the Summerlin area and not unique to the Westside. The grant from the Centennial Commission helped enter into a contract with KME Architects and subcontracts with other local agencies to put together an informative guidebook to include the unique, architectural and cultural character of the Westside to guide future development. Of course, developers could choose not to follow the guidebook, but staff could make the case, based on in-depth research of the area's history, for the types of elements that would complement the Westside.

The same guidebook concept could be created for the Arts District and parts of East Las Vegas, as long as they work off a resource survey that provides the crucial information to use as a base for the guidelines and prove what is documented. Surveys may have been conducted for some areas and did not reveal any qualifying districts, and staff would have to inform residents who want development guidelines for their neighborhoods that there is a cost because of the work that goes into developing them.

CHAIR STOLDAL appreciated the detailed overview and felt that the main goal seemed to be a desire to

maintain the culture of the neighborhoods. He asked if the 18b Arts District has the same boundaries, to which MR. HOWE replied affirmatively, although it is under review for a substantial expansion from 84 acres to a total of 240 acres, so it is currently smaller than people think. To the Chair, MR. HOWE said the intent is to get the expansion finalized by summer 2025.

CHAIR STOLDAL asked if the lot sizes in the McWilliams Townsite would be retained and if there was a map available of the Historic Westside boundaries in the guidebook. MR. HOWE responded that the map follows the boundaries of the Historic Westside District that were set by the Downtown Vision 2045 Map, given the larger West Las Vegas Master Plan area, which is considerably larger than the Historic Westside area and reaches Jackson Avenue and Owens Avenue. The lots were platted by (J.T.) McWILLIAMS and include the typical 140-foot-deep by 25-foot-wide lots, which make up a walkable, American pattern not seen in modern-day. He advised that the map was pulled from the Clark County Recorder's Office. The map in the guidebook and online follows the boundaries of the Historic Westside.

COMMISSIONER LeVINE recalled conversations with COMMISSIONER LARIME about an idea to utilize the name Conservation District Light for conservation districts and promote them as such but without having to perform a survey first. This designation could just be given, such as for the Huntridge neighborhood. He asked if that would be possible. MR. HOWE recommended starting with performing a survey to avoid confusion and to identify historic properties that may qualify for grant programs. For a conservation alternative, MR. HOWE said there are tools and pathways, but he was concerned about subjecting established neighborhoods to guidelines that staff could not enforce or that the residents may not agree to.

CHAIR STOLDAL asked for the completion date of the guidebook, to which MR. HOWE replied that he anticipated completion in April and a final project report to the Centennial Commission. The Chair asked where in the development process the guidebook would be made available to developers. MR. HOWE indicated the book is considered a Planning Division document that will be included in the FBC, available online and a part of the review process for development projects. He noted that creating guidelines for the Huntridge neighborhood would necessitate a process to inform the residents of them before pulling any permits.

CHAIR STOLDAL wondered if residents in historic districts, such as Beverly Green, would have to sign off on their awareness of guidelines, and MR. HOWE indicated that they would be made aware by staff at some point in the review process; although he would rather this occur during the permitting process.

After the vote, CHAIR STOLDAL said he was looking forward to seeing the final document.

Motion made by Jack LeVine to Hold in Abeyance to 2/26/2025

Passed For: 7; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Did Not Vote: 2; Excused: 3

For-Robert Stoldal, Jack LeVine, Donald Hotchkiss, Craig Palacios, Sondra Cosgrove, Todd Moody, Cheryl Purdue; Did Not Vote-Nevada State Museum Designee, Diane Siebrandt; Excused-Richard Serfas, Michelle Larime, Misty Grimmer;

# City of Las Vegas

## AGENDA MEMO

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING OF: JANUARY 22, 2025**

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**DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**DIRECTOR: SETH T. FLOYD, ESQ.**

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER: DR. DIANE SIEBRANDT**

☐ Action

☒ Report

### **SUBJECT:**

**25-0006-HPC1** - Discussion regarding Conservation Districts as they relate to historic preservation initiatives within the city of Las Vegas

### **PURPOSE/BACKGROUND:**

Members of the Historic Preservation Commission requested a discussion regarding Conservation Districts.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines a Conservation District as:

“Neighborhood Conservation Districts are areas located in residential neighborhoods with a distinct physical character. Although these neighborhoods tend not to merit designation as a historic district, they could warrant special land--use attention due to their distinctive character and importance as viable, contributing areas to the community at large.”

“Conservation District programs require a high level of neighborhood participation and support. Generally they must be initiated by residents within the neighborhood, and a majority of property owners must back the designation. With the assistance of either planning or preservation boards, residents can develop their own design guidelines and establish a neighborhood review board composed of, or with representation from, members of the community to determine if owners’ proposed changes to their properties are acceptable under those guidelines.”

The City of Las Vegas Unified Development Code 19.10.150 HD-O Historic Designation Overlay District defines HPO and HPC responsibilities as they relate to historic preservation within the city limits. The current code does not include Conservation Districts. Members of the Commission will discuss Conservation Districts as they relate to historic preservation initiatives in Las Vegas.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Discussion only; No action required

### **BACKUP DOCUMENTATION:**

None