

# **HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION MINUTES**

**Wednesday, December 6, 2006**

City Hall Council Chambers  
313 Court Streets  
The Dalles, OR 97058  
Conducted in a handicap accessible room.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Eric Gleason called the meeting to order at 4:02 P.M.

## **ROLL CALL**

The following Commissioners were present: Eric Gleason, Bob McNary, John Hashizume & Dixie Parker

The following Commissioners were absent: Anita Clason

Staff present: Dan Durow, CDD Director  
Dawn Hert, Associate Planner  
Denise Ball, Administrative Secretary

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Parker moved that the agenda be approved. McNary seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously, Clason absent.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Gleason asked if there were any corrections needed for the minutes of November 15, 2006. There were none. McNary moved to approve the minutes as submitted and Hashizume seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, Clason absent.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

## **ACTION ITEMS – PUBLIC HEARING**

A. **Historic Landmarks Commission Application #100-06 of North Wasco County School District #21** to request approval for demolition of the Joseph G. Wilson school facility. The property is located at 1413 E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street. The historic name of the building is the Joseph G. Wilson School. Gleason read the rules for conducting a public hearing.

Commissioners had no bias, ex-parte contact, or conflict of interest to declare. There were no  
Historic Landmark Commission Meeting  
December 6, 2006

challenges from the audience.

Chair Gleason opened the public hearing and asked for the Staff Report.

Associate Planner Hert presented the Staff Report. Hert summarized that the School District is marketing the property and has applied for the demolition permit so it will be an available option for a future purchaser. The denial will suspend the issuance of a demolition permit for 120 days from the date the application was submitted. City Council will have the ability to extend the suspension for an additional 180 days. At the end of that time, the demolition permit can be issued. Hert pointed out that the historic integrity of the property has not been maintained adequately.

Hert read a letter from Mr. Patrick Thornton into the record. Mr. Thornton is opposed to the demolition of the Joseph G. Wilson school building.

**Proponents:** Candy Armstrong, 2418 E. 18<sup>th</sup>, The Dalles, spoke in favor of the demolition application. Ms. Armstrong is the districts Superintendent and explained that the school district is preparing the site for sale and does not intend to demolish the building themselves. The underground oil tanks have been removed. A study has been done outlining the costs to renovate and they are prohibitive.

Chair Gleason asked Armstrong if the possibility of subdividing the property and leaving the historic building has been discussed.

Ms. Armstrong said it has been discussed and nothing has been ruled out yet. The school district is looking for the highest price and best use. This facility is costing the district over \$30,000 per year.

Janet Williams, School District 21, 1005 F Street, The Dalles, explained that the Joseph G. Wilson building has asbestos, lead paint, and PCB abatement requirements. The estimated cost is around \$240,000. The size and configuration of the school is not conducive to current educational needs.

Commissioner Parker pointed out that there were no reports or documentation submitted that support the application to demolish the historic building. Parker asked why they were not submitted with the application. Williams said she does not know when the application was completed so she can't answer that question.

Commissioner McNary asked Williams if the \$240,000 abatement/renovation costs included the new and old school building. Ms. Williams said it does.

**Opponents:** Kent Kalsch, 1403 E. 11<sup>th</sup>, The Dalles, spoke against the proposed demolition. Mr. Kalsch lives across the street from the school. His concerns are about what type of development that could go in the property. He has chased off vandals for breaking the glass in the school. The broken glass has not even been cleaned up. Mr. Kalsch doesn't want an "American Village". The building has deteriorated over the past 10 years because the school district allowed it to happen.

**Rebuttal:** None

**Deliberation:** Gleason closed the public testimony portion of the hearing and called for deliberation.

Chair Gleason said there are no studies submitted by the school to substantiate their need for demolition. The building may not be suitable for current educational needs but it is a vital historic building that is clearly worth saving and being reused to fit some need within the community. Denying this application for demolition will allow 120 days for the applicant to go the community and find some viable options. Gleason feels all the options have not been explored.

Commissioner Parker agreed with Gleason and pointed out again that the School District submitted no reports or documents that show a need for the building to be demolished. Commissioner Hashizume says the building should be reused to fill a community need.

Commissioner McNary said he has attended a couple of meetings in the last two weeks and at both of those meetings the nuts and bolts of the discussion were "We need a building". Joseph G Wilson could be that building. It is centrally located for after-school programs. There is also a group looking for museum space. With some financing finesse, a marriage between the groups needing a building and the school district trying to get rid of a building, this historic building can be saved and utilized.

Commissioner McNary moved to deny HLC 100-06 of North Wasco County School District 21 to demolish the Joseph G. Wilson. Parker and suspend the demolition for 120 days. Parker seconded the motion and it carried unanimously, Clason absent.

#### **RESOLUTIONS:**

Parker moved to adopt Resolution 95-06 denying HLC 100-06 of North Wasco County School District 21 to demolish the Joseph G. Wilson School for 120 days. McNary seconded the motion and it carried unanimously, Clason absent

**DISCUSSION:** Application for special assessment by Debbie Liesegang owner of the Hugh Glenn House at 100 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street. Hert informed the Commission that this is a re-application for a second 15-year assessment. SHPO asked that local Historic Landmarks Commissioners review the application and submit comments or concerns if needed.

McNary asked how many houses in our community are in the special assessment program. Hert said she presented that information to City Council and will give McNary a copy of the report.

Director Durow said that in the scheme of things it doesn't amount to much. However, for the individual property owner it is a big deal.

**PIONEER CEMETERY DISCUSSION** – Hert discussed the meeting she had with McNary and Hashizume on November 30, 2006. The consensus is to get bids from three landscapers. McNary will meet with prospective bidders to detail the scope of work. There will also be separate bids for 1) clean up and maintenance, and 2) removal of the sprinkler heads. Hert said she will be getting the request for bids out by the end of the week.

**COMMISSIONER/STAFF COMMENTS:** Director Durow reminded the Commission that budget work and goal setting begin next month.

Commissioner McNary asked Staff to contact the Mayor about the vacancy on the Historic Landmarks Commission. Anita Clason has not attended meetings for two years.

Hert said she needs to write a formal letter to the Mayor asking to officially replace Clason.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting is scheduled for December 27, 2006 and will be limited to 2007 goal setting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Denise Ball, Administrative Secretary.



Eric Gleason, Chair  
Historic Landmark Commission

In my life I have been lucky enough to travel to the White Tower in the tower of London, the Coliseum in Rome and the Eiffel Tower in Paris. What do these three places have in common? At some point in time a few people thought they should be torn down because the land could be used for a better purpose and make more money as something new. Like the three more famous places mentioned above, the school is historic because it is a sight where many people had events that shaped their lives. It was built with design not found today. It was built with quality not found today. Joseph G. Wilson School is equal to the Coliseum? No, but the school is historic to The Dalles. And it was declared as such. Now you are about to change that decision to make money and build something new because you believe you know better than the people who declared Joseph G. Wilson historic.

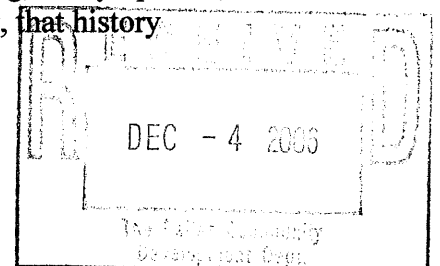
The Dalles is one of the most historic cities in the West. The falls were Indians gathered for thousands of years, Jason Lee and Pulpit Rock, the old Fort, The old Mint, the County Court house, Grants Rock, Whitiker School, The End of the old Oregon Trail, The Shaker houses, Old Saint Mary's church there are many historic places in The Dalles.

Many important places have been saved in The Dalles. People can go there, see them, hear about them and can learn about how important The Dalles was to the old West and how that time shaped our lives now. All of these are important to the history of The Dalles, Wasco County, Oregon and America.

I have been to the Columbia River Gorge Museum and because someone cared, I have seen how big old Fort The Dalles was at one time. I know this only because I have seen maps showing me where the many other buildings of the fort would have stood. I would have never known how big the Fort truly was without have seen the maps, because the other buildings are gone. The Fort is under backyards and under streets because the land could be better used for something else. Think of the history we have lost.

My Grandparents lived close to the Fort and when I would visit them I would climb and play on Grants Rock. Maybe not as important as Pulpit Rock but still it was a well known place. It was talked about in historical documents such as diaries which the soldiers kept. Then the land was sold to a private party. Grants Rock is an interesting rock in someone's back yard. Few know of it. Few have had the chance to stand on top and see the view. Or at least no one younger than about forty years old has had the chance. But the land could make someone money and the rock was a hazard, someone might fall and the city might be sued. Grants Rock, almost forgotten, I think about the history and fun that have been lost.

In the fifth grade the baby boomers were filling our schools. I rode a bus to Whitiker School. It was a beautiful old red brick school right next to the High School. Later, when I was going to High School, I spent hours in there in my math classes and eating lunch in the basement. I have a postcard that has a picture of the old place. But it was unsafe. Now we have a new building there, where it once stood. The new building, in my opinion, is not nearly as beautiful. Only a few people remember the old building, that history having been lost.



Let us talk about Celilo Falls. Think of the millions of dollars that could have generated in tourist money. Thousands of years of history lost. I know the Dams stopped the floods and have made electricity but as one who can remember the falls, I still mourn their passing. I believe more forethought could have saved the falls and given us the Dam, too. I feel the same about Joseph G. Wilson.

Joseph G Wilson School, I grew up living across from the school. I remember pretending the big gray front was the Alamo and I was Davy Crockett. I learned to roller skate on the sidewalks. I learn to ride my bike on the playground. I remember playing marbles in the dirt before it was paved over with black top. I got my polio shots in that school. I am only one of the hundreds who have memories of Joseph G. Wilson School.

I made many friends in that school. I learned many lessons; some had nothing to do with book learning. I remember the thrill of really making contract with a baseball, watching the ball fly high only to go through a window on the east side to the school. I remember having to tell the truth about who had done it. I remember having to pay for the replacement window.

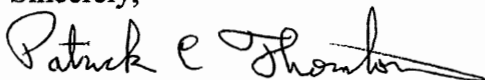
I remember Al Morrison marking out a strike zone on the east side wall. I remember the hours he would spend throwing a baseball against that wall. Later he would be a star high school and Legion Baseball pitcher.

I remember Mrs. Tilden and Mrs. Steinbocker among others who gave this school district years of their lives to help me and hundreds of others learn to read and write. I know that there are only a few of us that remember these things now and less of us as the days pass. So maybe only a few will protest the loss of one more historic building in The Dalles.

Maybe it is not the best example of an early school house in Wasco County. Maybe you could make more money if it were gone. But this school is historic. It has been declared so by people who were given the job of deciding what in this area is historic. Just because it means nothing to you but a waste of space that could be better used to make the district money does not mean that it is not historic. It does not mean that it not valuable to people like me for reasons that are abstract. Please do not destroy this part of the history of The Dalles. Please do not destroy a part of my history. I do not want to show my grandchildren a picture on a postcard and have to say, "I use to go to this school but they tore it down."

Try instead to save the main building. A program such as Restore America which funds such projects aiming at keeping history while providing new options for the lives of people.

Sincerely,



Patrick C. Thornton