



TO: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
FROM: Reuben McKnight, Historic Preservation Officer, Planning and Development Services
Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services Department
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Resolution to Rescind Historic Designation of 1239 E 54th Street – June 10, 2014
DATE: June 2, 2014

SUMMARY:

This is a request to remove the J.M. Hendricksen Homestead at 1239 E 54th Street from the Tacoma Register of Historic Places.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

- Foster neighborhood, community, and economic development vitality and sustainability.

BACKGROUND:

On November 29, 2011, the five-acre J.M. Hendrickson Homestead was placed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places at the request of the owner. The original nomination included the house, garage, barn, site and historic landscaping. The property is considered historically significant for its association with Tacoma's Scandinavian heritage as well as its association with Tacoma's farming history. On December 17, 2013, City Council passed a resolution to alter the boundaries of the original designation following a recommendation from the Landmarks Preservation Commission. This outcome was the result of an extensive conversation with the owner, who sought to subdivide the property and sell a portion of it for redevelopment, to address significant financial and health concerns. However, it became clear as the owner attempted to market the property that the altered boundaries of the historic designation alone did not meet the needs of prospective buyers and the requirements for platting the property. Based on feedback from the Commission, the owner submitted a request for Rescission of Landmarks Designation on March 26, 2014.

This rescission will remove all protections from the property. Although there is no current plan to demolish the existing structures, in the future they could be demolished provided all other applicable code requirements are met. The Landmarks Preservation Commission's recommendation was based in part on the determination that if most of the remaining vacant land was developed as proposed, most of the historic significance of the property as an agricultural property would be lost even if the structures remained.

The Commission held a public hearing to receive comment on April 23, 2014. There was no comment on the proposal.

ISSUE:

The property owner wishes to remove the designation of her property, to allow for partial redevelopment, in order to alleviate financial issues caused by declining health. There is a prospective buyer who will allow her to remain in her residence after the property is re-platted.



ALTERNATIVES:

Previously, the Landmarks Preservation Commission recommended altering the boundaries of the designation, and Council passed a resolution which did so on December 17, 2013. However, this proved insufficient to attract investors due to property platting requirements and the amount of land remaining under historic designation, and thus did not alleviate the owner's financial difficulties.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff concurs with the recommendation of the Landmarks Preservation Commission to remove the property at 1239 E 54th Street from the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, due to the unique personal and financial circumstances of the owner.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact.