

## **Historic Preservation Review Board – June 1, 2007 @ 8:30 AM**

Forum: Our Town: Economic Incentives for Historic Properties in Friday Harbor  
Friday June 1 at the San Juan Island Grange Hall.

**Members present:** Kevin Peterson, Michael Jean Carpentier and David Waldron

**Also Present:** Sandy Strehlou, HPRB Coordinator; Michael Sullivan, Liz Illg, Town Council; Artifacts Inc. Presenter; Jack Cory, Island Guardian; Ron Boe, Boe Family Trust; Bill Watson, EDU; Nancy McCoy, Lopez Historical Society; Allen Shayo, Kirk House; Ron Henrickson, San Juan Co. Planning Dept.; Anna Maria de Frietas, B&B Association; Kathryn Quackenbush; C. King Fitch, Frida Harbor Town Administrator; Kay Kohler; Boyd Pratt, Historic Preservation Architect; Anna Howden, Architect, D&A Studio; Nina Le Barron, Island Architecture; Marlyn O’Conner, Port of Friday Harbor; Charles Zemanek, SJ Co. Assessor; Lincoln Bohrman, SJC Land Bank; Lynn Danaher, developer; Mary Jane Anderson, SJ Historical Museum; Sharon Kivisto, San Juan Islander.com; Larry Soll; Nancy Maron; Mary Jean Cahail; Guard Sundstrom; Margot Shaw

**Welcome and Opening Remarks:** At 8:35 AM Friday Harbor’s Mayor David Jones welcomed attendees to the Forum, *OUR TOWN: Economic Incentives For Historic Properties* In Friday Harbor.

David Waldron, founding board member of Friday Harbor’s Historic Preservation Review Board, made opening remarks explaining that the HPRB began by establishing a historic district and developed a totally voluntary program to encourage any project requiring a building permit within the historic district of Friday Harbor to follow the guidelines set forth in the HPRB’s award winning *Historic Preservation Manual*. More recently the HPRB has established incentives regarding height and parking allowances that when taken by applicants make the HP guidelines as described in the manual mandatory. Waldron suggested that as more and larger projects come before the board the incentives become more important and that this forum is an initial step in expanding the HP incentives program. Waldron also informed the attendees that Friday Harbor is historically unique in being one of only three towns in the Puget Sound region not burned by a major fire adding to the significance of our early wood frame buildings.

**Topics of Interest to Attendees:** Friday Harbor Town Councilwoman Liz Illg facilitated the forum requesting topics of interest or what attendees hoped to gain from the forum. Topics included the following:

- Good concrete examples (of incentives)
- Residential examples (of incentives)
- Where the town is headed

Learn what the community wants – County implications  
Rub shoulders  
Building tourism with historic properties  
How to not go broke achieving historic preservation goals  
Historic Preservation regarding the rural built landscape – Barns and farms  
How to achieve a good future with changes  
What are the economics of historic preservation?  
Long-term cooperation & permanence – relationship of public/private  
ie legal mechanisms  
Are incentives worthy of use outside the historic district?  
How to make historic preservation cost effective  
Collective wisdom  
Housing inventory – How to add housing – Do historic obligations help or hinder  
Implications to Port property & building  
Overall economic impacts of saving buildings  
Adequate incentives to make historic redevelopment viable  
Learn more  
Voluntary base – how do we invite others to participate?

**Michael Sullivan's Presentation:** HPRB Coordinator Sandy Strehlou introduced presenter Michael Sullivan, formerly with the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation and partner in Artifacts, Inc., Olympia based consulting firm. Mr. Sullivan also teaches Washington State History at the University of Washington.

According to Michael Sullivan incentives are the economic realities of preservation. He stressed the importance of historic preservation to strong urban development noting that historic preservation is core to developing and maintaining a sense of place. Both Walla Walla and Spokane, Washington are developing urban centers around historic preservation. Other points made included:

- After World War II growth took the form of suburban sprawl whereas prior to that older cities were built for permanence.
- **Theme towns** (like Leavenworth, WA) are not considered historic, as they are not authentic in terms of the historical events, people or cultural character of a place.
- Pressures are great in a market like ours with high **property values**.
- In Washington State, state **legislative policy** supports historic preservation. San Juan Island is unique. Some good examples are: the Land Bank, and the recently received State of WA Historic Courthouse Grant funding, and a new initiative that set aside ½ million dollars to preserve heritage barns.

- Mr. Sullivan showed the forum a website, **revisitingwashington.org**, using quality public domain imagery from 1930s & 1940s.
- Sullivan championed **reuse of old structures and materials** in new construction as a way to keep money in the community. Rehabilitation requires intensive skilled labor and uses local materials whereas new construction spends more money outside of the community.
- Rehabilitation is pro-environment. **Green building** principles advocate the re-use of construction and demolition debris to decrease garbage in landfills. Refurbished wood windows can be more efficient than either vinyl or aluminum. Generally speaking, green building is of higher quality. The bottom line is to create meaningful construction in our time. New construction should not diminish the historic district and should be compatible in mass and scale.
- An incentive can also be found in allowances made for historic structures in the new **International Existing Building Code**. When adopted by local government (which both the TFH and SJC have,) building inspectors are allowed flexibility in code application for projects involving registry-designated structures as long as life/safety is not jeopardized.
- Most jurisdictions use a mix of “carrots” and “sticks” to support preservation. It is advised to put policies in place with no particular project in mind.
- **Historic preservation easements** are other financial incentives. This can be in the form of a charitable tax contribution or a cash-for-easement arrangement.

At this point there was a short break.

- **Federal tax credits** are only available for historic buildings used commercially and listed on the National Register.
- Historic structures may be eligible for **local, state and national historic registers**.
- Establishing a **historic district** is the best way to enforce urban growth.
- Banks are starting to buy **tax credits**. As part of the Banner Bank corporation, Islanders Bank on San Juan Island is a local lending institution to approach. Banner Bank has purchased tax credits in WA.
- **Special Property Tax Valuation** is an incentive available to register-designated historic sites in CLG counties. The cost of repairs and

restoration (labor, materials, appraisals, developer fees, and interior work) that comply with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation can be deducted from local taxes levied against property.

**Sandy Strehlou's Comments:** HPRB Coordinator, Sandy Strehlou addressed the current state of the HPRB clarifying that this is a voluntary board and of necessity spends a high proportion of time reviewing new construction. Design reviews are mandated to take place in a timely manner. The board has been working on preparing an inventory of historic structures using national criteria to be presented to the FH Town Council. Public education is another function of the board. She notes the following Board project priorities for the remainder of the year: Adoption of (1) Special Property Tax Valuation; (2) Certified Local Government designation for the Town of Friday Harbor; (3) implementation of a local landmarks register, and (4) adoption of demolition language

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Peggy Sue McRae  
12:10: Meeting adjourned

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David Waldron, HPRB Member