

Sarah Kane

From: Kevin Murray <empire@verinet.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 13, 2013 8:36 PM
To: City Leaders
Subject: Whitcomb Street Historic District, January 15th meeting
Attachments: Historic District Dec 18th City Council.docx

Dear Madams & Sirs,

I wanted to send along my comments, in writing, that I was hoping to say at the December 18th Council meeting. I tried, but couldn't do it in the allotted time. I'm not sure it will be in your packet before the meeting, so I'm sending direct. Please reply with any questions to this address. Thank-you for your time.

Kevin Murray

Whitcomb Historic District

We have a resurrected Historic District in Old Town which adds much to our shared fabric, has shown our history and a place for our Community to meet. This area is guarded by the DDA (Downtown Development Assoc.), and is a large reason Fort Collins has a stellar reputation on a national scale. For all of you who weren't here in the 70's, it took some visionaries to pull Downtown out of its scheduled demise.

This Historic core doesn't tell the story of the whole of early Fort Collins. During the building of Fort Collins, many people built their own homes close to the heart of the Town. Our City's premier families built close to Downtown on Mountain Ave., Remington St., and College Ave. Just beyond the reach of these mansions middle-class neighborhoods sprung up. These neighborhoods sit just beyond the larger homes, but still in walking distance to Downtown. As platted land diminished, folks like Abner Loomis filed Additions to the Town of Fort Collins. These subdivisions went through redesign as high times gave way to the Silver Crash or The Depression. These neighborhoods are each a story board of the development of our Town into a City.

Somewhere in our rediscovering our Heritage and beauty of our Core, we discovered that living Downtown IS very desirable. At the same time, we seem to have lost the connection that not only the commercial district has value, but also the early residential districts too.

Part of the downtown plan has been to bring residences back into the core to help stabilize the Downtown vitality. At the same time, commercial projects wanting to be part of Downtown are putting pressure on neighboring residential communities. Of note lately, is when a six month trial period for PDOD was presented, the Landmarks Preservation asked that historic neighborhoods near Historic Downtown be exempted. Zoning rejected this request.

As a neighborhood, we feel the pressure of new development, the shadow of PDOD and loss of a way of life. With little or no protection for residential areas in Old Town we decided to seek Historic Designation as a way to save part of our Historic Community for ourselves and for future generations to be able to interpret the growth and Community of old Fort Collins.

Our neighborhood does have some changes, and isn't pristine. This is not our goal. Our Community has parts of the original Town plat, part of the Loomis Addition, residences of famous Citizens, and (I believe) designs of at least one of our most famous Architects. All these put together make our Community an excellent example of development of Fort Collins, up through the present day.

Seeking Historic Designation of a neighborhood is not an easy task, in Fort Collins. There are no other locally designated neighborhoods in the original Town plat. Many have tried and failed. We were asked by other neighbors to include them, but because of limited resources and energy we stuck to our smaller filing, to allow us to make it to you today. We look forward to helping others in trying to either add to our future District or create their own.

Designation has been in City Code for a long time. I suggest that this application meets all the requirements found in Section 14-3 of the Code, titled "Purpose". Here is that section:

Sec. 14-3. Purpose.

The purposes of this Section are to:

- (1) Designate, preserve, protect, enhance and perpetuate those sites, structures, objects and districts which reflect outstanding elements of the city's cultural, artistic, social, economic, political, architectural, historic or other heritage;*
- (2) Foster civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past;*
- (3) Stabilize or improve aesthetic and economic vitality and values of such sites, structures, objects and districts;*
- (4) Protect and enhance the city's attraction to tourists and visitors;*
- (5) Promote the use of outstanding historical or architectural sites, structures, objects and districts for the education, stimulation and welfare of the people of the city;*
- (6) Promote good urban design;*
- (7) Promote and encourage continued private ownership and utilization of such sites, structures, objects or districts now so owned and used, to the extent that the objectives listed above can be attained under such a policy.*

Section 14-2 states that such designation as we seek is a "public necessity and are required in the interest of the prosperity, civic pride and general welfare of the people. "

Designation allows for growth, but only if it has no negative affect on the Historic Neighborhood. This is your chance to save a piece of Fort Collins, not as dead end, but as a growing example of our City that recognizes our shared history while still a vital Community

Thank-you for your consideration.

Kevin Murray

Whitcomb Historic District

117 S Whitcomb Street

Sarah Kane

From: Gina C. Janett <ginaciao@frii.com>
Sent: Monday, January 14, 2013 11:12 AM
To: City Leaders
Cc: nyork@verinet.com; 'Suzanne Murray'
Subject: Please support Historic District designation!

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

I am writing to add my support to the establishment of a new Historic District on S. Whitcomb. I live two blocks west and am not in the area requesting designation but I and many of my neighbors are in support.

We need to keep the "old" in Old Town by protecting our historic housing stock. My house was built in 1922 and its value per square foot is much higher than newer housing in other neighborhoods. I believe this is largely due to the housing style and historic character. To see this value difference, one only has to look in The Group's Saturday newspaper insert of houses for sale and compare the prices and square footage of homes in Old Town with those newer homes south of Prospect.

At first reading, I heard Council questions about the criteria for designation and whether this proposed designation was arbitrary. It certainly wasn't. City staff responded by identifying various performance criteria that were met by 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the houses under the federal historic designation rules. If you know anything about the historic preservation field, you probably know that the preservationists are very specific and stringent about architectural features and the historic significance of homes criteria that must be met to be designated.

The effort by residents to apply for the Whitcomb designation was a big undertaking and should be supported by the Council. The application is 90 pages long and it took the group months of research and preparation to complete and to carry through the City's review process. Imagine the work to get a much larger geographic area designated! My neighborhood, which is the Loomis Addition, is a subdivision laid out and recorded in 1887. It runs from Laporte to Mulberry, Whitcomb to Washington and includes the west half of the proposed Whitcomb district. Loomis has 15 blocks of housing with over 420 units. While it might be another good Historic District, it's a huge and daunting task to complete the research, solicit individual land owner's support, and to jump through the hoops to get it designated.

Finally, the designation of a Historic District by Council is clearly a political act. With 10 of 14 homeowners supporting the designation, there is 71% support. If this were a vote of the affected residents, it would pass with a wide margin. I ask rhetorically how many of our elected council members over the years have been elected with such strong support?

Please vote **unanimously** to support the Whitcomb Historic District.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Gina C. Janett
730 W. Oak Street
970 493-4677

Sarah Kane

From: Costlow, Catherine <CCostlow@1stnationalbank.com>
Sent: Monday, January 14, 2013 1:43 PM
To: City Leaders
Subject: Opposition to City Council Agenda Item #23 Whitcomb Street Historic District 1-15-13
Attachments: AR-M455N_20130114_142514.pdf

<<AR-M455N_20130114_142514.pdf>>

Catherine E Costlow
121 S. Whitcomb Street
Fort Collins, CO 80521

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To: Karen Weitkunat, Darin Atteberry, Kelly Ohlson, Ben Manvel, Lisa Poppaw, Aislinn Kottwitz, Wade Troxell, Gerry Horak

January 12, 2013

From : Catherine Costlow
121 S. Whitcomb Street
Fort Collins, CO 80521

Regarding: Proposed Whitcomb Street Historic District
Item 23 January 15, 2013 City Council Agenda

Once again, we ask you to not grant the request to form the Whitcomb Street Historical District without unanimous consent. We ask you, as our elected officials, to recognize the rights we have to do with our property what we want under the current regulations in place.

As you can see from the pictures provided and from information in the report only four properties can stand on their own and are individually eligible for historic designation (one of these properties already has the designation). This leaves three properties that qualify for the historic standard that "embodies the distinctive characteristic of a type, period or method of construction", obviously what should be the most important standard when historically designating a property. The other properties that owner's want designated do not meet this standard as the alterations that have already been done have significantly changed the distinctive character of the period of construction. This is shown in the pictures that are presented and is readily apparent. The changes already made by these homeowners has changed the "unique architectural ambiance" that can be seen on some other blocks in Old Town.

The City staff and the Landmark Preservation Commission have chosen to seek designation for the district and qualify the houses in the district by using standards that are open to subjectivity and are backed by little fact. Two of these standards are: 1. Buildings inhabited by people of importance and properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of history. To the first standard I respond that shop owners, businessmen, and public servants of Ft. Collins inhabited this street. Regular citizens just like the people who live here now. There is not one extraordinary historical person identified and that as seen at the last Council meeting anyone could name. The second standard is that the properties are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of history. In reading the report no identifying significant contribution was identified for the properties on this block ranging from the late 1800's to 1940 except their age.

Staff cites Clarion Associates comments as support for historical districts: Taken one by one these comments are at best exaggerated and at worst unsubstantiated.

1. Clarion states that homeowners' **usually** see an increase in property value due to financial incentives. There is no proven correlation between financial incentives that may (no promises here since it is government subsidized and can be affected by budget constraints) or may not be available. What funds are available are limited to certain improvements. What they don't say is that there is extra time and planning burden that is placed on the homeowner to go through the process which can cause more expense. Staff presented no evidence of this in Ft. Collins they simply made a general statement. Many on this block have stated in letters and meetings that their goal is to limit increased property value so they can maintain their way of life. They are trying to keep more expensive and remodeled homes out. Restrictions on properties also may create financing issues as lenders see restricted properties as a greater risk.

2. Clarion states that a perception (a perception) is created that designated properties are better maintained. There is no proof offered to support this statement and when looking at historic properties in Ft. Collins you cannot draw this conclusion. You cannot drive down a street and pick out an house as historical because it is better maintained.

3. Clarion states that there is an appeal of owning a recognized landmark. Again, if that is the case then people who find this appealing should seek it for their home on an individual basis. There is something inherently wrong that City officials, like you, make it easier for a person to restrict the property rights of their neighbors and taxpayers to get something they want (a relatively small government handout) instead of first having to seek and use the process to get what they want for their property before they infringe on the rights of others.

4. The last advantage Clarion cites is that there is the advantage and the assurance of predictability that historical design review offers. The City staff already has this ability and already is the arbiter of style in Old Town for properties 50 years and over.

As commission members I ask all of you but Mr. Manville, to put yourselves in our shoes. Think of your houses that are 50 years old or more and your neighborhoods and ask yourselves if you would like this form of regulation attached to your properties. I do not include Mr. Manville as he already expressed to us at the last meeting our idiocy in not wanting more government rules, regulations and handouts.

The arguments for this Historic District are subjective and the gerrymandering of who would be included and who would not (aided by City staff) and the inclusion of new homes and homes that do not contribute just to make a boundary and to fulfill the desires of some is an injustice.

In conclusion I ask you once again not to designate this District without unanimous consent of all the owners. Those that want the designation have access to a process to do so. Preservation can occur without coercion and zoning should provide adequate protections against unwanted and incompatible development (look at what control the Historic Preservation Commission had over the house on Sherwood that wanted an addition and it isn't in an historic district). Why do we need more? Promoting freedom of choice and property rights along with voluntary action is the best way to encourage people to restore and protect our historic resources.

Sarah Kane

From: meg <barefootmeg@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 14, 2013 4:09 PM
To: City Leaders
Cc: Sarah Kane
Subject: Letter regarding the Whitcomb Historic District
Attachments: whitcombletter.pdf

Hello,

I'm not sure yet if I'll be able to make it to the council meeting tomorrow night, but I wanted to at least send a letter with my thoughts on the Whitcomb Historic District. Thanks!

Meg Dunn

**720 W. Oak Street
Fort Collins, CO 80521**

January 14th, 2013

Fort Collins City Council
300 LaPorte Ave,
Fort Collins, CO 80521

To the Fort Collins City Council Members,

I am thrilled with the support that the City Council showed in December for a new historic district on Whitcomb Street. I hope to see a similar positive response at this week's meeting.

I am also excited that this little block of neighbors has gotten together and done all of the hard work required to make this request. I hope that this is the beginning of several grassroots movements within the Old Town neighborhood to take steps not only to preserve what belongs to all of us, tangible pieces of Fort Collins history, but also to take advantage of financial incentives that can pull state money into our beautiful Old Town area.

I am particularly excited that the request was made for a historic district and not just for individual designations of a few houses. Granting landmark status upon an individual house is laudible. It is a means of preserving important artifacts (houses) of our city's history. But creating a landmark district preserves so much more than just artifacts. A district preserves context and a sense of place in a way that individual landmark designations do not. To be able to look at a house and know that it looked that way 100 years ago is pretty neat. But to walk down a block and know that, with a few exceptions, you are entirely surrounded by history on all sides is really cool. Such sizable, physical pieces of history ground us, anchoring us to our roots as a city and as Americans.

I am proud to live in a city that values its own history, not just through museums and history walks, but through preserving sizable chunks of physical evidence that our entire city can enjoy and cherish simply by walking the streets of Old Town.

Sincerely,

Meg Dunn

Resident on Oak Street for almost 12 years and author of NorthofProspect.com

Sarah Kane

From: Mary Humstone <humstone@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 14, 2013 6:21 PM
To: City Leaders
Subject: Whitcomb Street Historic District

Dear City Council Members:

I am writing to express my support for the Whitcomb Street Historic District. Although I do not live in the district, I do own property at 122 Pearl Street, and have been a resident of Fort Collins since 1985. As a resident who appreciates historic buildings and as a professional historic preservationist, I have watched in dismay as the historic character of the "Old Town" residential area (Mountain Avenue and parallel and perpendicular streets) has been eroded by teardowns, pop ups and other drastic changes.

Fort Collins is known as one of the first communities in the region to adopt a strong historic preservation program. And yet that program to date has not been applied, except in individual circumstances, to the city's premier residential historic neighborhood. The proposal to designate the Whitcomb Street Historic District is an important first step in protecting the architectural, historical and cultural features that make this neighborhood such a desirable place to live.

Designation will protect this area for all of Fort Collins to enjoy, and will give property owners the assurance that their investment in their historic properties will not be undermined by insensitive development.

Sincerely,

Mary Humstone
4420 Bingham Hill Rd (residence)
122 Pearl Street (rental property)
970 482-8939
humstone@gmail.com

Sarah Kane

From: Jim Swanstrom <j.swanstrom@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, January 15, 2013 7:26 AM
To: Kelly Ohlson
Subject: Whitcomb Historical District

Mr. Olson

I want to voice my opposition to the establishment of this district.

This historical stuff is getting carried away.

Property owners should not be forced into being a historical property or district. And I do not want to support the maintenance and care of these old homes with my tax dollars. All of them have poor insulation and are hard to heat. Maintaining an architectural standard is one thing but requiring someone to keep an old property is not necessary. Please vote no to the new district. The individual house that want to be historical can be if the owner desires

Thank you
Jim Swanstrom
970 567 1327