

Hello folks!

My name is Allen Lowry. I am an architect and a member of the Davis Historic Resources Management Committee. I am writing to ask for your support.

At the last HRMC meeting, we were informed that the Davis City Council is discussing deactivating the HRMC, either through an amendment to the city charter or through withdrawal of staff and other resources. We were not given details of this move and we are seeking more information. We understand that the Council may view the HRMC as an unnecessary expense or as some kind of impediment to process.

While the HRMC has not been politically active in city affairs, we believe that a case can be made for its continued participation in local affairs. The HRMC is established by the city charter and can only be disbanded by modification of the charter.

Over the years that I have been a commissioner, the HRMC has met monthly to review and advise on a large number of proposed projects and issues, and has facilitated the plan review process consistent with the city's codes and regulations. In every case, the commission has added value to the process and has aided permit processes for developers, homeowners, and larger City efforts to resolve compatibility issues. The HRMC fully supports existing neighborhood groups surrounding the downtown core, and has worked hard to define and promote awareness of newer districts such as College Park, Elmwood, University Estates, and others. The HRMC does not oppose progress!

The HRMC has obtained funding for surveys and other documentation of buildings and neighborhoods that the City can use to promote Davis architectural values. On a regular basis the commission has advised property owners on methods to advance their interests consistent with the city's heritage (examples: University Mall, the old life insurance building on Chiles Road, the old City Hall, and many downtown developments).

The HRMC is developing sensible standard for replacing or improving windows in historically sensitive areas. We feel that our consultations with at least 20 homeowners have saved them money, reconciled differences among neighbors, and added to property values.

The current Core Area Plan process contains an historic assessment component. The HRMC has participated in all of the public workshops and has met with both of the consulting historians. The commission has undertaken specific building surveys to assist the City to refine its contract for this work, all at no cost.

In mid-December the HRMC will meet with City Council representatives to present its case for continued support. I ask now that you consider expressing your support for the commission by contacting the City Council. If you write a letter of support, please provide us with a copy. Without a local historic commission, it is hard to see how our cultural resources can be defended in the face of expected growth and change, especially downtown. Neighborhood groups should value our representation.

Also we would appreciate any suggestions for expansion or refinement of our work or outreach, so as to better promote the idea that our heritage can help define the future!

Thanks,

Allen Lowry, AIA
Davis HRMC commissioner