



**Additional Documents List
Regular City Council Meeting
May 19, 2021**

(Uploaded Online on 05/20/2021 @ 12:30 p.m.)

Item No.	Agenda Item Description	Distributor	Document
13	Project No. 2384-LHD - Approval of a City Historic Landmark Designation for property located at 1016 Orange Grove Avenue (Assessor's Parcel Number 5315-019-037)	Joanna Hankamer, Planning and Community Development Director	PowerPoint Presentation
14	Project No. 2338-LHD - Approval of a City Historic Landmark Designation for property located 807 Bank Street (Assessor's Parcel Number 5314-019-021)	Joanna Hankamer, Planning and Community Development Director	PowerPoint Presentation
PC	Emailed Public Comment for: Regular Session Agenda Item Nos. 2, 9, 13, 14	Lucie Colombo, City Clerk	Emailed Public Comments



**City of South Pasadena
Planning and Community
Development Department**

Memo

Date: May 17, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Council Members

From: Joanna Hankamer, Planning and Community Development Director

Re: **Additional Document No. 1 for Item No. 13 – Project No. 2384-LHD - Approval of a City Historic Landmark Designation for property located at 1016 Orange Grove Avenue (Assessor’s Parcel Number 5315-019-037)**

Please see the attached staff presentation slides for this item. The staff presentation is also available to view as a video [here: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/vwfg6byv4opxha9zjdevs/Item-13-1016-Orange-Grove-Avenue_CC-staff-presentation-updated.pptx?dl=0&rlkey=jg5cb6vmfisthw5wcbcz8kv](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/vwfg6byv4opxha9zjdevs/Item-13-1016-Orange-Grove-Avenue_CC-staff-presentation-updated.pptx?dl=0&rlkey=jg5cb6vmfisthw5wcbcz8kv)



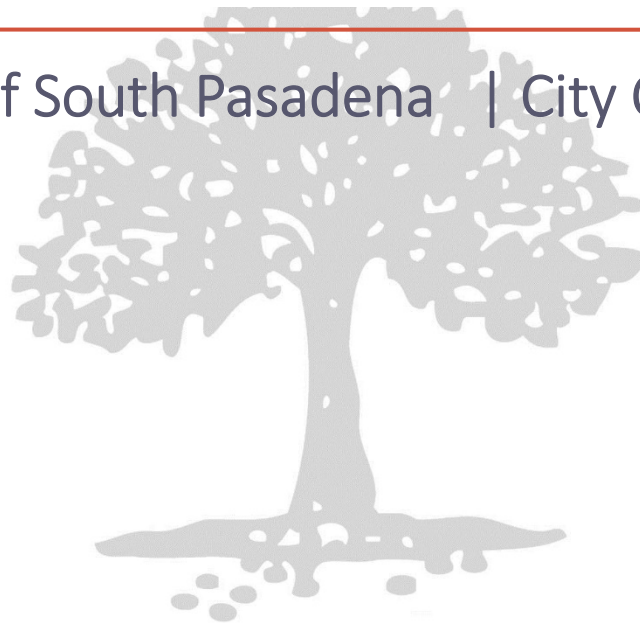
1016 Orange Grove Avenue

Project No. 2384-LMN

Historic Landmark Designation

May 19, 2021

City of South Pasadena | City Council





On April 15, 2021, the Cultural Heritage Commission reviewed the Historic Landmark application and voted 4-0 recommending that the City Council designate the property at 1016 Orange Grove Avenue as a Historic Landmark (Historic Landmark No. 57)





PROJECT

- **Historic Landmark Designation Request** for property located at 1016 Orange Grove Avenue.



Built in 1885 – Orange Grove Schoolhouse





Criteria for Historic Designation

1. **Its character, interest or value as a part of the heritage of the community;**
2. *Its location as a site of a significant historic event;*
3. *Its identification (such as the residence, ownership, or place of occupation, etc.) with a person, persons or groups who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city, state or United States;*
4. *Its exemplification of a particular architectural style of an era of history of the city;*
5. *Its exemplification of the best remaining architectural type in a neighborhood;*
6. *Its identification as the work of a person or persons whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, the state or the United States;*
7. *Its embodiment of elements of outstanding contribution to architectural design, engineering, detail design, detail, materials or craftsmanship;*
8. *It is either a part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be developed or preserved according to a plan based on a historic cultural or architectural motif;*
9. *Its unique location or singular physical characteristic representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood;*
10. *Its potential for yielding information of archaeological interest; or*
11. *In designating a historic district, its significance as a distinguishable neighborhood or area whose components may lack individual distinction.*



Recommendation: Cultural Heritage Commission recommends that the City Council designate the property at 1016 Orange Grove Avenue as a Historic Landmark (Historic Landmark No. 57).





Thank you





**City of South Pasadena
Planning and Community
Development Department**

Memo

Date: May 17, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Council Members

From: Joanna Hankamer, Planning and Community Development Director

Re: **Additional Document No. 1 for Item No. 14 – Project No. 2338-LHD - Approval of a City Historic Landmark Designation for property located 807 Bank Street (Assessor’s Parcel Number 5314-019-021)**

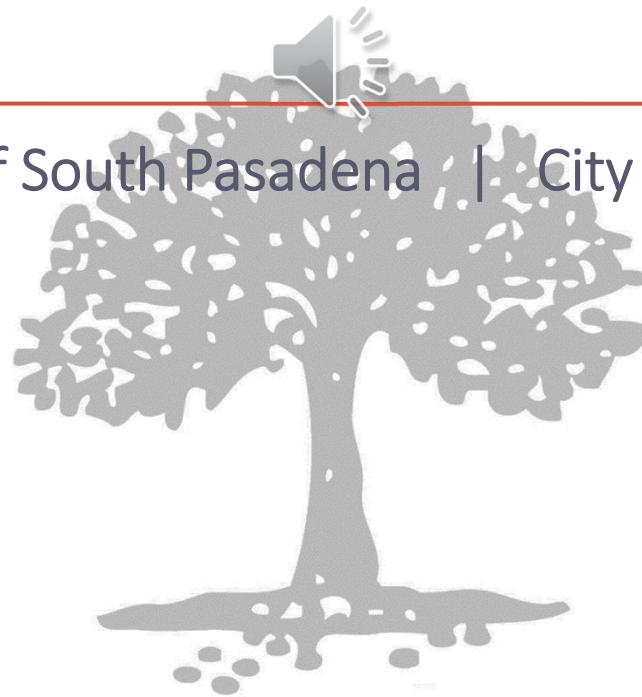
Please see the attached staff presentation slides for this item. The staff presentation is also available to view as a video [here: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/k0hmep5de15o375guukie/4-807-Bank-Street_CC-staff-presentation_updated-voiceover.pptx?dl=0&rlkey=zczefllu690vysnjoceft12yu](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/k0hmep5de15o375guukie/4-807-Bank-Street_CC-staff-presentation_updated-voiceover.pptx?dl=0&rlkey=zczefllu690vysnjoceft12yu)



807 Bank Street

Project No. 2338-LHD
Landmark Historic designation
May 19, 2021

City of South Pasadena | City Council





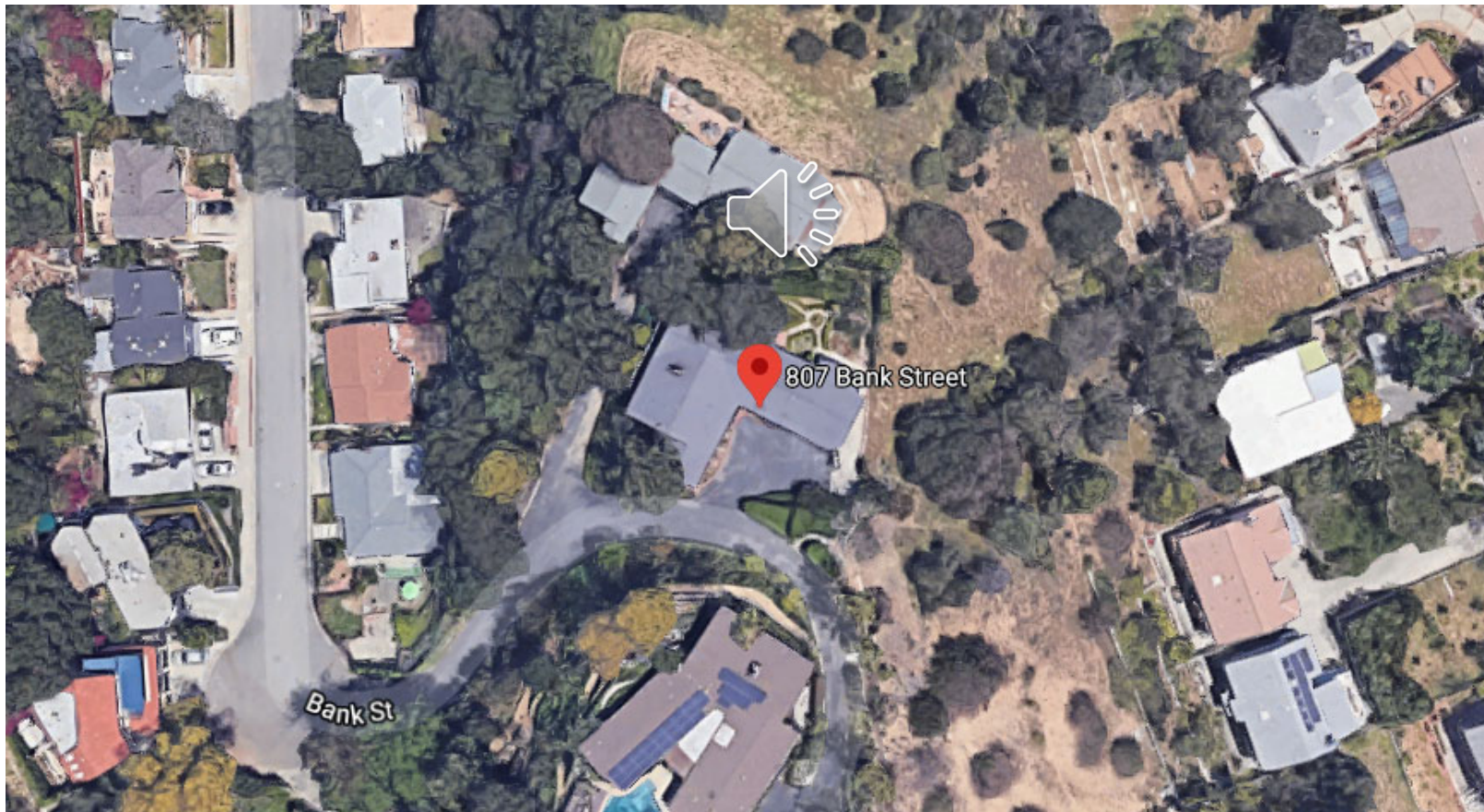
On February 18, 2021, the Cultural Heritage Commission reviewed the Historic Landmark application and voted 4-0 recommending that the City Council designate property at 807 Bank Street as a Historic Landmark (Historic Landmark No. 56)





PROJECT

- Request for Landmark Historic Designation located at 807 Bank Street





- Built in 1959 – Modern Ranch Home





Criteria for Historic Designation

- 1. Its character, interest or value as a part of the heritage of the community;**
- 2. Its location as a site of a significant historic event;*
- 3. Its identification (such as the residence, ownership, or place of occupation, etc.) with a person, persons or groups who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city, state or United States;*
- 4. Its exemplification of a particular architectural style of an era of history of the city;**
- 5. Its exemplification of the best remaining architectural type in a neighborhood;*
- 6. Its identification as the work of a person or persons whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, the state or the United States;**
- 7. Its embodiment of elements of outstanding attention to architectural design, engineering, detail design, detail, materials or craftsmanship;**
- 8. It is either a part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be developed or preserved according to a plan based on a historic cultural or architectural motif;*
- 9. Its unique location or singular physical characteristic representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood;*
- 10. Its potential for yielding information of archaeological interest; or*
- 11. In designating a historic district, its significance as a distinguishable neighborhood or area whose components may lack individual distinction.*



Recommendation:

The Cultural Heritage Commission recommends that the City Council designate the property at 807 Bank Street as a Historic Landmark (Historic Landmark No. 56).





Thank you



Regular City Council Meeting
E-mail Public Comment 05/19/2021

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2
General Public Comment

1. Madeline Offerman
2. Michael Siegel
3. Mayumi Fukushima
4. Phung Huynh
5. Shandor Garrison
6. Laura Riley & Stanley Chen
7. Barbara Eisenstein
8. Caitlin Lainoff
9. Stephanie Stein
10. Bianca Richards

From: Madeline Offerman <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 18, 2021 11:17 AM
To: City Council Public Comment <ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Public Comment- Support Care First Budget

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I urge you to support the Care First Budget Proposal for 2021-22. I believe it is time for our budget to reflect our town's values of equality, justice and inclusion. Given the budget surplus, there is no better time than now to take the steps necessary to begin to address the issues that have been neglected for far too long in our city. Issues like affordable housing, environmental abuse, transportation and improved social services desperately need our attention. I urge you to adopt the proposals presented in this budget. Thank you.

Madeline Offerman, South Pasadena resident

From: Michael Siegel <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 18, 2021 1:24 PM
To: City Council Public Comment <ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Public Comment for 2021-22 budget

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Esteemed Council Members,

I urge you to adopt what is outlined in the CARE FIRST BUDGET PROPOSAL.

South Pasadena Commissions and Council has taken a great deal of effort to craft some amazing Plans to transform our great city in the years to come for the better. Only problem, there is hardly enough staff to work on implementing them. Without appropriate staffing levels, there will never be enough resources to finalize even half of what has been approved.

If you truly believe in the Plans that you've personally approved, its time to act now, put the funding where its truly needed, and provide the resources to implement what you say are important. Lets put our money where our mouth is!

Michael Siegel
[REDACTED], 91030

From: Mayumi Fukushima <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 18, 2021 10:36 PM
To: City Council Public Comment <ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject:

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To Whom it may concern:

South Pasadena needs affordable housing now. More than 50 percent of our residents rent and too many pay too much of their income on rent, creating economic stress. There are promising signs that affordable housing finally is becoming a public priority, yet here in South Pasadena it took three years to adopt an inclusionary housing ordinance. But we need to do more. Renters need help now with financial assistance from the city that fills the gaps in other pandemic rent support programs. There are cities that have rental assistance programs that seem very helpful. This issue is pressing - the national moratorium expires soon. We do not want our neighbors to lose their homes. We also need better programs for our unhoused neighbors that are publicly operated and not based on charity. Let's begin treating our unhoused and those facing tough times with the dignity they deserve. Adopt the Care First Budget proposals tonight!

Sincerely,
Mayumi Fukushima

From: Phung Huynh <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, May 19, 2021 10:32 AM
To: City Council Public Comment <ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Public Comment for 5/19 City Council Meeting

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mayor and City Council,

My name is Phung Huynh, and I live in District 3. I fully support the Care First Budget Proposal for 2021-22. Our city needs a budget that reflects the values of diversity, equity, justice, inclusion, and access in our community. Given the budget surplus, now is the time to take the steps necessary to begin to address the issues that have been neglected in our city such as affordable housing, environmental neglect, sustainability, transportation and improved social services. I urge you to adopt the proposals presented in this budget. The budget is robust, clear, and will make significant and much needed change in our city so that everyone can benefit.

Sincerely,
Phung Huynh

From: Shandor Garrison <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, May 19, 2021 10:32 AM
To: City Council Public Comment <ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Support Care First Budget

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear City Council,

Let me tell you why I support the Care First budget proposals. Right now, our city is leaving money on the table—transportation funds from MTA, environmental grants to name a few—due to the lack of staff to develop the plans needed to grant the money to our city for various projects. I see other cities making improvements such as street calming measures, better traffic controls, stormwater capture projects, affordable housing projects, innovative emissions free, city organized ridesharing service, and other projects and programs. But we don't see the same progress here. That's why with the city's improved finances it's time for the City Council to deliver on long-promised projects and program improvements. We need to address growing economic and racial inequity, affordable housing, and improved services for families and youths in our community. Adopt the Care First budget proposals today and you'll have my vote in the future. I'll be watching.

Sincerely,
Shandor Garrison

--

work: [REDACTED]
call: [REDACTED]

From: Laura Riley <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, May 19, 2021 11:24 AM
To: City Council Public Comment <ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov>
Cc: Stan <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Public Budget Comment

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mayor and South Pasadena City Council,

We support the Care First budget proposals and urge you to support it as well by implementing it immediately. The Care First Proposal outlines many important issues that we as a city can have a real impact on if we only choose to. We as a city can and should help ensure a basic level of security and dignity to our most vulnerable and the community as a whole by investing in social services, the environment and affordable housing.

While we support the entire breadth of the CareFirst proposal, we specifically want to hire one element of concern and need in our community. South Pasadena needs affordable housing now. More than 50 percent of our residents rent and too many pay too much of their income on rent, creating economic stress and inequitable access. There are promising signs that affordable housing finally is becoming a public priority, yet here in South Pasadena it took three years to adopt an inclusionary housing ordinance, though it's finally done. Now we need additional staff to make affordable housing a reality, as outlined in Care First's budget proposals. Renters need help now with financial assistance from the city that fills the gaps in other pandemic rent support programs. Otherwise, some of our neighbors could soon lose their homes. We need better programs for our unhoused neighbors that are publicly operated and not based on charity. Let's begin treating our unhoused and those facing tough times with the dignity they deserve.

Thank you in advance for considering our input and the lives of everyone in our community.

Best,
Laura Riley & Stanley Chen, residents of South Pasadena

From: Barbara Eisenstein <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, May 19, 2021 11:40 AM
To: City Council Public Comment <ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: 5/19/21 City Council Meeting, Comment on Item 2,

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Please note the following public comment

City Council Meeting, 5/19/21, Item #2 (also included in attachment)
Name: Barbara Eisenstein, Address: [REDACTED]

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I urge you to adopt the ideas for the city budget presented in the Care First Proposal. It is time for our city to seriously address these critical issues, including social services, affordable housing, racial equity, youth development, environment, and transportation. We need a reimagined approach to public safety, policing, and services for those in need, including individuals who live unhoused in our city.

I have been involved in Friends of South Pasadena Nature Park since 2006, and so I'd like to focus my comments on environmental issues. For the past 15 years the city's only natural habitat park has been largely maintained by a small group of volunteers. This park could serve to educate residents and staff on effective ways to landscape homes and city property to enhance good habitat, conserve water, reduce urban runoff, and improve air quality by eliminating the use of polluting landscape equipment, especially leaf blowers. Over the years, very little has been done to promote these goals, and the time to do so is long overdo.

For example, a proposal to capture urban runoff in the park from Pasadena Avenue has languished because the city has not applied for Measure W or Proposition 68 funds that are available for exactly this type of project. I believe that with the help of Friends of South Pasadena Nature Park, the city could receive significant funding if it had staff available to oversee the grant process.

Not only has the city failed to use the park for public education and failed to go after public funds for environmental projects, it has allocated a minimum of resources for park upkeep. Upon accepting the state money for the creation of the nature park, the city agreed to maintain the park in perpetuity. Although the city supports our local volunteer group, it has shunned its own responsibility to check the park regularly for garbage and debris, vandalism, and tagging. In addition, the city has not maintained the paths within the park, so they have become rutted and difficult to navigate, especially for those with

mobility issues. Unlike other parks in the city, there is no budgeted line item for maintenance of the nature park. I believe this is one reason that the park receives so little attention. The city should remedy this lack of transparency.

I urge you to adopt the proposals presented by Care First, especially those that would promote leadership for environmental change. Thank you!

Barbara Eisenstein
Friends of South Pasadena Nature Park

--

Available at heydaybooks.com

City Council Meeting, 5/19/21
Item #2

Name: Barbara Eisenstein, Address: [REDACTED]

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I urge you to adopt the ideas for the city budget presented in the Care First Proposal. It is time for our city to seriously address these critical issues, including social services, affordable housing, racial equity, youth development, environment, and transportation. We need a reimagined approach to public safety, policing, and services for those in need, including individuals who live unhoused in our city.

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For example, a proposal to capture urban runoff in the park from Pasadena Avenue has languished because the city has not applied for Measure W or Proposition 68 funds that are available for exactly this type of project. I believe that with the help of Friends of South Pasadena Nature Park, the city could receive significant funding if it had staff available to oversee the grant process.

Not only has the city failed to use the park for public education and failed to go after public funds for environmental projects, it has allocated a minimum of resources for park upkeep. Upon accepting the state money for the creation of the nature park, the city agreed to maintain the park in perpetuity. Although the city supports our local volunteer group, it has shunned its own responsibility to check the park regularly for garbage and debris, vandalism, and tagging. In addition, the city has not maintained the paths within the park, so they have become rutted and difficult to navigate, especially for those with mobility issues. Unlike other parks in the city, there is no budgeted line item for maintenance of the nature park. I believe this is one reason that the park receives so little attention. The city should remedy this lack of transparency.

I urge you to adopt the proposals presented by Care First, especially those that would promote leadership for environmental change. Thank you.

From: Caitlin Lainoff <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, May 19, 2021 12:49 PM
To: City Council Public Comment <ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Comment to City Council & Finance Commission

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I support the Care First Budget Proposal for 2021-22. I believe it is time for our budget to reflect our town's values of equality, justice and inclusion. Given the budget surplus, there is no better time than now to take the steps necessary to begin to address the issues that have been neglected for far too long in our city. Issues like affordable housing, environmental abuse, transportation and improved social services desperately need our attention. I urge you to adopt the proposals presented in this budget. Thank you.

Best,
Caitlin Lainoff

From: Stephanie Stein <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, May 19, 2021 1:21 PM
To: City Council Public Comment <ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: May 19 Meeting

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I believe that the last year has exposed deep flaws in the treatment of many members of our community when it comes to equity and fairness. We as a city can and should help ensure a basic level of security and dignity to our most vulnerable and the community as a whole by investing in social services, the environment and affordable housing. That is why I support the Care First Budget Proposal for 2021-22. I urge you to adopt the proposals presented in this budget.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Stein
Community Member & SPUSD Parent

From: Bianca Richards <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, May 19, 2021 4:12 PM
To: City Council Public Comment <ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Public Comment-General for May 19, 2021

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submitted by Bianca Richards

Now is the time for us, residents, to make public comments to City Council and the Finance Commission regarding the 2021-22 budget proposal. South Pasadena voters and taxpayers have consistently opened their pocketbooks to support and improve city services. Most recently, residents voted to raise sales taxes and to renew the utility tax. I have volunteered to be on all these committees because I believed the city needed fiscal stability. We are now seeing the positives in these voter-approved measures: more sales tax revenues and rising property values that bolster city revenues. That's why it's time to deliver the promised improvements in city programs.

I have reviewed the Care First Budget proposals and find it to be a good foundational starting point. The categories –Housing & Human Services, Public Safety, Racial Equity in Economic Opportunity, Youth Services, and Environment & Transportation – all these hit upon current issues. I would go a step further to include and expand Library services, and then combine categories under our existing Community Services that serve youth and seniors, and add and a new category -Arts and Culture. All of this will take additional staff but the city must be strategic in moving forward. We have so many issues to deal with: Cal Trans housing, affordable housing, finding and writing grants then implementing the grants, environmental responses for adapting to climate change, homelessness and mental health issues, getting a handle on mounting traffic to improve safety for both pedestrians and motorists. Let's take a serious look at the Care First Budget proposals and more creative proposals to improve South Pasadena for all.

Thank you

Regular City Council Meeting
E-mail Public Comment 05/19/2021

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9

**Request for Approval of a Co-Sponsorship and Fee
Waiver of “Grad Night” hosted by the South Pasadena
High School Parent –Teacher – Student Association**

1. Tisa Poe, Dean Serwin; Laura Morales; Chris Holmes, Lolita Lopez; Jill Olsen; Jim Dowd

From: Jim Dowd PTSA President <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 18, 2021 3:10 PM
To: City Council Public Comment <ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Letter to the City Council for public comment

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear City Council Members,

The SPHS PTSA Senior Class of 2021 committee was formed to help our Seniors feel connected while spending most of their last year of high school in Distance Learning, away from their friends and teachers. We have held several activities and events in the last several months, including video game tournaments, scavenger hunts, and a very fun Senior Appreciation Day that was well-attended on campus.

This class has been denied so many of their senior year milestones. Fortunately, they have an in-person graduation at Roosevelt Stadium to look forward to on June 2nd. While the PTSA hosted a trip in previous years' to Grad Nite at Disneyland, it is not an option this year. In its place, we would ask the city to allow us to use the Arroyo Seco Golf Course complex to hold a semi-formal nighttime social following graduation.

The committee has hired a party planner Loriann Serna, also known as *The Wife of the Party*, to help us in the planning and coordination of the event we are proposing. Loriann is an SPHS alumna who has worked with SPEF on Parti Gras. We are fortunate to have her on board with us. She knows the Arroyo very well and feels that the entry area would be the best and safest location to hold our celebration. It's contained with boundaries to keep the kids in one area. It's also close to the bathrooms to ensure that there is no roaming the grounds. She would like to use the mini-golf course as an activity for the kids.

We cannot think of a better location for our kids to spend their last night as South Pasadena High seniors than the Arroyo. It would mean so much to them to say goodbye to their friends in the safety of their hometown.

Thanks in advance for your help,

The SPHS Senior Class of 2021 Committee
Tisa Poe - PTSA Grad Night Chair
Dean Serwin - PTSA Grad Night Chair
Laura Morales - PTSA Parliamentarian
Chris Holmes - PTSA VP of Ways & Means
Lolita Lopez - PTSA Volunteer Coordinator
Jill Olsen - PTSA Volunteer
Jim Dowd - PTSA President

Regular City Council Meeting
E-mail Public Comment 05/19/2021

AGENDA ITEM NO. 13

**Project No. 2384-LHD - Approval of a City Historic
Landmark Designation for property located at 1016
Orange Grove Avenue (Assessor's Parcel Number
5315-019-037)**

1. Alysia and Christopher Painter

From: Alysia Gray Painter <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, May 19, 2021 7:34 AM
To: City Council Public Comment <ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Support for 1016 Orange Grove Avenue's historic designation

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi South Pasadena City Council,

We wanted to send a note in support of 1016 Orange Grove Avenue, "the Orange Grove Schoolhouse," receiving a designation of a Historic Landmark as suggested by the Cultural Heritage Commission.

In our travels through California and the West, we've seen that older schoolhouses, where they still exist, are among the most treasured places in town. We're so happy to see such a fine structure still standing tall in South Pasadena.

It's a beautiful and important building. Thank you for considering the designation!

Thank you,
Alysia and Christopher Painter
[REDACTED]

Regular City Council Meeting
E-mail Public Comment 05/19/2021

AGENDA ITEM NO. 14

**Project No. 2338-LHD - Approval of a City Historic
Landmark Designation for property located 807 Bank
Street (Assessor's Parcel Number 5314-019-021)**

1. Kenneth Breisch

From: Kenneth Alan Breisch <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 18, 2021 6:17 PM
To: City Council Public Comment <ccpubliccomment@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Soward House, Item 14

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Attached are my comments on the Soward House, Item 14 on tomorrow's agenda.

Thank you

Ken Breisch

Kenneth Breisch, PhD
Associate Professor of Architecture
School of Architecture
[REDACTED]
University of Southern California
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

USC School of Architecture

13 February 2021

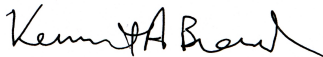
Honorable Landmarks Commissioners:

As an architectural historian, who has been teaching courses in American and Southern California architectural history and heritage conservation at the University of Southern California for more than two decades, I would like to express my support for the designation of the Mary Sowards House at 807 Bank Street as a South Pasadena Historic Landmark. I am also currently a member of the Santa Monica Landmarks Commission and am a past president of the Santa Monica Conservancy.

In my opinion the Sowards house represents an excellent example of the “modern ranch” house popularized in Southern by architects such as Cliff May during Southern California’s period of exponential growth and prosperity during the first decades after the end of World War II. Designed in 1958, its architect, Theodore Pletsch, has seamlessly woven together indoor and outdoor space, a significant characteristic of this style, which relates it to the type of Post War modernism that became nationally and internationally associated with the region during this period. Following the lead of architects such as Cliff May, Pletsch gracefully combined his open plan with more traditional materials, such as vertical, board and batten siding, and “used brick” to evoke the more romantic tradition of the California ranch house to create a setting for the kind of “comfortable” Southern California, middle-class lifestyle that was widely lauded in the architectural and popular press during this era, especially in publications such as *Sunset Magazine*. This character of Pletsch’s design, is enhanced by the quality of materials and workmanship, and seemingly effortless relationship that he created between the house, its site, and landscape, a wonderful achievement, given the moderate price of this residence. The modest demeanor of this home charmingly captures what we know of its original owner, Mary Sowards, a single woman and teacher at South Pasadena High School.

What I find particularly remarkable about this property is the intact nature of both its architecture and landscape. The absence of alterations and additions are exceptionally unusual for houses of this scale, as is the fact that this home has not been demolished and replaced by a newer and larger “McMansion”. The site overall maintains a strong sense of its original purpose and period of design. As a preservationist I find it increasingly frustrating that these types of properties, homes that so exemplify the aspirations of a large segment of the population are increasing being lost. They form an integral reflection of our history and its suburban vernacular landscape, as do many other remnants of our often complex and sometimes difficult history. We need to recognize all aspects of this complexity, not just the great “masterpieces” of architecture, but also the less conspicuous “monuments” commemorating the everyday life of often unsung individuals that contributed to the well-being of our society. The Sowards house is an especially elegant example of this and certainly reflects an important contribution to the character of the South Pasadena neighborhoods that arose during the decades following the War. The current owners of this property should be applauded for taking their own initiative to nominate this property as an historic landmark and for their intent to preserve it.

Ken Breisch, PhD.



Associate Professor,
Graduate Programs Heritage Conservation

University of Southern California

Watt Hall [REDACTED] • Tel: [REDACTED] • Fax: [REDACTED] • <http://arch.usc.edu>

