



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING

C-8

333 W. Ocean Boulevard Long Beach, CA 90802 (562) 570-6864 FAX (562) 570-6610

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

November 17, 2005

CHAIR AND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
City of Long Beach
California

SUBJECT: Consideration of a Mills Act Historic Property Contract for the Property Located at 395 Wisconsin Avenue (Council District 2)

APPLICANT: Shalla Callahan
395 Wisconsin Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90814

RECOMMENDATION

The Cultural Heritage Commission recommends that the City Planning Commission recommend that the City Council approve the execution of a Mills Act Historic Property Contract for 395 Wisconsin Avenue, located in the Bluff Heights Historic District.

BACKGROUND

The Mills Act Historic Property Contract is a state law allowing a property tax reassessment and reduction for designated historic landmarks and contributing buildings in designated historic districts in return for certain historic preservation obligations. A legal contract is executed between the City and a property owner, and is recorded on the property title. The Mills Act Historic Property Contract is the only opportunity the City has to support a preservation-minded homeowner who needs financial assistance to restore and maintain an historic property. The tax savings helps to alleviate the extra financial costs of historic restoration and contributes to the public good by preserving the heritage of the community.

Since 1993, when the City adopted the Mills Act Historic Property Contract program, a total of approximately 30 contracts have been enacted with individual owners of designated historic properties or those located within historic districts. Almost all of these are owner-occupied single-family homes; three are apartment buildings. The number of contracts enacted each year has been small, from two to four contracts annually.

The subject property located at 395 Wisconsin Avenue was constructed in 1903 and is owned by Shalla Callahan. This large, turn-of-the-century Queen Anne inspired residence is located in the Bluff Heights Historic District. It is a contributing structure to the District, which was designated as an historic district by the City Council in July 2004. Attached are photos of the property.

CHAIR AND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

November 17, 2005

Page 2

Since purchasing the house, the applicant has already begun to rehabilitate the property. Ms. Callahan is very appreciative of the historical and architectural qualities of the house, and has applied for a Mills Act contract in order to be able to afford the proper standards for historic restoration and preservation. The age and materials of the house make it a challenge to preserve and maintain. As part of the Mills Act contract, the owner anticipates the following work program over the next ten years:

- Restore and repaint north side of house
- Repair plumbing
- Paint interior in appropriate colors of the era
- Landscape with appropriate plantings along north and west side of dwelling
- Refinish hardwood floors
- Lay European wool carpet in upstairs rooms and stairway (design and style consistent with the era)
- General upkeep and maintenance to preserve and enhance the historic character of the building

The commitment of the owner to historic preservation and the building's overall contributing features to the Bluff Heights Historic District makes it a good candidate for a Mills Act contract. The Planning Commission's endorsement of this Mills Act application allows it to continue through the approval process for ultimately submission to the Los Angeles County Recorder's office by December 31, 2005.

The Mills Act contracts run for ten years; however, they are automatically renewed each year and can potentially continue in perpetuity, unless cancelled by either an owner or the City. There is a revenue loss for the City, equal to its share of the property tax. The County assumes most of the property tax loss. The concept behind the Mills Act is that the revenue loss is compensated by the public benefit obtained in maintaining and restoring a historic resource.

The Cultural Heritage Commission approved the execution of a Mills Act Historic Contract between the property owner and the City at their meeting of November 16, 2005.

The City Council must approve the execution of the Mills Act contracts. The City's Budget Officer considers the fiscal impacts of the action at that time.

CHAIR AND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

November 17, 2005

Page 3


IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Recommend that the City Council approve the execution of Mills Act Historic Property Contracts between the City and the owner of 395 Wisconsin Avenue.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

LAYNE JOHNSON
CHAIR, CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

By:



Janet Ostashay
Historic Preservation Officer

Attachments