



August 18, 2015

Submitted electronically

Attn: Poonam Davis, City Clerk
Long Beach City Council
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Long Beach, CA 90802
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Los Angeles, CA 90014

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laconservancy.org

RE: Item #24, 15-0811, amendments to Long Beach Cultural Heritage Commission Ordinance

Honorable Long Beach Mayor and City Councilmembers:

On behalf of the Los Angeles Conservancy, I am writing to urge you to vote against the proposed owner consent provision and instead support "Version A" of the Cultural Heritage Commission Ordinance amendments.

The City of Long Beach earned the grade of "A+" in the Conservancy's 2014 Historic Preservation Report Card for Los Angeles County. To the best of our knowledge, Long Beach has never required owner consent for the designation of local landmarks since the City first established an ordinance allowing for the designation and protection of historically significant structures in 1978. We think it is a misstep to now institute this type of provision as it will limit and weaken the overall preservation program for the city.

The Conservancy works to encourage strong preservation practices throughout the county and applauds those communities which have established strong historic preservation programs and those that are working on improving their programs. That's why we support the other proposed amendments before you tonight, with the exception of the owner consent provision or requirement that only owners can initiate a local landmark nomination.

Throughout the country, it has been clearly shown that owner consent provisions reduce the effectiveness of local preservation programs. If the owner consent provision is adopted as part of the overall ordinance amendments tonight, Long Beach will lose an effective key tool needed to protect historically significant structures when endangered.

The policy change will represent a significant step backwards for Long Beach and has the real potential to put scores of structures throughout the city at risk going forward. Historic preservation efforts in the city will be greatly diminished, and only those structures proposed for designation by the owners will receive protection. If passed, the Conservancy would need to reevaluate Long Beach's grade in our Preservation Report Card, which likely would receive a corresponding reduction in points—something that rarely takes place among local historic preservation programs.



The Conservancy, Long Beach Heritage, and the City's own Cultural Heritage Commission all strongly oppose this provision and we urge the Long Beach City Council to vote against the proposed owner consent provision and instead support "Version A" of the Cultural Heritage Commission Ordinance amendments.

About the Los Angeles Conservancy:

The Los Angeles Conservancy is the largest local historic preservation organization in the United States, with nearly 6,500 members throughout the Los Angeles area. Established in 1978, the Conservancy works to preserve and revitalize the significant architectural and cultural heritage of Los Angeles County through advocacy and education.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (213) 430-4203 or afine@laconservancy.org should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Adrian Scott Fine
Director of Advocacy

cc: Long Beach Heritage
California Office of Historic Preservation

