

THE CAPITAL

"Preserving Santa Barbara's historic sites of enduring community value"

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SCHEDULED MEETINGS OF INTEREST

PEARL CHASE SOCIETY

In-person Board Meetings at the MacVeagh House on the grounds of the Natural History Museum been suspended due to Covid protocols. The Board continues to meet via Zoom; meetings are typically held the first Thursday of the month at 3:30. Next meeting: February 3

Preservation Committee Meetings will be held virtually when they resume. Next date to be determined.

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

City Council Public Comment and Participating Online. In order to promote social distancing, City Council chambers will not be open to the general public. Public participation can be done in two ways: 1) via telephone: Call (805) 564-5301 and leave your name, return phone number and the number of the item you wish to speak on. You will be called back during the meeting and will have the chance to make your statement then. 2) you may participate in the Zoom meeting that may be accessed [HERE](#).

City meetings are broadcast live on City TV channel 18 and streamed live [HERE](#), where they are also archived and viewable on demand.

[City Council Meetings](#) are held on Tuesdays at 2 pm at Council Chambers, City Hall: February 1, 8, 15

[Planning Commission](#) Meetings are held on the first, second and third Thursdays of the month at 1 pm at Council Chambers, City Hall: February 3, 10, 17

[Historic Landmarks Commission](#) Meetings are held every other Wednesday at 1:30 pm at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street: February 2, 16

[Architectural Board of Review](#) Meetings are held Mondays at 3 pm at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street. Full Board meets February 7, 22 (Tuesday)

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

County Board of Supervisor Meetings and Planning Commission meetings are broadcast live on CSBTv20. They are also streamed live [HERE](#) where they are also archived and viewable on demand.

[County Board of Supervisors](#) Meetings are held on three Tuesdays of the month at 9 am. The first and third meetings are held in Santa Barbara in the Board of Supervisors Hearing Room, 105 East Anapamu St., 4th Floor. The second meeting is (typically) held in Santa Maria at 511 East Lakeside Parkway. February 1 (SB), February 8, (SM), February 15 (SB)

[County Planning Commission](#) Meetings are held three Wednesdays of the month at 9 am. The first and third meetings are held in Santa Barbara at 123 East Anapamu Street, Room 17, and the second meeting is (typically) held in Santa Maria at 511 East Lakeside Parkway: February 2 (SB), February 9, 23 (SM)

[County Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission](#) Meetings are held the second Monday of the month at 10 am at 123 East Anapamu, Room 17 (unless specified otherwise): February 14

Society News & Notes

By Cheri Rae

Members of the Board of Directors of the Pearl Chase Society met over Zoom on January 6 for the first meeting of the New Year. However, there were not enough members in attendance for a quorum, so the meeting was for discussion and follow-up only.

The comprehensive recent article about the Orella Adobe that appeared in the Santa Barbara News-Press was cited; it can be viewed on page six [HERE](#).

There was discussion about the completion of "Birth of Beauty," the new documentary video sponsored by the Society that builds upon the virtual 2021 Historic Homes Tour and tells the story of the visionary women associated with Plaza Rubio who helped usher in an architectural renaissance in Santa Barbara.

This venture was described as "a new frontier for the Society," and is an exciting contemporary approach to developing interest and awareness in preserving and protection of the historic resources of Santa Barbara. [See profile of filmmaker Jim Cutsinger on page 4 for a behind-the-scenes look at this project.]

A general discussion of the request for the Society to donate to the Main-Begg Farmhouse and Cistern project. The property, located at 5001 Hollister Avenue, was designated a County Historic Landmark in 2020, and efforts for its preservation and restoration are ongoing. Concern was expressed to guarantee that plans adhere to Department of Interior standards. It was suggested that Board members conduct research and visit the site for an organized informational tour when conditions allow. More information about the site can be found [HERE](#).

An additional brief discussion about the request for funding for a number of repairs of the St. Paul AME Church, designated a City Landmark in 2020. Questions will be clarified and consideration of assisting with the protection of this important newly designated landmark will take place in the near future.



Newly named historic landmark, St. Paul's AME Church in need of repairs. Photo by Steve Dowty

The next Board Meeting is Thursday, February 3, via Zoom.

Want to get involved, or have submissions for The Capital? Email us at PCS@pearlchasesociety.org.

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and comments to:

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Newsletter

Cheri Rae, *editor*
Lisa DeSpain, *graphics*

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PRESERVATION WATCH

By Susan Chamberlin

(Initiated by popular request, Preservation Watch informs Pearl Chase Society members of community projects that may disturb historical structures and features, explains community preservation efforts, and/or lists opportunities for public input for those concerned with a particular issue.)

HLC Consideration of the De la Guerra Plaza Remodel

In a Zoom meeting on January 19th, the Historic Landmarks Commission considered the RRM Design Group's presentation of the "De la Guerra Plaza Revitalization Concept Hearing No. 3."

This meeting was a continuation of the previous concept review for the remodel of the historic Plaza. Alterations to the design based on past comments from the HLC were reflected in the presentation.

[Video of the meeting can be viewed [HERE](#). NOTE: Discussion of the project begins at 3:29 on the video of the six-hour meeting.]

HLC chair Anthony Grumbine was the only one at the meeting who liked the idea of the splash pad water feature. No commissioner seemed to like the design of the proposed arcade, which would function as a stage except at Fiesta, when a larger Fiesta stage would be erected in front of it.

(Continued on page 3)

DE LA GUERRA PLAZA
1850-1950
NEAR THIS SITE, AUGUST 26, 1850,
TWO WEEKS BEFORE
CALIFORNIA STATEHOOD, DULY
ELECTED COMMON COUNCIL
CITY OF SANTA BARBARA, HELD
FIRST OFFICIAL MEETING.
HERE IN 1875, FIRST CITY HALL
ERECTED AND AREA
STILL CENTER OF CITY'S
GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES.
PLAZA SCENE EARLY SANTA
BARBARA FIESTAS AND
DE LA GUERRA HOUSE SET
STANDARDS FOR SANTA
BARBARA HOSPITALITY.
MARKER ERECTED BY CALIFORNIA
CENTENNIALS COMMISSION
IN CONSIDERATION WITH OLD
SPANISH DAYS IN SANTA BARBARA
AND SANTA BARBARA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY.
DEDICATED AUGUST 26, 1950



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Editor's Note:

With this issue, we extend gratitude and appreciation for the many years of graphic design of *The Capital* by Dan Levin. He has always been a pleasure to work with, and a great supporter of the Pearl Chase Society. We wish him all success in his adventures ahead.

We also offer a warm welcome to Lisa DeSpain, who has graciously stepped in to take on the job, and we look forward to working with her. Many thanks to both of these talented designers.

De la Guerra Plaza Remodel (continued from page 2)

Feedback included: worries about the homeless camping in it; make it simpler; make it more like the Harmer Adobe, which once occupied the site (a portion of its wall remains adjacent to City Hall); and get rid of it.

Many commissioners wanted the proposed restroom to be simple in design and were concerned it would also attract the homeless. Most commissioners were happy that new landscaping would be extended to the City Hall façade on Anacapa Street, although the design still needs work. Several commissioners said they would like to see at least some grass remain in the Plaza for its softening and cooling effect. Citing the lawns at the Courthouse, chair Grumbine noted that this is not Spain or Italy, it is a California interpretation of a plaza.

A commissioner asked if the Plaza is a State Historical Landmark. Tim Hazeltine of Post/Hazeltine Associates, said no, but the 1950 recognition of the Plaza [as described on the Plaza's plaque] would have to be considered. There was a lively exchange when Commissioner Edwin Lenvik asked if the architect's project complies with the period of significance of 1850-1924, which Post/Hazeltine had identified as the period of significance in their 2011 Historic Structures Sites Report for the Plaza.

He added, "You've never said if their design complies

with anything," and he wondered, if the project does not meet the period of significance, are you "possibly misleading" the applicant? Post/Hazeltine's Pamela Post responded, "We don't believe that," and noted that they are providing input and guidance to the RRM design, not a formal analysis. [Read the HSSR [HERE](#).]

Quite a few members of the public spoke including an architect who asked the HLC to pause the project until the Master Plan for State Street is complete. The majority of the public comments were opposed to the entire project or some parts of it. Commissioner Gordon remarked later that in early public workshops people were asked, "what do you like?" it was a blank slate, but now the public response to the proposal is "predominantly negative." [Written public comments submitted before the meeting can be viewed [HERE](#).]

Some commissioners were concerned that the remodel proposal would have a negative impact on the historic Plaza to the point where it might not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards or trigger an environmental impact report or conflict with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA.) The HLC voted to continue the concept review. As chair Grumbine said, "We need to get this right." Final approval is yet to come.

Historical Notes on De la Guerra Plaza

By Cheri Rae

The importance of De la Guerra Plaza as a center of civic life in Santa Barbara predates California statehood. Over the years there has been much attention paid to this spot, as these historical accounts indicate.

"The plaza between the city hall and the street will be beautified as a portion of the civic improvement schedule of the administration. The park commission is already working on this scheme of landscape decoration." ~ *Morning Press*, December 2, 1910

"And restoration of De la Guerra plaza and return of De la Guerra mansion and its surroundings to the

condition of the period of romantic history for which it stands the most conspicuous surviving representative. These, too, were advanced during the month toward actual construction and soon will be realized. The aesthetic and practical go hand in hand in the building of Santa Barbara. The practicability of the beautiful always is kept in sight. Dreams are coming true." ~ *Morning Press*, July 12, 1922

"The first shock struck the city at about 6:44 AM. Within an hour there was a little green tent standing in the Plaza on De La Guerra Street, with the Red Cross flag flying above it and an energetic group at work inside and out." ~ *American Red Cross Report*, 1926.

"The plaza remains today the ceremonial and civic center of Santa Barbara." ~ *Santa Barbara: El Pueblo Viejo*, 1986



Community outreach on Victory Gardens at De La Guerra Plaza, circa 1940s. Photo Edson Smith Photo Collection.

"After the 1925 earthquake, she [Harriet Moody] formed a business partnership with George Morrison, a City Engineer, and they built many neighborhoods in Goleta and Isla Vista." ~ *The Capital*, the Pearl Chase Society Newsletter, March 2016

[Ed. Note: George Morrison is the same Santa Barbara City Engineer whose "Plan of De la Guerra Plaza" was approved by the City Council on July 17, 1924, which is largely unchanged today.

Morrison and the City-approved 1924 plan of the Plaza are not mentioned in the 2011 Historic Structures/Sites Report and Cultural Landscape Report for the Plaza by Post/Hazeltine Associates. The drawing was included in Preservation Watch, January 2022.]



Photos from "When Disaster Strikes," *American Red Cross* (L) and *Edson Smith Photo Collection* (R).

Behind the Scenes with *Birth of Beauty* Filmmaker Jim Cutsinger

By Cheri Rae

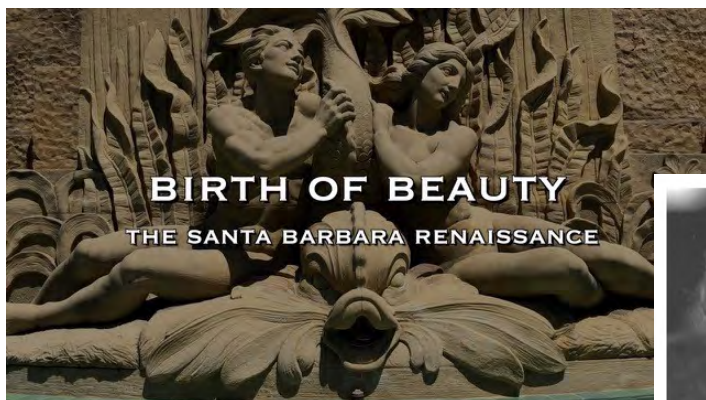
He's a native of Detroit, Michigan who, since 1981, has found home in Santa Barbara. "The first time I came here," he notes, "I knew this is where I wanted to live. And moving here was the best thing I ever did."

Filmmaker Jim Cutsinger, who heads Meadowgate Media Productions, is a man of wide-ranging talents and interests, including music, spirituality, nature, storytelling, history and the spirit of place. The book he's reading right now is *Patriot Chiefs*, an historical account of the great Native American chiefs. He read it holed up in a rustic mountain cabin, miles off a lonely dirt road, far from phones, computers and anything but the natural world.

His recent retreat was a way of decompressing and taking a bit of time off from the project that had consumed him for months, *Birth of Beauty*, the newly completed documentary about Santa Barbara's architectural renaissance in the 1920s.

The film was inspired by his work on the Pearl Chase Society's virtual Historic Homes Tour in 2021. Since it was impossible to host an in-person event due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Society commissioned the filmmaker to create a tour of homes on Plaza Rubio, giving them an online glimpse of the historic, architectural and natural charms of one of Santa Barbara's most beautiful settings.

But after completion, Jim realized there was much more to be said ~ and shown.



Board emeritus member Sue Adams and Marcella Simmons provided additional information about the architectural influence of the women who spearheaded the creation of Plaza Rubio, Jim began to see new possibilities for expanding the project. "They created a script about Margaret

Forsyth Andrews, Mary Craig and Caroline Hazard that brought greater depth to the story," he said. "And of course, you can't forget the influence of Bernhard Hoffmann and Pearl Chase."

As he expanded the work from a tour to a documentary, he became more enthralled with this significant moment in Santa Barbara history, and more determined to tell it. He reached out to a dozen of colleagues who shared a variety of perspectives. They provided input, offered suggestions, and brought a synergistic quality to the final cut.

"I love being part of a group and a shared purpose," stated Jim, "and I'm delighted to have the opportunity to share this work about the visionaries who created this special part of Santa Barbara."

Board president Steve Dowty noted, "The video Jim has created adds a new way for the Pearl Chase Society to communicate the importance of our community's history. And the Society is pleased to provide significant funding to produce the project."



Filmmaker Jim Cutsinger notes, "*Birth of Beauty* has 2 distinct editions. The original, *Birth of Beauty: The Santa Barbara Historic Homes Tour 2021*, is a virtual homes tour, and the sequel, *Birth of Beauty: The Santa Barbara Renaissance*, is an historical documentary about the women behind the architectural renaissance of the 1920s."

Photo by John McKinney



Birth of Beauty tells the story of Margaret Forsyth Andrews (L), Caroline Hazard (C) and Mary Craig (R) and their visionary influence in Santa Barbara. Courtesy photo