

GAINING HISTORIC STATUS NO EASY TASK IN EUGENE

Eugene has bulldozed hundreds of historic homes and commercial buildings over the years, many with architectural as well as historic value, and the destruction continues. But not all have been lost. So what is it like to get an old and significant home or office building designated as a City Historic Landmark (CHL) or other designation in Eugene? The benefits include tax credits and assessment freezes, low-interest loans for rehabilitation and more.

Owners of a circa-1920 bungalow at 1325 Jefferson St. in Eugene are going through the process of acquiring CHL designation, and a public hearing is on the agenda of the Historic Review Board this Thursday, with city staff recommending approval. The house has its original siding, doors and windows and interior woodwork, and it was once owned by the Skinner family.

“Our experience has been positive so far, but I would not describe it as either ‘simple’ or ‘straightforward,’” says Gina Graham, who owns the home with her mother, Lynne Graham.

The bungalow, known as the Skinner Rental House, is next door to the historic Skinner House, owned and preserved by David Atkin. Atkin got his CHL designation several years ago and has assisted the Grahams in going through a complex process that can take years of rewarding but also frustrating work.

The process in this case involved extensive research and documentation of the building’s ownership and usage over the years, including deciphering handwritten title transfers and city staff time in preparing a written report looking at the application’s compliance with historic designation criteria, various city policies, public agencies, the Jefferson/Westside Neighborhood Organization, the Metro Plan and more.

“I wish the process was more streamlined,” says Heather Kliever, chair of the Eugene Historic Review Board and registrar at the Lane County Historical Society. “If it had been someone other than Gina I think they may have given up entirely. The process shouldn’t be too easy, however. Then it loses its meaning as a special designation.”

Gina Graham describes confronting a “quagmire of language” at times in dealing with city bureaucracy but also appreciates the help she received from city planning staff. One indication that the rules need updating is the requirement to submit “slides” of photos.

Other cities in Oregon appear to have a less convoluted route to historic designation, Kliever says. “Eugene seems to look at codes as written in stone — difficult to change, a burden on tight budgets and short staff. Medford, Ashland and Jacksonville periodically revise codes and are very proactive in historic preservation.”

Kliever notes that Medford is currently going through a code revision process to protect its historic structures, and the city of Medford “offers yearly awards for individuals and business owners for preservation efforts.”

She says Jacksonville has a “super strong economy around its historic architecture, and Ashland has a strong cultural economy and was a Google eCity [demonstrating a strong online business community] two years in a row and celebrates its history almost on a daily basis.”

The Historic Review Board meets from 8:30 to 10:30 am Thursday, Feb. 19, at the Atrium Building, 99 W. 10th Ave. Comments on this application can also be emailed to jacob.l.callister@ci.eugene.or.us. — *Ted Taylor*

BILLS TO BAN TOXICS IN TOYS AND JUNK FOOD FOR THE POOR

For the first two weeks of the legislative session in Salem, Sen. Chris Edwards (D-Eugene) has focused all his attention on passing the clean fuels bill. But he also has several bills to foster a healthier environment for Oregonians in the works.

The next “big” bill Edwards says he’ll be working on is the Children’s Toxics bill (SB 478). He started work on the bill back in 2013, but he says supporters were unable to get it passed because not all Democrats voted for it. He says after several iterations, it is “a better bill now.”

Edwards’ concern about chemicals in toys made for children arose when he was shopping for one of his children’s birthday parties.

“The rubberized toys, the fake teeth ... all of it reeked,” he recalls. He says there’s a mass of research about known toxins in toys that can affect children’s neurological development. The bill he’s putting forth again would first re-

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- **Margaret Robertson**, sustainability instructor at LCC and author of the textbook *Sustainability Principles and Practice* will lecture at 5:30 pm Thursday, Feb. 19, at LCC’s Downtown Campus, 101 W. 10th Ave.

- A parent information night on **Smarter Balanced testing** and Common Core State Standards will be at 7 pm Thursday, Feb. 19, at South Eugene High School, 400 E. 19th Ave. An equivalent session in Spanish will be at 6:30 pm Monday, March 2, at the 4J Education Center, 200 N. Monroe St. The presentation will “cover why the state tests have changed, how they will be implemented, and how parents can support their students.” More information can be found at 4j.lane.edu.

- Noted author **Kristen Ohlson** will talk about her book *The Soil Will Save Us: How Scientists, Farmers and Foodies are Building Healthy Soil to Heal the Planet* at 6 pm Thursday, Feb. 19, at the Eugene Public Library.

- UO education prof **Jerry Rosiek** will speak on “Curriculum and the New Standardized Tests: Why Tests are a Poor Lever for School Improvement” at City Club of Eugene at noon Friday, Feb. 20, at the Downtown Athletic Club, 999 Willamette St. \$5 for non-members.

- A symposium on “**Living Data: Inhabiting New Media**” will be from 9 am to 5:45 pm Friday, Feb. 20, at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art on campus. Part of the Wayne Morse Center’s 2015 theme of Media and Democracy. Keynote speaker is Wendy Hui Kyong Chun of Brown University. See waynemorsecenter.uoregon.edu for schedule.

- Eugene Mayor **Kitty Piercy** and Ward 7 City Councilor **Claire Syrett** are holding a public outreach meeting from 5 to 6 pm Tuesday, Feb. 24, at Grocery Outlet, 2060 River Road. For more information on these monthly Mayor’s One-on-One meetings, call 682-8340.

- A discussion titled “**UNPLUGGED: Are Wireless Technologies Worth the Convenience?**” will be at 4 pm Wednesday, Feb. 25, at the LCC Main Campus Building 17 with a free screening of the documentary *Take Back Your Power*, with comments from director Josh del Sol via Skype and presentations by Dr. Paul Dart and Commissioner Pete Sorenson on health effects of electromagnetic radiation and cell tower regulations. Sponsored by the Lane Student Chapter of OSPIRG and the Lane Peace Center.

- **Revised urban growth boundary (UGB)** recommendations from the Envision Eugene process will be presented 4 pm Thursday, Feb. 19, in the Atrium Sloat Room, 99 W. 10th Ave. The City Council will also hold a public forum on the topic at 7:30 pm Monday, Feb. 23, at Harris Hall, 125 E. 8th Avenue, in order to hear from community members. The City Council will hold a work session Feb. 25 to provide direction to staff on the housing components of the formal UGB adoption package.



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