



City of Chula Vista

Staff Report

File#: 15-0016, **Item#:** 5.

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-083 OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHULA VISTA INITIATING AN APPLICATION FOR THE HISTORIC DESIGNATION OF THE ROHR INDUSTRIES DROP HAMMER

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Council adopt the resolution.

SUMMARY

An application for designation of publicly owned historical resources may be initiated through a recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and approval of the City Council. At the November 19, 2014 HPC meeting, the HPC found that there was enough information to support the potential historic significance of the Rohr Industries Drop Hammer (Drop Hammer) and therefore voted to recommend that the City Council initiate an application for historic designation of the Drop Hammer.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Development Services Director has reviewed the proposed project, to initiate an application for designation of the Rohr Industries Drop Hammer for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has determined that the project is exempt in accordance with CEQA Section 15331, Class 31, Historic Resources Restoration and Rehabilitation.

BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

On November 19, 2014, the Historic Preservation Commission voted (5-0-0-1) to recommend that the City Council initiate an application for designation of the Rohr Industries Drop Hammer. (Attachment 1)

DISCUSSION

Background

A drop hammer is a large metal forming device that was invented in the 1920's by Rohr Industries founder, Fred Rohr. This invention changed the aircraft industry by creating a quicker and more efficient way to manufacture the metal exterior of planes. In 2007, the Goodrich Corporation donated the Drop Hammer that is on display in Memorial Park as part of a partnership project between the Friends of the Library, the County of San Diego, and the City of Chula Vista (Attachment 2). Pursuant to Chula Vista Municipal Code section 21.04.090 (c) (ii.), the HPC recommended that the City Council direct staff to initiate an application for the historic designation of this publicly held resource (Attachment 3).

The Drop Hammer

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The Drop Hammer is 12' high, 6' wide, 8' long and weighs approximately 30,000 tons. As of 2007, it was one of 5 other drop hammers still in active operation at the Goodrich Corporation (formerly Rohr Industries) in Chula Vista. Documentation provided by the South Bay Historical Society (SBHS) shows that the Drop Hammer came on line at Rohr Industries in 1941 (Attachment 4).

Designation Process for Publicly Owned Resources

If the HPC believes that there is enough information to substantiate that a publicly owned resource may be historically significant they may make a recommendation to the City Council to initiate the designation process. If the City Council votes to initiate the application for historic designation, staff would commence the research and analysis necessary to determine if a resource meets the findings of fact and eligibility criteria for historic designation (Attachment 5). Once staff has enough information to make a recommendation on the historic significance of the resource, the item would be scheduled for consideration by the HPC. The HPC would hold a public hearing to review the evidence provided by both staff and the public. In most cases, for a resource to be designated, only HPC approval is required. However, in the case of designation of publicly owned resources, a recommendation from HPC and Council approval is required

Conclusion

It appears from preliminary information that the importance of the Drop Hammer to the aviation history remains significant, and that the Drop Hammer owned by the City of Chula Vista may be one of very few operable drop hammers of its type (Attachment 6). As stated above, if the Council initiates the designation process of the Drop Hammer, staff would then commence the research and analysis necessary to determine if the Drop Hammer meets the criteria for designation, and would return with a report and recommendation for final action by the HPC and City Council regarding whether to formally designate the Drop Hammer as historic or not.

DECISION-MAKER CONFLICT

No Property within 500 feet

Staff has reviewed the property holdings of the City Council and has found no property holdings within 500 feet of the boundaries of the property which is the subject of this action. Staff is not independently aware, and has not been informed by any City Council member, of any other fact that may constitute a basis for a decision maker conflict of interest in this matter.

LINK TO STRATEGIC GOALS

The City's Strategic Plan has five major goals: Operational Excellence, Economic Vitality, Healthy Community, Strong and Secure Neighborhoods and a Connected Community. Protecting historically significant resources meets both the Connected Community goal and the Healthy Community goal as it promotes civic pride and sustainability through the recognition, and preservation of the limited resources that contribute to Chula Vista's rich heritage.

CURRENT YEAR FISCAL IMPACT

An application for historic designation would require staff time to research and analyze the historic significance to determine whether the resource meets the findings of fact and eligibility criteria necessary for designation. Staff time and resources necessary to process the application for historic designation of the Drop Hammer would be met with existing staffing and resources approved in the

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FY15 DSD budget. Any necessary staff work needed to complete the designation application in FY15-16 would be covered by staffing resources proposed in FY15-16 base budget. No additional current year fiscal impact is anticipated.

ONGOING FISCAL IMPACT

Public Works currently has the responsibility for costs associated with maintenance of the Drop Hammer (e.g. costs for vandalism, such as fence damage and graffiti). At this time, staff does not anticipate any further on-going costs associated with the historic designation of the Drop Hammer. Should the Council ultimately designate the Drop Hammer, a historic plaque would likely be purchased for a one-time cost of approximately \$200.

ATTACHMENTS

1. November 19th, 2014 Historic Preservation Commission Minutes
2. October 9, 2007 Council Information Memo on the Drop Hammer Project
3. Chula Vista Municipal Code section 21.04.090 (3) (c) (ii.)
4. Drop Hammer Historical Information, South Bay Historical Society
5. CVMC 21.04.100 - Historical Designation Findings of Fact and Criteria
6. Goodrich Skyline Article on the Rohr Drop Hammer

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