

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**Minutes**  
**July 10, 2024**

**1. Meeting Called to Order**

The July 10, 2024 meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was called to order by Vice Chair Holly Norton at 6:12 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at 350 Kimbark Street.

**2. Roll Call**

Present were Commissioners Holly Norton, Susanne Sibley, Herb Fenster, Doug Barnert and Council Representative Mayor Joan Peck. Absent were Commissioners Steve Lane and Rick Jacobi. Also present were Principal Planner Jennifer Hewett-Apperson and recording secretary Maria Yost.

**3. Approval of the May 2, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Motion

Commissioner Barnert moved approval of the May 2, 2024 meeting minutes as submitted. Commissioner Fenster seconded the motion.

Vote

Minutes approved unanimously 4-0.

**4. Report from the Vice Chairperson**

No items to report.

**5. Communications from HPC Staff Liaison**

Jennifer spoke to the Commission about the following:

**1. Administrative Certificates of Appropriateness Issued**

- a. 502 Collyer Street: Roof replacement
- b. 501 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Aspen Center: Mortar repointing and brick repair
- c. 470 Main Street/Old St. Stephen's Church: Roof replacement, gutter and downspout replacement, window and fascia restoration
- d. 402 Kimbark Street/Central Presbyterian Church: Replacing rooftop HVAC units
- e. 545 Collyer: Window repair

**2. Demolition Review: 844 Baker Street**

Jennifer and Chairman Lane are in the process of reviewing a proposed demolition of an existing home in order to subdivide the lot for construction of two single-family homes. There is a cultural resources survey on file for the property from earlier efforts that were done as part

of the Historic Eastside Neighborhood survey work. She will have a full report on this item at next month's meeting.

### **3. Survey Plan Update**

The team from Ayres Associates (Josh Olhava & Tim Stroh) have conducted a windshield survey of Longmont and have put together a preliminary priority list that they will incorporate into the draft report. The draft report will be ready the week of August 5<sup>th</sup>. She will include the draft in the packet for the September HPC meeting.

### **4. HPC Meeting Time**

Meetings will continue to begin at 6:00 p.m. at least through September due to scheduling conflicts in City Council Chambers. If the board wishes to consider meeting at 6:00 p.m. the Commission will need to vote on this, and it would require an amendment to the Bylaws.

### **5. New Board Member**

Dawn Terrick has been appointed to the Historic Preservation Commission. City Council confirmed her appointment at their July 9, 2024 meeting. Her first meeting as a member of the Commission will be the August 1, 2024 meeting.

### **Commission Discussion**

Commissioner Barnert wanted to confirm that next month's meeting will be on Thursday, August 1<sup>st</sup>. Jennifer responded that they were meeting tonight because of the holiday last week. Meetings will be held on the first Thursday of each month going forward.

Vice Chair Norton thinks the Commission should vote on whether they wish to continue the 6pm start time or go back to starting meetings at 5pm once that time is available again in the Council Chambers. Jennifer will include this for discussion on next month's agenda.

Vice Chair Norton wanted to mention that she noticed a demolition in her neighborhood at 303 Sunset Street.

Jennifer said that property did not fall into their purview for demolition review. Demolition review only covers the original town plat. The building department sends over demolition requests for her to take a look at if a structure is in question.

### **6. Public invited to be heard – for topics other than public hearings**

Vice Chair Norton opened the public invited to be heard.

No one wished to speak.

Vice Chair Norton closed the public invited to be heard.

**7. Public Hearing**

**A. Local Historic Landmark Designation: Tower of Compassion**

*Action Requested: Decision*

**Staff Presentation**

Jennifer spoke to the Commission about the following:

- The Tower of Compassion was built in 1973 and officially meets the 50-year threshold for landmark designation. It is located in Kanemoto Park at 1151 S. Pratt Parkway.
- The Tower is historically significant relative to the theme of Ethnic Heritage / Asian. It was presented to the City of Longmont, as a gift from the Kanemoto family in appreciation for the community's empathy for the family, especially during the World War II era.
- The Tower is thought to be the first style Japanese Pagoda east of California.
- City Council has agreed to pursue landmark designation for the Tower.
- The Tower meets 6 of 8 criteria of the Criteria Review for Designation of Landmarks.
- The property was posted with a public hearing sign and a notice was provided in the newspaper. Staff has not received any inquiries to date on this proposal.

Jennifer mentioned that she has spoken with Damion Pechota from the History Colorado State Historian's Office, and they discussed the upcoming theme in 2026 for the Sesquicentennial of the State which is "Colorado Heritage for All" and is focused on indigenous and underrepresented communities. If the tower is approved for inclusion on the State Historic Register it would be the fourth site in the state associated with the Asian-American community in Colorado.

Once the tower is designated, and since Longmont is a Certified Local Government (CLG), they will be able to pursue funding through the State Historic Fund and other State funding sources to contribute towards the restoration and maintenance of the tower.

**Commission Options**

The following options are presented for consideration by the Historic Preservation Commission:

1. Recommend that the Tower of Compassion receive local historic landmark designation;
2. Recommend that local historic landmark designation not be granted for the Tower of Compassion;
3. Defer action on the request based on the need for additional information.

1 Staff Recommendation

2  
3 Staff recommends that the Commission recommend to City Council that the Tower of Compassion  
4 be designated a Longmont Local Historic Landmark.

5  
6 Commission Discussion

7  
8 Commissioner Fenster asked if there has been involvement of the federal government in the  
9 property itself.

10  
11 Jennifer said this is a local site that met the eligibility requirements for a local landmark  
12 designation. Once designated they can pursue State and National Register designation.

13  
14 Commissioner Fenster asked if the Department of Interior has indicated any interest in the tower  
15 and if they are aware that it exists.

16  
17 Jennifer said it has not been presented to them. She is not aware if they know that the tower exists.  
18 They recently completed the historic survey within the last year, and the tower just became eligible  
19 for listing in this last year for landmark designation.

20  
21 Commissioner Fenster asked if the Japanese government as it might be represented by the Embassy  
22 in Washington, D.C. is aware of the project. The reason he is asking is because it could affect how  
23 the project is funded both systematically annually and permanently if the Japanese government  
24 expressed an interest. There could potentially be some help from Japan and/or from the Interior  
25 Department for its maintenance and operation. He is disturbed to hear that they are totally unaware  
26 of the project.

27  
28 Jennifer thinks that is an excellent point and they haven't brought this project to their attention yet.  
29 The local designation is the first step from the City's perspective.

30  
31 Commissioner Fenster said the facility itself is an antique and has significant historical value. He  
32 thinks the Interior Department would have a sustaining and long-term interest and should be aware  
33 of what they are locally doing to designate the tower.

34  
35 Jennifer said once a structure reaches 50 years old it is eligible for designation both at the local  
36 and the federal level. Since the tower turned 50 last year, they can start going through the process  
37 of getting the tower recognized and start seeking additional funding sources beyond the City's  
38 general fund. She added that the Interior Department will be aware once they put forth an  
39 application for the National Register designation.

40  
41 Vice Chair Norton explained that there are individuals within the Department of the Interior that  
42 are very aware of the tower and are aware of many historic sites in the State. The National Register  
43 Program is run through the National Park Service which is part of the Department of Interior.  
44 Regardless of their awareness, they don't become officially interested until a community brings  
45 forth the nomination. Once the Commission forwards the recommendation for local designation  
46 of the tower to City Council for approval, and as the owners of the property if they approve it, the

1 Commission can put together the documentation package to send to the Department of Interior.  
2 Then it goes through History Colorado which is the conduit to get this to the National Register in  
3 Washington, D.C. She thinks that there are individuals who have been waiting for this property to  
4 be 50 years old and will be very happy to see this come across their desk.

5  
6 Commissioner Fenster reiterated that he is disturbed that the Department of Interior appears to be  
7 unaware of the property.

8  
9 Vice Chair Norton said there is no nexus for them to have any involvement until the City of  
10 Longmont requests that involvement.

11  
12 Commissioner Fenster suggested that some research be done because he is aware of other instances  
13 particularly relating to facilities that owe their origins in or around World War II where the Interior  
14 Department has an ongoing interest and is a potential source for on-going funding and capital  
15 funding. He feels as a matter of courtesy the Japanese government through the Embassy should be  
16 informed of the existence of the facility and what steps are being taken for its preservation.

17  
18 Commissioner Barnert complimented Jennifer on the quality of the packet for the tower. With  
19 respect to the steps for the tower, he feels they should get the Commission's recommendation to  
20 the owner of the property. It would then be the owner's decision with respect to landmark status  
21 and how much further they want to go in the process and who they would want to make aware. He  
22 said he respects Commissioner Fenster's idea but doesn't think they should get ahead of  
23 themselves by reaching out to all different levels of government. He said that should be up to City  
24 Council to reach out, and to let the Commission know what role they would want them to have if  
25 any going forward. He asked Jennifer if after they make the recommendation to City Council if  
26 they would have any further role in the process.

27  
28 Jennifer said there's a likelihood that this could come back to the Commission as they pursue  
29 various grant funding and if they need Commission authorization for any work done on the tower.  
30 She mentioned that the Commission's recommendation is tentatively on the City Council's agenda  
31 for August 13<sup>th</sup> and the actual public hearing and vote would be September 10<sup>th</sup>. She will send out  
32 an email to the Commission once those dates are finalized.

33  
34 Commissioner Fenster's concern is that the facility is so valuable both locally and nationally given  
35 its World War II relationship that it needs all of the protection and funding that both the Local and  
36 National Government might be able to provide. He thinks that the State Department would also  
37 have an interest and believes that they shouldn't wait any longer to inform them that the tower  
38 exists.

39  
40 Vice Chair Norton suggested that their recommendation to City Council should also include that  
41 the Commission feels there is a sense of urgency to get the National Register nomination moved  
42 forward. She mentioned that she has recently visited the tower and it looks to be in great condition.  
43 She asked if there is any urgency in terms of funding for capital construction or should they not be  
44 concerned since the tower is in good repair and maintenance.

1 Jennifer will confirm this with the facility maintenance folks in the Parks Department. Her  
2 understanding is that the tower is in good condition. She knows there was some damage sustained  
3 during the 2013 floods and that damage has been repaired. They would need to work closely with  
4 Parks since the property is owned by the City and managed by Parks and Recreation. She added  
5 that from a policy standpoint it would be up to City Council to determine how far they wish to  
6 pursue coordination with the State and Federal Government.

7  
8 Mayor Peck said it is correct that this has to come before City Council first, and if Council makes  
9 a motion to direct staff to inform the Secretary of Interior then it would come back to staff. She  
10 feels that they are on the right step and likes what Jennifer has done to this point. Council could  
11 direct staff on the first or second reading to inform the Department of the Interior that they have  
12 asked for local historical landmark designation.

13  
14 Jennifer said the National Register nomination goes through the Department of the Interior via  
15 History Colorado. The State would have to say that this would be National designation worthy.

16  
17 Mayor Peck suggested that she can ask for a historical landmark designation letter to be written  
18 from the City. She will talk to the City Manager about this process going forward.

19  
20 Commissioner Fenster's recommendation is that the Department of Interior and the State  
21 Department be informed now of the existence of the facility and the potential interest of preserving  
22 it intact and providing permanent funding for its preservation and access. He said the tower is in  
23 an area where a lot of development goes on and it could easily be compromised. Based on his  
24 experience there is a reason for the Department of Interior to formally express an interest in its  
25 preservation so that any attempt to compromise it can be headed off.

26  
27 Commissioner Barnert said he opposes the recommendation from Commissioner Fenster. He  
28 thinks they need to get their ducks in a row and that they are not there yet. They don't know how  
29 Council is going to vote on this even though he suspects they will give it a positive vote. He said  
30 there are a lot of things that need to be done before they start reaching out to other potential  
31 stakeholders, and through the administrative process they need to be extremely careful that they  
32 don't get ahead of themselves.

### 33 34 **Public Hearing**

35  
36 Vice Chair Norton opened the public invited to be heard.

### 37 38 **Matthew Popkin, 852 Missouri Avenue, Southmoor Park**

39  
40 Matthew lives across the street from the Tower of Compassion in Kanemoto Park. He and his  
41 neighbors find the tower to be a distinguished and beautiful part of the neighborhood. He said he  
42 is here tonight to say that the tower is absolutely a historically significant landmark. He feels it is  
43 a cultural and physical reminder of compassion despite extreme xenophobia which has not  
44 disappeared but taken different forms in recent years and decades. The visual reminder is  
45 meaningful to the community, their neighborhood and to the City. It is meaningful toward Asian-

Americans and many others who have experienced xenophobia and other forms of discrimination. The local and State history surrounding the tower's original construction is something that he hopes everyone in Longmont understands one day. He said he has definitely learned more about the tower from this meeting.

Matthew wanted to flag that the Torii Gate associated with the site is meaningful and significant also. It is referenced in the packet on pages 23-25 of Attachment 2. In Japanese culture, his understanding is that the Torii Gate marks the boundary between the ordinary space and the sacred special space of these types of sites. The gate is a distinct and culturally significant feature that meaningfully complements the Tower of Compassion. He wanted to share this because if the gate was constructed later from the tower that might render it ineligible from funding. He thinks it might be prudent to stress more clearly in the application at the State and Federal levels that this makes the site even more distinguished. If the gate was not maintained it would not only be a shame but would detract from the cultural and historical significance of the tower. He said it is not just a prominent feature, but a defining feature of the park with the tower and gate combined and a clear demarcation of historical significance. Presuming this designation would increase opportunities for funding to maintain the Tower of Compassion and Torii Gate and any other associated features, he strongly encourages the Commission to support the application for historic landmark designation at the local level and hopefully more advanced levels down the road.

Vice Chair Norton closed the public invited to be heard.

Vice Chair Norton thanked Matthew for his comments and for bringing their attention to the importance and the significance of the Torii Gate. The Commission will take this into consideration as they move forward with the State Register and National Register nomination information.

### **Commission Discussion**

Commissioner Fenster asked if the current planning provided a publicly owned perimeter that would protect the site generally from further development.

Jennifer explained for a landmark designation they apply it to the boundary of the property unless there's a reason to limit it to the structures. The cultural resource survey shows the legal description is for Lot 2, Kanemoto Park, Burlington Elementary School Subdivision with a note that the legally defined parcel encompasses but does not exceed the land historically associated with the property. She will confirm with staff in the Planning Department as far as what the extent of the legal description would be, and if the legal description in the survey report is adequate.

Commissioner Fenster said that the area is a fairly intense development, and he thinks someone needs to make a determination of what a protective perimeter would be for the property because it could require further acquisitions of the property.

Jennifer said the tower and gate are within Kanemoto Park which is a large city-owned parcel. The property has excellent protections and the likelihood that someone could come in and develop off portions is highly unlikely.

Commissioner Barnert referred to page 32 of the packet where it talks about the “Assessment of the physical integrity related to significance.” He feels that the assessment is inclusive and speaks to the issue, and that it also appears clear in the description that boundaries were intended.

Vice Chair Norton thanked Jennifer for the excellent packet of information for the tower and thank you also to Carl McWilliams for the assessment of the site.

#### Motion

**COMMISSIONER BARNERT MOVED TO APPROVE THE DESIGNATION OF THE TOWER OF COMPASSION AS A LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK. COMMISSIONER FENSTER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

#### Vote

**MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY 4-0.**

### **8. New Business**

No new business.

### **9. Prior Business**

Prior business items were discussed in Communications from HPC Staff Liaison. No additional prior business.

### **10. Comments from HPC Commission**

No comments from the Commission.

### **11. Comments from City Council Representative**

Mayor Peck said she has enjoyed the conversation and time spent on this property because it is an amazing structure. She and her family lived off Missouri Avenue across from the tower for 4 years. She mentioned that she will be going to Chino, Japan next March for the cities 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and would like to invite Jimmy Kanemoto, and also give him a copy of the historic preservation documents for the tower. The Kanemoto family along with former Mayor Leona Stoecker introduced Chino, Japan as a “sister city.” She said the Kanemoto’s have been a huge influence in Longmont and thinks a landmark designation for the tower is very appropriate and exciting.

### **12. Adjournment**



**Commissioner Fenster moved adjournment of the meeting. Commissioner Sibley seconded the motion. No one was opposed. The meeting was adjourned at 6:57 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

HPC Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson  
my/jh 07/10/24