

Estanislau, Robin

From: k s <iamalmira@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 21, 2019 2:19 PM
To: Peterson, Erik; Semeta, Lyn; Posey, Mike; Hardy, Jill; Carr, Kim; Brenden, Patrick; Delgleize, Barbara
Cc: Fikes, Cathy; Estanislau, Robin
Subject: Please Reject H Item 19-1074!!!
Attachments: PLAQUE ASSESSMENT.docx

**SUPPLEMENTAL
COMMUNICATION**

Meeting Date: 10-21-2019

I have only just returned from a conference, else I'd have written sooner.

Agenda Item No.: #32 (19-1074)

Comments Re: Council Agenda Item 32. #19-1074. October 21, 2019

I have read, with deep concern, the deceptive presentation regarding this item and grossly misleading statement "a review has already been conducted by the Historic Resources Board". Certainly, Mr. Posey has not been properly or fully informed.

In particular,

- The HRB minutes presented from SIX YEARS AGO, documented ONLY the belief at that time that the plaque contained inaccuracies – NOT what those inaccuracies were and certainly did NOT review or approve any proposed language for a replacement. Any statement to the contrary is FALSE.
- The email from Mr. David Wentworth dated August 20, 2013, FOUR YEARS AGO, was a personal one. It was not an official communication from the HRB and was not meant to be. Any assertion to the contrary is FALSE.

In keeping with its mission as defined by Council, the Historic Resources Board should review any and all proposed language containing historic information or content for permanent public placement. The members of the HRB include award-winning historians, authors, educators and others with particular qualifications to do this work. Two of us have graduate degrees in the field and two of us are qualified under guidelines established by Federal Law to evaluate historic infrastructure. I am unaware of any other group in Huntington Beach whose members are similarly qualified. In any case, the Historic Resources Board is the official board appointed for this purpose.

Further, NO PLAQUE OF THE TYPE PROPOSED SHOULD BE ALLOWED IN THE CITY, especially within miles of the coastline. A detailed report which was previously submitted to the city staff some time ago is attached. It documents the short life span and predictable failure of plaques with photographic inserts because they are only imprinted on aluminum which corrodes quickly when exposed to ocean air. The Golden Bear plaque delaminated and fell apart. The plaque at Triangle Park is similarly corroding as well. No amount of covering the surface with any wax or chemical will delay this and will actually cause further damage.

These kinds of plaques may look attractive to begin with, but quickly decay into a scar on the historic places they are intended to celebrate.

The people of Huntington Beach and our guests deserve appropriately worded plaques made of appropriate materials.

Please direct that this matter be **PROPERLY** referred to the Historic Resources Board for evaluation and recommendations.

Respectfully,

Kathie A. Schey

Golden Bear Plaque – Corrosion and Repair Assessment

On May 9, 2016, the plaque marking the former location of the fabled Golden Bear – one of the most iconic and enduring historic sites in Huntington Beach – was observed to be severely corroded. In place at that time less than two years, it was a startling discovery. Authorities on this topic, including National Park Service publications and staff as well as the firm from which the plaque was obtained, have been consulted to determine possible repairs or mitigations. The following report summarizes the resulting findings.

Problem: Corrosion

Corrosion was first brought to the attention of the HRB and the Planning Department when it was first reported on May 13, 2016. While the entire plaque appeared to be dirty and worn (Image 1), the aluminum insert featuring an etched photographic image was in particularly imminent danger from corrosion. Chemical deposits and resultant decay were very evident primarily along the bottom but extending up the sides and along the top of the insert (Image 2). The edges of the insert were compromised (Image 3), they were curling up and the plaque was clearly one “weather event” away from destruction despite the fact that it had occupied this location for less than two years.

Subsequently, within a short time, the plaque was vandalized by someone inscribing graffiti into the remains of the insert – easily done in the soft surface of aluminum. Shortly thereafter, the insert disappeared in its entirety. Currently, the plaque remains in place, bereft of the insert. It is an eyesore that does no credit to the Golden Bear or to our City. Thousands of tourists, a number of whom are familiar with the widespread fame of the Golden Bear, are greeted with a tragic demonstration of our city’s inability to celebrate our remarkable past.



THE GOLDEN BEAR

THIS PLAQUE MARKS THE ENTRANCE TO THE GOLDEN BEAR, A STAR STudded RESTAURANT DESTINED TO BECOME A ROCK N' ROLL NIGHTCLUB.

CHEF HARRY BAKRE OPENED THE GOLDEN BEAR CAFE ON MAIN STREET IN 1903. BAKRE WANTED A BEACHFRONT LOCATION. IN 1928 HE BOUGHT TWO LOTS ON WHAT IS NOW PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY. THAT SAME YEAR BAKRE COMMISSIONED FAMED ARCHITECT MORRIS W. BISHOP TO CREATE THE CALIFORNIA ECLECTIC/SPANISH REVIVAL MASTERPIECE. SILVER SCREEN LEGENDS, MARY PICKFORD, ERROL FLYNN AND JOHN BARRYMORE WERE FREQUENT GUESTS.

DEL KAUFFMANN ESTABLISHED THE GOLDEN BEAR AS A FOLK MUSIC CLUB IN 1963. A YOUNG DAVID CROSBY WAS THE FIRST OF MANY ACTS, BUT BY 1966 KAUFFMANN WAS BANKRUPT AND CLOSED THE CLUB.

GEORGE NIKAS REOPENED THE CLUB THE SAME YEAR AND BOOKED MORE DIVERSE ACTS LIKE JAKES MOPLIN, NEIL YOUNG, AND LENNY BRUCE.

IN 1974 RICHARD, CAROLE AND CHARLES BABRACKI PURCHASED THE GOLDEN BEAR. THE BABRACKIS KEPT THE MUSIC ALIVE WITH AN ECLECTIC LIST OF STARS INCLUDING VAN HALEN, JACOB RONSTADT, THE RAMONES, ROBIN WILLIAMS AND STEVE MARTIN. FIVE YEARS LATER AN UNKNOWN LOCAL ARTIST PAINTED A LARGE MURAL ON THE OUTSIDE WALL. THAT ARTIST WAS WYLAND WHO BECAME FAMOUS FOR HIS WHALE MURALS.

THE LAST PERFORMANCE ROCKED THE GOLDEN BEAR INTO HISTORY ON JANUARY 23, 1988. LATER THAT YEAR THE BEAR WAS DEMOLISHED TO MAKE WAY FOR DOWNTOWN RE-DEVELOPMENT.

DEDICATED BY THE CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH AND
THE HUNTINGTON BEACH HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD

2014

Image 1. Corrosion damage is evident on the plaque and especially to the edges of the aluminum insert.



Image 2. The edges of the aluminum insert are severely corroded, especially on the bottom and sides.



Image 3. Corrosion of the aluminum photoengraved insert has clearly led to delamination.

Remediation or Repair: an Impossibility

In the time between identifying the severe corrosion and the ultimate loss of the plaque insert itself, the advice of experts was sought. One high ranking employee of the National Park Service whose job focuses on preservation of bronze memorials, replied simply “You have plaque problems!” His authorship of numerous guidelines for bronze plaque placement and maintenance are widely available.

The plaque in question was purchased from Socal Bronze, a company widely recognized by the NPS, numerous historic preservation groups throughout the nation, and a host of governmental entities within California.

This very creditable entity refused to warranty this plaque (and others) because of placement in our marine environment. In fact, they warned the individuals who took it upon themselves to purchase the plaque, that it was wholly unacceptable in a marine environment where salt air would clearly render the aluminum insert

worthless in a very short period of time. This has been confirmed by an email from one of the two individuals who made this decision.

As such, our marine environment renders this type of plaque completely unacceptable. Salt air and aluminum do not mix. The company further shared that no amount of waxing, clear coating or other mitigating measures will do more than extend the life of a replacement insert for anything but the briefest time. Their advice now - as it was given then- is that this is a completely unacceptable plaque type for our environment, however visually pleasing it might be. It cannot be repaired. It must be replaced with an appropriate solid bronze plaque with no aluminum insert.

Further, there can be no reuse of the existing plaque in making a new one. The foundry is located in Pennsylvania. The cost of shipping the plaque back to be melted down and remade is prohibitive. Some local recycler would likely purchase it for the metal value, but no other use can be made of it for replacement purposes.

Additional Follow-up and Concerns

Plaque deterioration is the direct result of an improper choice of plaque type for placement in our marine environment. While some locations are more sheltered than others slowing the process, it is not reversible making these types of plaques inappropriate choices for Huntington Beach.

In fact, the other plaques of this type are also eroding. Triangle Park's sign is showing similar corrosion and delamination. (Image 4) Since it is located a bit further from the shore and is somewhat sheltered from the salty winds by some buildings, it is corroding more slowly. However, it is corroding irreversibly. Further, because of the angle at which it is placed, moisture gathers along the bottom edge where it remains to eat deeply through the aluminum insert. Any efforts to polish or rub the corrosion will only distress the plaque further, removing even more aluminum.

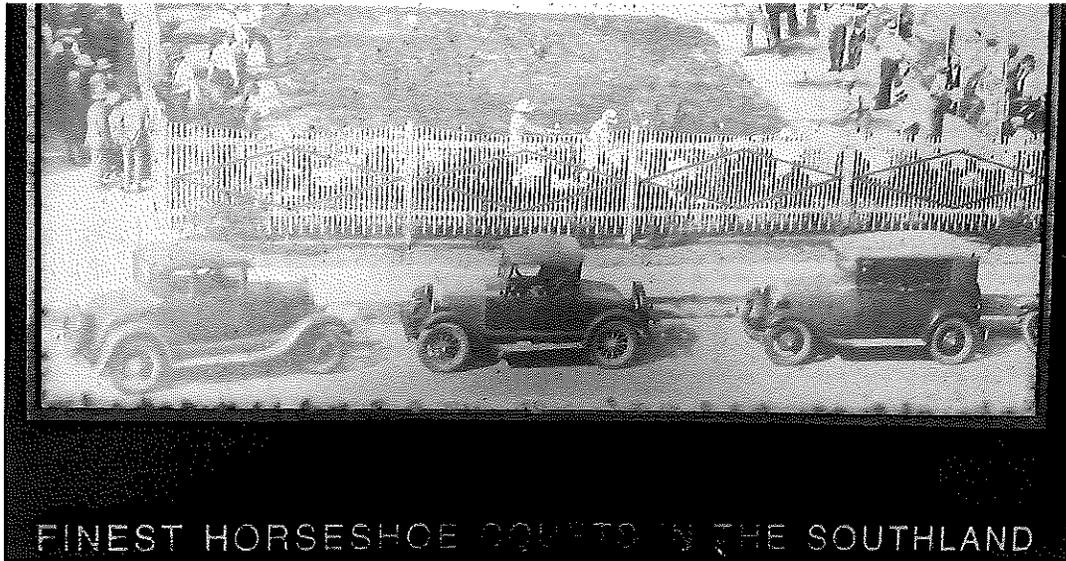


Image 4. Corrosion of plaque inset at Triangle Park.

Conclusion

The Golden Bear Plaque must be replaced with a plaque of suitable materials for the location. Repair or remediation of these plaques is not an option. No clear coating or waxing will prevent their ultimate decay in only a few years - the Golden Bear lasted for two.

Further, plaques of this type should not be placed in any exterior location in Huntington Beach. While the imagery they present is appealing and informative, only solid cast types should be used.