



DATE: April 28, 2014

AGENDA ITEM # 2

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Historical Commission
FROM: Sierra Davis, Staff Liaison
SUBJECT: Historic Preservation Award

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider nominations for the 2014 Los Altos Historic Preservation Award

BACKGROUND

The Los Altos Historic Preservation Award was adopted by the City Council in May 2012 with the intent of recognizing individuals, groups, organizations or projects that exemplify the spirit of historic preservation in the City of Los Altos. Nominees should demonstrate a dedication to historic preservation in the City of Los Altos within at least one of the following criteria:

1. Demonstration of pioneering or innovative efforts in historic preservation or education;
2. Conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation;
3. Public Benefit received (educational, beautification, advocacy, etc.); and/or
4. Impact to the City of Los Altos.

The purpose of the award is to encourage public knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the City's past, and foster civic and neighborhood pride and sense of identity based upon the recognition and use of the City's historic resources.

DISCUSSION

One nomination was received by staff, Margaret Thompson, nominated by Denise Welsh.

The Commission should consider the written evidence and oral testimony from members of the public before voting on the award recipient. The award recipient will be recognized with a Mayor's Proclamation at the City Council meeting on May 13, 2013.

Attachments:

- A. Margaret Thompson Nomination



City of Los Altos

2014 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD NOMINATION

I am nominating MARGARET THOMPSON for the 2014 Historic Preservation Award.

Describe the reasons why the nominee should receive the Historic Preservation Award and how the nominee meets the following criteria:

- 1. Demonstration of pioneering or innovative efforts in historic preservation or education.
- 2. Conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation.
- 3. Public Benefit received (educational, beautification, advocacy, etc.).
- 4. Impact to the City of Los Altos.

Please see attached
letter from Denise Welsh
letter from Los Altos History Museum

If applicable, submit copies of letters of commendation or any other supporting documentation (not required). Attach additional sheets as needed.

Nominated by: Denise Welsh Date: 4/16/2014

In order to officially submit a nomination for the 2014 Historic Preservation Award, please submit one copy of all necessary documentation to the Historical Commission staff liaison Sierra Davis. Materials can be submitted at City Hall, 1 North San Antonio Road, Los Altos, CA 94022. All nominations must be submitted by **Thursday, April 17, 2014 at 5:00 pm.**

At the April 28, 2014 meeting, the Historical Commission will hold a vote to determine the recipient of the 2014 Historic Preservation Award. The 2014 Historic Preservation Award winner will be recognized by the City Council with a proclamation at their meeting on May 13, 2014.

Nomination of Margaret Thompson for the
Historical Preservation Award
2014

I would like to submit for the 2014 Historic Preservation Award Margaret Thompson.

Ms. Thompson has been a resident of Los Altos since 1950 and has been an active member in many local committees serving the Los Altos Area since then. In 2008, she was recognized by the joint Los Altos/Los Altos Hills committee for a Community Volunteer Award.

Through the years, Ms. Thompson's volunteer work has included many activities that meet the criteria for the Historic Preservation Award:

- Her innovative effort to enlighten the youth about their hometown and its history with an Annual Essay Contest and offer opportunity to the students from 3rd through 6th to achieve recognition outside of sports has resulted in a 30 year long tradition that bears her name.
- In 1977, Ms. Thompson joined the auxiliary for the History Museum when Marion Grimm recruited her to offer her journalistic talents to publicize their fundraisers. Since then, she has drawn on her education background to connect the museum to the Community through education.
- Margaret Thompson served as a Commissioner on the Historical Commission (1982 – 1989), dedicated to the preservation and the restoration of historical buildings and sites, for seven years.
- As a Historical Commissioner and pioneering member of the team that launched the History Museum, she created the Essay Contest as a combined effort merging the two entities towards a mutually beneficial awareness of their common interests.
- Ms. Thompson was also involved with the development of the government segment of the History Museum's fourth grade tour

program to help student understand the Civic activities of the local, County and State Governments.

The greatest tribute is from a former Los Altos fourth grader who wrote in 2008 that the participation in the essay contest and her 'surprise win' boosted her nine year old self's confidence and resulted in improving her academics immensely. She wrote the letter as a student at Stanford University.

Margaret Thompson also volunteers at the Christ Episcopal Church, is a member of AAUW and a 25 year participant in the Morning Forum. Margaret Thompson's contributions to our town, her gracious demeanor and her legacy as an educator and a proponent of local history are immeasurable. She is truly one of the town's great treasures.

Denise Welsh
Commissioner
2014

History inspires imagination,
stimulates thought and
transforms society.

The Los Altos History Museum
preserves and shares our local
history to enrich our community
and to shape a more
informed future.

Board of Directors

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Karen Purtich, Anne Roberts,

Sande Stuart, Ginger Summit,

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A past essay contest winner,
Stanford student Jill Wurzburg
remembered in 2009:

"...being really excited about
the topic for the annual
Margaret Thompson historical
essay contest.

"I knew immediately that I
wanted to write about my
great-great-grandmother, who
organized aid for Mexican
immigrants working on the
railroad in Wichita, Kansas.

"It helped me **learn the
importance of history on a
personal level**, which I later
took with me to other history
classes...

"[winning the essay contest]
boosted my nine-year-old self's
confidence tremendously. **My
academics improved greatly**
during the course of my fourth
grade experience, and
**education has been a priority
in my life since then.**"

April 15, 2014

Sierra Davis, Liaison
Los Altos Historical Commission
City of Los Altos
1 North San Antonio Road
Los Altos, CA 94022

RE: Historic Preservation Awards

Dear Sierra:

On behalf of the Los Altos History Museum and its Education Committee, it is with great pleasure that we recommend **Margaret Thompson** for the 2014 Historic Preservation Award.

Margaret served as a Historical Commissioner from 1982-89. During her time of service, she believed that local students should know more about the history of their community and be rewarded for writing about that history. Margaret felt that many students were recognized for their *athletic* abilities, but there were few *academic* awards. She thought it very important that student writing be honored. Thus, the Historical Commission began the Margaret Thompson Essay Contest 30 years ago!

The Museum's Education Committee, along with the Historical Commission, administers the essay contest every year. Margaret has continued to be an integral part of the contest by attending the Education Committee meetings in the fall and helping with the selection of the topic. Her knowledge of the history of the contest and her input regarding topics has been invaluable!

Each May, Margaret always attends the ice cream social held for the winning students. The number of students participating annually has continued to grow; this year there were over 500 essays submitted resulting in 15 winners, 3 for each grade level participating (Grades 3-6). Without Margaret's interest and involvement, the contest might well have stopped, instead of experiencing this growth.

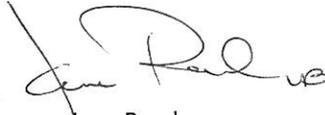
In May, 2009, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the contest, Margaret personally obtained a trophy to annually recognize the school with the most winners. The trophy passes each year to the winning school, helps publicize the contest and encourages students to participate.

In 1950, Margaret and her husband, a Navy pilot, Commander "Tommy" Thompson, along with their two children, Chris and Susie, moved to Los Altos. Margaret was widowed in 1960 and raised her children as a single parent. Besides her History Museum membership, Margaret's volunteer activities include 45 years with AAUW, 25 years with the Morning Forum, and as past Historian for Christ Episcopal Church, where Margaret's archives were instrumental to their centennial book last year.

Again, it is with great pleasure that we recommend Margaret Thompson. We feel she would be the perfect recipient for this award!

Sincerely,


Anne Roberts
Chair, Education Committee


Jane Reed
President, Board of Directors

April 17, 2014

The Los Altos Historical Commission
1 N. San Antonio Road
Los Altos, CA 94022

Dear Los Altos Historical Commission Chair Bishop and Commissioners:

I would like to add my enthusiastic support for Margaret Thompson's selection as the Los Altos Historical Commission's 2014 recipient of its Historic Preservation Award.

A former Los Altos Historical Commissioner and past Chair myself, I have participated in many ice cream socials recognizing the winners of the annual Margaret Thompson Historical Essay Contest. This program, which Margaret initiated over 30 years ago, is a wonderful way to introduce children to both local history and essay writing. It has become a beloved tradition in our community that is a tribute to her vision as well as a lasting legacy. Through the decades, Margaret has stayed involved with the program she created. It's always a pleasure to see her at the event.

I can't think of a more deserving recipient of the Historic Preservation Award, and I hope you all agree and select her as your 2014 honoree.

Best,

Val Carpenter
Los Altos City Councilwoman
Mayor of Los Altos 2011-12 & 2007-08
vccarpenter@gmail.com
650-941-0487 phone/FAX

