

**KING COUNTY LANDMARKS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES***

*August 27, 2020
Zoom (Call-in) Conference
Seattle, Washington
(Approved 09/24/2020)*

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Poppi Handy, Chair; Caroline Lemay, Vice-Chair; Ella Moore, Rebecca Ossa, Amber Earley, Cristy Lake

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED: Amy Blue, David Pilgrim

STAFF PRESENT: Sarah Steen

GUESTS: Sherrie Evans, Keith Watson, Candace Tucker

CALL TO ORDER: Handy called the meeting to order at 4:34pm. Introductions of commissioners and staff were made.

Convene BLACK DIAMOND LANDMARKS COMMISSION

SPECIAL COMMISSIONER: Keith Watson (*recused*)

CITY STAFF PRESENT: None

GUESTS: None

PUBLIC HEARING: Black Diamond Depot Landmark Nomination

Steen gave a presentation on the history of the Black Diamond Depot within the context of historical coal mining and railroad development history of the Green River District. She detailed the mining settlement, building construction and ownership history of the depot, and noted design details of the depot as well as later alterations, renovations and use changes. She concluded by relating the significance of the depot directly to the designation criteria. Steen also introduced both Sherrie Evans, primary researcher of the nomination and representative the Black Diamond Historical Museum, and Keith Watson, president of the Black Diamond Historical Museum and new Special Commissioner. Both were in attendance to support landmark designation.

Handy asked if the applicants wished to speak on the nomination being considered. Keith Watson said he appreciated the factual staff presentation on the depot. He noted the educational function of the museum, saying they regularly hosted visitors from around the world, with the depot building itself being an important memory of those who worked in the area. Sherrie Evans said she was born and raised in Black Diamond. Her grandfather was a coal miner who worked as fire boss on the 13th level of Mine 14, the largest mine in the U.S. The 13th level was 2000 feet down, so its quite an important family connection that she is passionate about preserving. Much of her family were Welsh, with a rich coal mining history they are all proud of. Sherrie says she is also very proud of the work all the Museum volunteers do to maintain the facility, and it will be an honor to

*May include minutes for cities who have interlocal historic preservation agreements with King County.

be recognized as a landmark. Handy said her connection to the building was impressive. Watson said in 1939 when he was a boy his father was the principal of the high school in town. The family left, moving to Berkeley, California, then moved back to Black Diamond after WWII. So he also has a strong connection and historical tie to the area.

Lemay asked when the depot became the Black Diamond Historical Museum. Keith said the grand opening was in 1982, but restoration efforts began in 1976. Questions arose about when the depot was in use as a café, and when the railroad stopped coming through town. Sherrie said the railroad stopped service in 1925, and the building had various uses after that, eventually falling into disrepair. Local community member Carl Steiart and his wife Anne took an interest in restoring the depot, forming the Black Diamond Historical Society and organizing efforts to rehab the depot for use as a Museum.

Moore asked what the population was of Black Diamond, and how it has changed with recent residential developments. Keith said the population was at 4200, and nearby developers sell about 40 houses a month within city limits. Estimates are about 20,000 population at the end of the buildout. Keith noted that Black Diamond has been diverse historically, and it is becoming so again. The city now has one school and is projected to have 7 or 8 more in the coming years. The museum hosts school groups regularly, both in Black Diamond and on trips to the nearby ghost mining town of Franklin. Discussion continued on Franklin's connection to Black Diamond, and on local history tours of the area.

Handy asked if there was any public comment. Hearing none, she closed the public hearing portion of the meeting and called for commissioner discussion. Lemay said she was surprised it wasn't already a landmark. Especially considering all the development in the area, its important to get this building protected and recognized. Handy commended Keith, Sherrie and the Black Diamond Historical Museum for their stewardship of the depot and their educational efforts.

Handy/Moore moved to approve landmark designation for the Black Diamond Depot under Criterion A1 and A3, with the following boundaries and features of significance: all exterior portions of the depot, and all of the land area within the parcel boundaries (for new construction). The motion passed 6-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m.