



STAFF REPORT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING DATE: 05/28/14

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING

ITEM DESCRIPTION: Report by Department of Planning regarding historic and archaeological resources in local media

BACKGROUND

No relevant case history.

ANALYSIS

Please enjoy the attached articles.

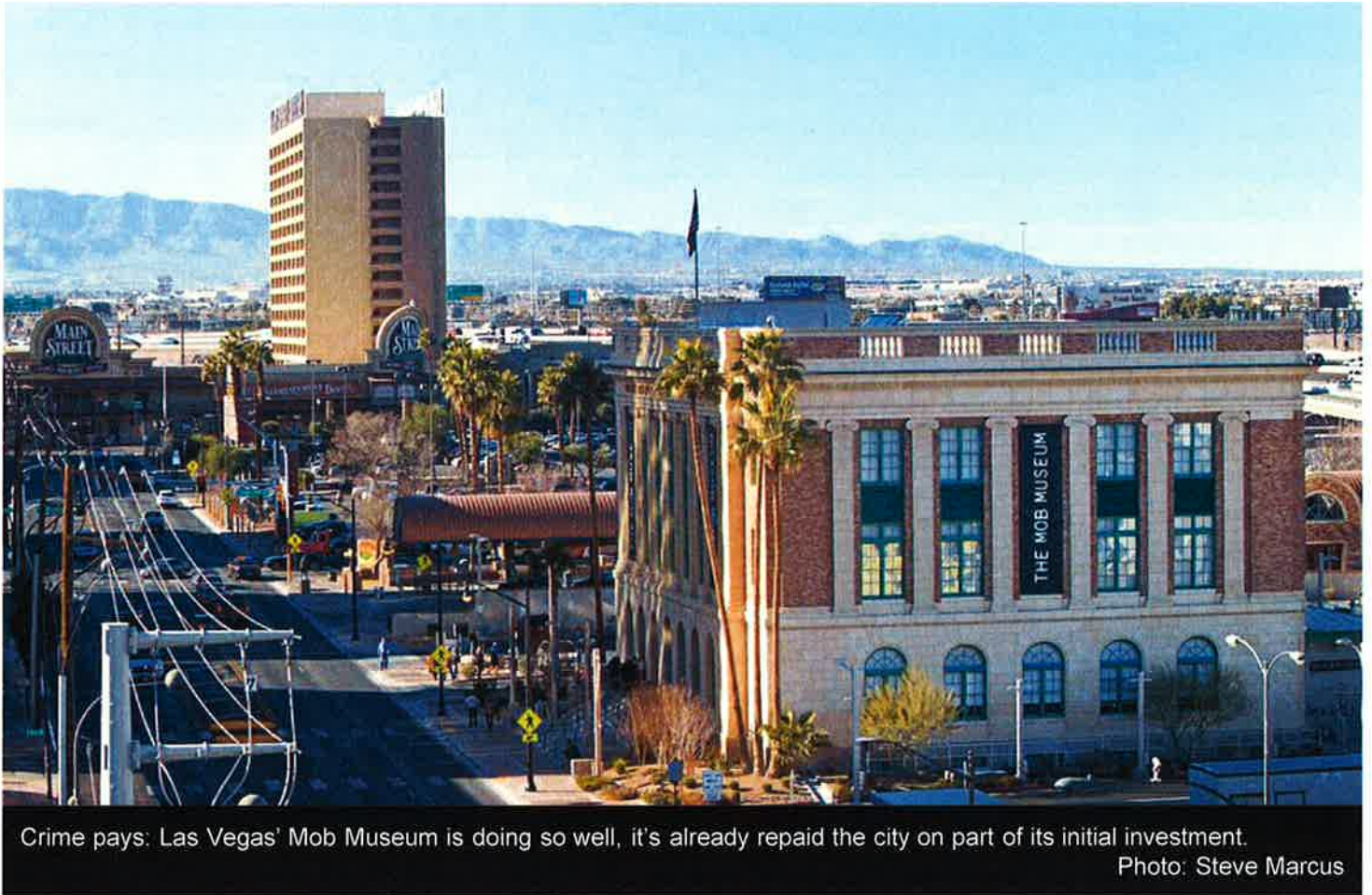
STAFF RECOMMENDATION

No action required.

BACKUP DOCUMENTS

- "Joe Downtown: Why Is The Successful Mob Museum Asking For A Handout?," www.lasvegasweekly.com, 04/30/14
- Joe Downtown: Councilman exploring whether city can kick-start Huntridge fundraising effort," www.lasvegassun.com, 05/02/14
- "Las Vegas casino icon Burton Cohen dies," www.lvrj.com, 05/06/14
- "Longtime gaming executive Burton Cohen dies at age 90," www.lasvegassun.com, 05/06/14
- "Vintage Vegas Sites To Check Out During Historic Preservation Month," www.asvegasweekly.com, 05/07/14
- "Centennial panel considers \$1 million to save aging Huntridge Theater," www.lvrj.com, 05/11/14
- "Las Vegas centennial panel watching its money closely," www.lvrj.com, 05/11/14

JOE DOWNTOWN: WHY IS THE SUCCESSFUL MOB MUSEUM ASKING FOR A HANDOUT?



Joe Schoenmann

Wed, Apr 30, 2014 (3 p.m.)

Bob Stoldal, the white-haired Channel 3 news exec with some 40 years in business, is one of the more likable news people in Las Vegas. And I say that with full appreciation for his innate ability to mellifluously tell someone where to go if they rub him the wrong way.

I was on the receiving end of a somewhat colorful berating more than 10 years ago when I interviewed him for a Las Vegas Life story about the weakness of local television news coverage. At the time, local TV news was infamous among newspaper writers for doing “how-to” stories: how to avoid bee stings; how not to lock a kid in a hot car; how to avoid ... you get the idea.

Las Vegas Life printed some of his @#*&\$-laced tirade in answering my question, and I always thought Stoldal appreciated that. I respected his candor, humor and intelligence, and his knack for staying focused. I asked questions, he answered. He didn't hide from anything and certainly didn't hold a grudge. Over the years, we stayed in contact, so I reached out again recently, this time for a question regarding the Mob Museum.

Stoldal sits on the Mob Museum's board. He's also a member of the Las Vegas Centennial Commission. His obsession with local history is well-known, and maybe stems from the fact that he's reported on many of Las Vegas' comings and goings for almost half of its young life. Visit the Nevada State Museum some weekend and you might find him hunched over books or files, seeking the precise date and time of some event, or the long-forgotten background of a name on a Downtown street sign. He knows history, and he understands reporters. So he was perfect to pepper with my questions.

Earlier this week, the Centennial Commission was to consider a grant request of \$61,400 from the city's Mob Museum. The money was to be used to create a 40-minute audio tour in Spanish and Mandarin. The meeting was canceled Monday and will be held May 5.

My question was simple: Open two years, the museum is doing so well it recently repaid the city the first \$1.5 million of \$6 million. The city's \$1.5 million investment resulted from the Federal Historic Tax Credit Program. The museum cost \$42 million, and was funded through federal, state and local grants, including general fund sources of about \$12.4 million.

So I asked Bob, along with some public relations people: With the museum such a success, why is it asking for more money from the city? Can't it pay for the audio tour from the museum's revenue?

First, Stoldal said, because he sits on both boards, he would recuse himself from voting. Second, he added, he would have been disappointed if the museum had not applied for the money. "Any nonprofit agency has the right to apply for any grant," he said. "I would hope that the Mob Museum, the Nevada State Museum, the Natural History Museum, all would seek as many grants as possible."

Furthermore, Stoldal noted a bit of arcanum from deep in the memory vaults of his armchair-historian mind. The Centennial Commission's available grant money isn't really the city's. Back in 2001, current City Councilman Bob Coffin was a state senator. At the time, he passed legislation with bipartisan support to issue special license plates commemorating Las Vegas' 100th anniversary. Buyers paid an extra fee for the plate, and collected fees went into a fund that could be used to defray the costs of the

city's centennial celebration. The money could also be used for Las Vegas "historical markers, tours of historic sites and improvements to or restoration of historic buildings."

Even in his early 70s, nothing slips by Stoldal, not even the occasional smart-ass remark. As the consummate newsman gave me a tour of the Channel 3 offices on Foremaster Lane, I pointed out that one day, maybe soon, he could be part of a museum himself.

He pointed to an ear, indicating he wanted me to stop mumbling and talk louder.

I didn't repeat myself. He merely smiled.

Joe Downtown: Councilman exploring whether city can kick-start Huntridge fundraising effort



YASMINA CHAVEZ

Volunteer painters from Union #159 paint the Huntridge sign tower from a lift during the BYOB! Bring Your Own Brush community painting party, which is part of the Huntridge revitalization efforts, Saturday, Sept. 28, 2013

By Joe Schoenmann (contact)

Friday, May 2, 2014 | 4:10 p.m.

With potential private investors leery because of a pending lawsuit action against owners of historic Huntridge Theater, the city of Las Vegas is seeking \$1 million to invest in the building itself.

Now 70 years old, the theater at Maryland Parkway and Charleston Boulevard is only one of the oldest standing structures in Las Vegas and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Last summer a group of private investors



operating as Huntridge Revival LLC announced intentions to purchase the building, renovate it and open it with theaters, classrooms, restaurants and more. They figured it would take \$4 million to buy the building and \$11 million more to renovate it.

Huntridge Revival founders Michael Cornthwaite and Joey Vanas put out a prospectus seeking private investors. But Las Vegas Councilman Bob Coffin said a lawsuit looming over the project has caused would-be backers to pause.

The state sued earlier this year on behalf of the Nevada Commission for Cultural Affairs, saying theater owners received \$1.3 million in grants in exchange for certain promises.

Those promises weren't kept, the state alleges, so it wants its money back.

"The lawsuit hurt fundraising," Coffin said. "I came up with this idea to get things off dead center if it looked like cash was needed to assist the group and help them get over the hump."

Coffin's idea is to ask the Commission for the Las Vegas Centennial for a \$1 million grant. The commission's financial reports showed it had \$1.4 million in the bank at the end of fiscal 2013.

The commission is funded from fees on special license plates commemorating Las Vegas' 100th anniversary. The money can be used for "historical markers, tours of historic sites and improvements to or restoration of historic buildings."

In his previous role as state senator, Coffin wrote the bill that created the license plate fund; it passed into law in 2001.

Coffin said using the money to help Huntridge Revival LLC purchase the theater was a "perfectly appropriate" use. However, he added, if the Centennial Commission approves the grant, the city won't give the money to Huntridge Revival freely.

"It wouldn't be a gift or a loan but ownership," he said.

What form the city's ownership might take, Coffin wasn't sure.

Some ideas are being considered, including that Huntridge Revival LLC enter into a lease agreement with the city. Coffin said city staff was working out the details and he expected a clearer picture by 3 p.m. Monday, when the Centennial Commission is scheduled to meet in City Hall.

If the city got involved, it would "make a statement" to investors still sitting on the sidelines, said Scott Adams, Las Vegas chief urban redevelopment officer.

"The private sector may (then) be more willing to be involved," he said.

Adams also said the city was looking into the possibility the state Cultural Affairs Commission might drop its lawsuit against the current owners if the city helps Huntridge Revival purchase the building.

The state agency's "ultimate goal," Adams noted, "is preservation."

The suit against Eli Mizrachi, ECT Holding LLC and King George LLC alleges the defendants broke their covenant with the state by failing to:

"preserve (its) architectural, historical, cultural and/or archeological integrity; make no visual or



structural alterations without prior permission; allow the Commission for Cultural Affairs to inspect the building “at all reasonable times”; be open to the public no less than 12 days per year; and publish a newspaper notice when the building closes for “CCA-assisted improvements.”

When Huntridge Revival announced its plans last year, it stirred an unforeseen community involvement. An online fundraising campaign that originally sought \$150,000 brought in more than \$200,000.

Later, hundreds of residents showed up to whitewash the neglected building, and several businesses promised donations of architectural, design, electrical,

lighting and other services totaling several hundred thousand dollars.

Posted May 6, 2014 - 12:32pm **Updated** May 6, 2014 - 5:16pm

Las Vegas casino icon Burton Cohen dies



MGM exec Burton Cohen takes part in a roundtable discussion during G2E (Global Gaming Expo) in Las Vegas, Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2010. (John Gurzinski/Las Vegas Review-Journal)



By HOWARD STUTZ
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Gaming industry icon Burton Cohen, who managed some of the Strip's most iconic resorts during a career that spanned multiple decades, died Tuesday morning at his home in Las Vegas.

Cohen managed the now-demolished Desert Inn on three separate occasions. He also held management positions at the Flamingo, Caesars Palace, Thunderbird and Dunes. He was inducted into the Gaming Hall of Fame in 1995.

His wife of 30 years, Linda, told the Associated Press her husband died in his sleep. His death was unexpected — he had attended a meeting the day before, she said.

Cohen, 90, was a current member of the MGM Resorts International board of directors.

"The entire MGM family grieves the loss of Burton Cohen, who played a pioneering role in the early development of resorts on the Las Vegas Strip," MGM Resorts Chairman Jim Murren said in a statement. "He was a courageous man and an innovator who quickly rose to the top of our industry ranks, and played an instrumental role in the growth of tourism in Nevada over many decades."

Cohen was closely associated with Los Angeles financier Kirk Kerkorian, 98, the founder of what is now MGM Resorts. Kerkorian coaxed Cohen out of retirement to run the Desert Inn for a second time in the late 1980s.

"Burton was a dear friend and trusted colleague for more than 50 years," Kerkorian said in a statement released through MGM Resorts. "I am very saddened to learn of his passing and want to offer my heartfelt thoughts to Linda and their entire family. Burt was a special person and I am deeply honored to have known him and called him a friend."

Cohen is best known for the Desert Inn casino, where the 1970s TV series "Vega\$" was filmed with his support. He is credited with reviving the hotel in the 1990s before it was closed to make way for the Wynn and Encore resorts.

Born in Philadelphia, Cohen served in the Air Force during World War II and worked as an attorney in Florida, his wife said. He came to Las Vegas in 1966 as co-owner and general manager of the Frontier casino, and he helped Jay Sarno open the Circus Circus casino.

In addition to his position on the MGM Resorts board, Cohen was a Sunrise Hospital board member.

Statements of tribute for Cohen poured in as news of his passing became public.

Former Gov. Bob Miller said Cohen's fingerprints can be found throughout the history of the Strip because of the number of casinos he ran.

"He had no peers in his combination of charm and wit," Miller said. "As recently as a few weeks ago he had me rolling in laughter. He was as spry and active as someone half his age. Las Vegas changed in many ways in his nearly 50 years here but Burton's insight was always relevant."

Gov. Brian Sandoval released a statement that also described Cohen's sense of humor, as well as his social conscience.

"Burton was a great man who helped shape his community and had a positive impact on those he came in contact with," Sandoval said. "He was a leader in his industry and his community, and without question will be deeply missed."

Longtime casino industry host Gene Kilroy called Cohen, "a great man. Everyone he met, he made a better person."

Murren said Cohen "left an indelible imprint on Las Vegas-style hospitality as we know it today." He added that Cohen continued to share his expertise with the company as a board member.

"He came to every single meeting with a sharp sense of humor, keen operating insight and immeasurable wisdom," Murren said.

Cohen attended the funeral of downtown gaming icon Jackie Gaughan in March, recalling how Gaughan helped him break into the casino business "as the new kid in town 50 years ago."

In his time in Las Vegas, Cohen was always cordial and ready with a quip, but wasn't one to share secrets. In a Review-Journal interview on his 90th birthday in January, Cohen spoke about his many casino positions.

"Testimony to my managerial ability, all except one have been blown up," he said. "I've left a sea of destruction."

In February, the UNLV Gaming Law Journal at the William S. Boyd School of Law published an oral history given by Cohen in which he chronicled his life and his involvement in the gaming industry.

The oral history can be found at: <http://scholars.law.unlv.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1057&context=glj>

Cohen is survived by his wife, son, two grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and two beloved rescue dogs. Funeral services are pending.

Review-Journal columnist Norm Clark contributed to this report. Contact reporter Howard Stutz at hstutz@reviewjournal.com or 702-477-3871. Follow @howardstutz on Twitter.

Longtime gaming executive Burton Cohen dies at age 90



MONA SHIELD PAYNE

Long-time friends of Jackie Gaughan arrive for the memorial mass for John Davis "Jackie" Gaughan held at St. Viator Catholic Church in Las Vegas on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2014. From right to left are Burton Cohen, Gene Kilroy and an unidentified man.

By Ed Koch

Published Tuesday, May 6, 2014 | 12:40 p.m.

Updated Tuesday, May 6, 2014 | 4:13 p.m.

Burton M. Cohen grew with Las Vegas and, over the last half century, he did his best to push the glittering gaming capital's growth to unexpected heights.

Despite his decades at the helm of some of Las Vegas's most vital hotels, Cohen admitted to the Sun in 2005 that he did not foresee just how much and how quickly Las Vegas would grow.

"If you had told me this would be happening 40 years ago, I would have had you committed to an institution," Cohen told the Sun in a Feb. 27, 2005, story about the Nevada Gaming Commission's approval of MGM Mirage's historic \$7.9 billion buyout of rival Mandalay Resort Group.

Cohen, the former three-time president of the Desert Inn and a member of the MGM Resorts International board and Sunrise Hospital board of directors, died in his sleep today at his home at Regency Towers. He was 90.

Services for the Las Vegas resident of 48 years will be Friday at King David Mortuary at 2697 E. Eldorado Lane. A time has yet to be set.

Cohen, who is enshrined in the Nevada Gaming Hall of Fame, is perhaps best remembered for his second and longest tenure at the Desert Inn — 1978 to the mid-1980s — where he brought to town major events including several Ladies Professional Golf Association tournaments.

“My husband golfed a little bit, but the reason he brought major golf tournaments to Las Vegas was because they were good for Las Vegas — and anything that was good for Las Vegas, Burton supported,” said Cohen’s wife, Linda Cohen.

The LPGA tournaments at the DI featured some of the game’s greatest stars, including Nancy Lopez and Donna Caponi Young, and drew thousands of locals and tourists each year.

Despite his advanced years, Cohen had been in generally good health, so his death came as a shock to his closest friends.

“I liked Burton because he was a handshake kind of guy,” said longtime Las Vegas businessman, banker and former Nevada Gaming Commission member Art Marshall, a friend of Cohen’s since the mid-1960s.

“He was generous, kind, totally trustworthy and very smart. When I served on the commission, I could always call Burton, ask him a question about gaming and know I would get a straight-up, honest answer,” Marshall said. “He was very well liked in the industry and loved by those who worked for him.”

Bill Bible, former president of the Nevada Resort Association and former chairman of the Nevada Gaming Commission, said Cohen was “a gaming pioneer who was very knowledgeable about the industry and was a man with a great sense of humor.”

Years earlier, Cohen held the same post at the Resort Association as Bible held in the late 1990s.

Bible, who served on the Mirage Resorts International board with Cohen, also remembered his longtime friend as a man who was especially kind to animals.

“Burton was a regular in the breakfast crowd at Bagelmania (on East Twain Avenue) and after every meal, he would break half a bagel into tiny pieces and feed the pigeons under the canopy on the sidewalk outside the restaurant,” Bible said. “He even named some of the pigeons who showed up every day for those scraps.”

Residents at Regency Towers knew Burton as the kind, elderly gentleman who daily walked his two little mixed-breed dogs, Izzy and Moe, along the sidewalk in front of the posh condominium complex.

Izzy, a schnauzer/terrier mix, and Moe, a poodle/bichon frise mix, are both 14 and today showed signs of depression over their master’s departure, Linda Cohen said.

Cohen, who initially retired from active management of gaming resorts in 1995 and for 15 years did mostly consulting work for gaming companies, accepted the offer to serve on the Mirage Resorts board on April 13, 2010.

But it was at the Desert Inn where Cohen left his most indelible mark in Las Vegas. His first tenure at the DI in the early 1970s was a brief one as he left to develop other properties.

Cohen began his third stint at the Desert Inn in 1992 as its president and chief executive officer and stayed on as president and managing director when ITT Sheraton Corp/ acquired the property in 1993. Cohen oversaw the sale of the hotel he often called “my first love” to gaming giant Steve Wynn.

The Desert Inn was imploded to make room for the Wynn Las Vegas and Encore.

“It seems that almost every hotel I have worked for has been demolished,” Cohen often mused.

Cohen also held key executive posts in the Frontier, Thunderbird and Dunes — all imploded or otherwise destroyed to make room for new structures.

In the mid-1960s, Cohen was part of a team that financed construction of the Frontier and was its co-owner and general manager.

Cohen left the Frontier and helped Jay Sarno open the Circus Circus.

Cohen also was a top executive at the Flamingo — he was executive vice president in the late 1960s and

president in 1973 — and Caesars Palace. He served as president of the Thunderbird in the mid-1970s.

Cohen, who was president and chief operating officer of the Dunes in 1986 and 1987, is credited with bringing the Dunes out of bankruptcy and selling it to Japanese investor Masao Nangaku for \$153 million — one of the biggest turnarounds in gaming history. Today, the Bellagio stands on the spot of the old Dunes.

But Cohen may be most remembered by non-gaming enthusiasts for his role on the 1978-81 TV show “Vega\$” starring Robert Urich.

Although Cohen only appeared as himself in three episodes during the 1980 and 1981 seasons, the DI public address system could be heard loudly blaring several times during almost every episode: “Paging Mr. Cohen, Mr. Burton Cohen.”

In actuality, fellow Southern Nevadan Tony Curtis played the Cohen character “Roth” in “Vega\$.” Linda Cohen said that Curtis claimed he modeled the Roth character after her husband.

Burton Cohen also played himself in the 1987 made-for-TV movie “Glory Days.”

Born Aug. 23, 1923, in Philadelphia, Cohen moved with his family to Miami when he was just 6 months old.

During World War II, Cohen joined the Army Air Corps and trained as a pilot at a base near Biloxi, Miss. The war ended as he was about to be sent overseas.

After his stint in the service, Cohen returned to Florida and graduated with a law degree from the University of Miami in 1948. Shortly thereafter, Cohen entered the resort industry and oversaw the construction and development of hotels in Miami and along costal Florida.

Cohen came to Las Vegas in 1966 and almost immediately established himself as one of the town’s most highly visible casino executives.

In addition to his wife, Cohen is survived by his son Stephen Cohen and Stephen’s spouse, John, of Washington, D.C.; a grandson, Jeremye, of Philadelphia; a granddaughter, Nyssa, and her spouse, Steve Herz, of Philadelphia; and 5 great-grandchildren.

Ed Koch is a former longtime Las Vegas Sun reporter.

VINTAGE VEGAS SITES TO CHECK OUT DURING HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH



The Guardian Angel Cathedral was constructed in 1963.

Photo: Steve Marcus

Kristen Peterson

Wed, May 7, 2014 (3:13 p.m.)

We love what the city has done with the old Downtown post office and courthouse. With May being Historic Preservation Month, we thought we'd highlight a few other vintage gems that have stood for decades, keeping history alive in a landscape that's always changing its look. Here's a mini tour to sample Las Vegas through the years:

of Encore at 302 Cathedral Way. **Guardian Angel Cathedral's** sloping roof triangulates a large religious mosaic above the front entrance, and stained glass windows feature images of the then-Hilton and Landmark casinos, as well as nuclear-era imagery. Designed by Paul Revere Williams, architect of the famous La Concha lobby, it was constructed in 1963.

Commonly referred to as Nevada's first minority-built subdivision, the fabulous **Berkley Square** was constructed in 1954 and '55 near Owens Avenue and D Street to improve housing conditions for black residents in segregated Las Vegas. Also designed by Revere Williams, the neighborhood of ranch homes was a Federal Housing Administration Project, still relevant for both its cultural significance and its design.

A run-down mission revival structure that is probably often overlooked, **Victory Hotel**, at 307 S. Main St., is one of the oldest buildings in Las Vegas. Opened in 1910 just five years after the land auction that established Clark's Las Vegas Townsite, this hotel served "notoriously rowdy railroad workers and miners," says Courtney Mooney, historic preservation officer for the City of Las Vegas. Though eligible for historic designation in the 1980s, the owners weren't interested and the building remains threatened.



Photo: **Steve Marcus**

The Victory Hotel opened in 1910, just five years after the land auction that established Clark's Las Vegas Townsite.

While the Fifth Street School (401 S. Fourth St.) and Las Vegas Academy (315 S. Seventh St.) get all the attention for their historic stature and current prominence, the **Westside School** (330 W. Washington Ave.) was built in the early 1920s and remains the oldest schoolhouse in town. Originally constructed as a mission-style two-room schoolhouse, its history includes early integration before it went on to serve the mostly black community. Today the building is home to KCEP, a public nonprofit radio station.

The fact that the **El Cortez**, added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2013, stands as a Downtown centerpiece and has remained true to its architectural integrity, helps make up for the heartache of losing so much. The Spanish Colonial

Revival at Sixth and Fremont Streets was built in 1941 and today looks as much as it did then, renovated and at the heart of Downtown revitalization.

And as long as we're on the Revere Williams theme, we thought we'd finish up at his most famous building—the thin, undulating concrete shell (conch) built in 1961. **The La Concha hotel lobby** once stood on the Strip, but was sliced and trucked north on the Boulevard to serve as the Neon Museum's entrance and gift shop.



Photo: **Christopher DeVargas**

The La Concha's hotel lobby was built in 1961 on Las Vegas Boulevard. The building was sliced and trucked north to serve as the Neon Museum's entrance and gift shop.

Posted May 11, 2014 - 8:42pm

Centennial panel considers \$1 million to help save aging Huntridge Theater



The Huntridge Theater sports a new paint job, seen Monday, Sept. 30, 2013, in Las Vegas. (Jerry Henkel/Las Vegas Review-Journal)

By JANE ANN MORRISON
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Countless stories have been written about saving the historic Huntridge Theater, but there's never been a happy ending where it's actually saved.

In the latest effort, the Las Vegas Centennial Commission is considering spending \$1 million to buy land under the theater built in 1944 at the corner of Charleston Boulevard and Maryland Parkway.

That would just pay for a plot of land, a one-third acre island really.

The actual job of saving the theater itself would be in the hands of private investors, who would have to raise another \$3 million to buy the rest of the surrounding land, then raise \$8 million, and probably far more, to renovate the theater so it would be able to function.

Joey Vanas, who lives in the Huntridge neighborhood and operates the First Fridays, dreams of reviving the tired theater. So does Michael Cornthwaite, owner of the Beat Coffeehouse and Downtown Cocktail Room, who used to live in the 'hood. They made their pitch to the Centennial Commission on May 5, but commissioners had unresolved legal questions, so they postponed the vote until a special meeting at 3 p.m. May 19.

The theater definitely had glory days and is a memory bank for hordes of Nevadans who went there to see movies, live theater and concerts.

The tower is 75 feet high and was originally built in a style known as "streamline moderne."

Las Vegas Councilman Bob Coffin, who grew up and still lives in the Huntridge neighborhood, is behind the push to spend \$1 million as part of historic preservation.

He serves on the Centennial Commission, which was created to celebrate the city's 100th birthday in 2005. Funding still comes from commemorative license plates, which raise about \$1.6 million a year. The money is spent on restoration and rehabilitation of historical sites and projects related to the history of the city of Las Vegas.

The state has already put \$1.5 million over a five-year period into saving the Huntridge. The roof collapsed in 1995 shortly before a concert and the state stepped up to make the building safe.

Cima Mizrachi, daughter of the owner, had plans to save it. So did her brother, Eli Mizrachi.

The Mizrachi family owns both the theater and the building next door which housed their mattress store. While the door to the shop has "open" scribbled on it, on Thursday it appeared mostly empty and locked with a chain.

Other would-be saviors include Richard Lenz, who sponsored concerts there in the 1990s. The city put in \$150,000 in 1994 at his request and he suggested the city should take over the theater as a cultural center. Didn't happen.

In 2001, the saviors at that time said the state wouldn't need to put any more money into the Huntridge, after accepting a \$100,000 grant from the state Commission for Cultural Affairs.

In 2002, the theater closed, but Eli Mizrachi planned a renovation that was supposed to include a club, a restaurant, lounge, comedy shows and an open mic night. Didn't happen.

In 2004, he planned another renovation. Didn't happen.

In 2008, he spoke of changing the property to a mix of retail and offices. Didn't happen.

In 2012, Cima Mizrachi sought to open a secondhand store. Her father, Aron Mizrachi said if things didn't work out, he planned to tear down the theater, although the state restriction that accompanied its money prevents him from doing that until 2017.

At the daughter's request, the city put in \$19,000 in a 2012 visual improvement grant and granted the family a license to operate adjacent buildings as a secondhand store. The council overruled the Planning Commission which agreed with neighbors who compared it with a pawn shop.

The theater is listed on both national and state registries of historic sites. In its early days, partial owners included movie stars Loretta Young and Irene Dunn. Two Nevada politicians — former Attorney General Frankie Sue Del Papa and former Lt. Gov. Lorraine Hunt-Bono — were ushers at the theater as young women.

The theater is also a symbol of desegregation. Former owner Lloyd Katz refused to segregate the theater when the practice was common.

Now the latest saviors, Vanas and Cornthwaite, with the strong backing of Councilman Coffin, hope to succeed where others failed. They need \$3 million to buy the three acres surrounding the theater. The city's portion would be the one-third of an acre.

Vanas said the plan is to create a performing arts venue that would show art-house movies, off-Broadway shows, high school productions, concerts and live music.

The idea is supported by Bill Arent, director of the Las Vegas Development Agency, who said the solution to saving the Huntridge is to consider this public-private partnership. And if it never comes to reality, the city would own a piece of land. He said the purchase would include some sort of street access, although that parcel is currently landlocked. The city would work with developers, using city resources to obtain tax credits.

"We want to be involved," Arent said.

Commission members were warned that spending \$1 million would leave about \$500,000 in their ending fund balance.

Commissioner Bob Stoldal, who remembers all the other resurrection efforts since 1990, asked bluntly, "Why is it going to work this time?"

Commissioner Tim Cashman also worried they might have nothing to show for the \$1 million.

Councilman Ricki Barlow raised questions about whether the city would own the land or the commission, which is forbidden from owning land, and whether this was an allowable expense under the commission's governing regulations. Those questions delayed a vote.

Vanas said that in previous attempts, the focus was on the theater. In this plan, the next-door buildings would be used for other things, such as a coffee shop and things that would be useful for the neighborhood.

"I'm confident we will get the remaining money we need," he said.

"Have you raised the other \$3 million?" Stoldal asked.

"No," Vanas said. He believes investors will come forward if the city shows its commitment to invest.

Contact Jane Ann Morrison at jmorrison@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0275.

Posted May 11, 2014 - 10:45pm Updated May 12, 2014 - 7:15am

Las Vegas centennial panel watching its money closely



The Las Vegas Centennial Commission has money to give to historical projects. However, the commission questioned the backing the city of Las Vegas has provided the HellDorado Days rodeo and parade. This year's HellDorado Days has been designated a Nevada Sesquicentennial event. (Las Vegas Review-Journal file)

By JANE ANN MORRISON
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Las Vegas' centennial celebration was 2005, but the Las Vegas Centennial Commission still has money to give to worthwhile historical projects — about \$1.6 million a year.

The sale of the centennial commemorative license plates raises money to support history, and insiders know how to apply for the moola, whether they're asking for a little or a lot.

At the May 5 meeting, commissioners did something unusual for them. They turned down applicants or reduced the amounts they'd allow.

They even questioned the generous backing the city of Las Vegas has provided the HellDorado rodeo and

Helldorado officials asked for an additional \$134,000, saying specialized environmental costs for moving the rodeo to Symphony Park created the need. The commission authorized an additional \$98,500. Duane La Duke said that moving the rodeo from spot to spot costs more than if Helldorado was in a permanent location.

He mentioned that ticket sales of about \$10,000 for each of the five nights go to local charities.

Commissioner Bob Stoldal pointed out that if the ticket sales were used to pay some of the costs, that would reduce the amount that city taxpayers spend. Essentially, taxpayers are subsidizing charities. Commissioner Richard Bryan concurred. "Maybe we should not be responsible for giving to charities."

Two other proposals also were carefully scrutinized.

Sarann Knight Preddy applied for a \$66,500 grant. Part of it would help her finish, publish, promote and distribute 1,000 copies of her unfinished book "72 Years in Las Vegas." Preddy was the first black woman to hold a gaming license in Nevada and was the longtime owner of the Moulin Rouge, the first integrated casino in Las Vegas.

After discovering that about \$22,000 would go toward a birthday party at the Smith Center for the Performing Arts to celebrate Preddy's 94th birthday July 27, the commissioners reduced the grant to \$31,000 for preparation and printing of the book.

The Las Vegas Leadership program, sponsored by the Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce, was turned down for \$10,275 it sought for the annual program for 40 or 50 people a year. The money would have been spent on materials for the group's history day.

Commissioners Bryan and Stoldal didn't want to get into the position of funding \$10,000 every year for so few people.

Las Vegas Mayor Carolyn Goodman was frank. "The chamber shouldn't be coming to this body for this. The chamber of commerce is pretty well off. This is not a great deal of money but it would establish a precedent."

The commissioners voted 6-4 to deny the grant.

Other applications were approved exactly as requested.

The Mob Museum asked for and received \$61,740 to create interactive 40-minute audio tours in English, Spanish and Mandarin. Rental for the audio tours will increase the entrance fee between \$5 and \$10, according to museum Executive Director Jonathan Ullman, who said the tours should be a money-maker for the museum. Ullman selected a company with a good reputation rather than the lowest bidder and commissioners asked him to explain how that company was chosen in a no-bid process. Afterward, they approved his request.

Desert Companion, the magazine affiliated with KNPR radio, received a \$14,000 grant to hire freelancers to write historical pieces for future editions.

Assemblywoman Heidi Swank, D-Las Vegas, received \$15,198 as startup money so the Nevada Preservation Foundation can create walking tours for the Beverly Green and Paradise Village neighborhoods and help them become named to the Las Vegas Historic Property Register. The entire project will cost nearly \$23,000.

The neighborhoods built in the 1950s are between Oakey Boulevard and Sahara Avenue off Las Vegas Boulevard near the Stratosphere. Former residents of Beverly Green include entertainers Louis Prima and Keely Smith and restaurateurs Lou and Angie Ruvo. The preservation foundation promotes appreciation of architectural heritage.

Yet to be resolved is whether the Centennial Commission will dip to its lowest funding balance ever by approving a \$1 million grant to buy one-third of an acre underneath the Huntridge Theater.

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