

Crockett Community Services District

Memorial Hall Update #12

It has been many months since the last update on our restoration project for Crockett's Memorial Hall (Legion Hall), but we have not been idle. Our team of architects at Interactive Resources began by investigating the building's eligibility for the State Register of Historic Resources and use of the historic building code. Their "Historic Resources Evaluation" was published in May and has been posted on our website (www.town.crockett.ca.us). Just search on the word "historic" to find the report easily. The history of Memorial Hall makes interesting reading, with many photographs included. This report concludes that Memorial Hall is eligible for use of the historic building code, which is less restrictive than the international building code used by Contra Costa County.

Our architects next met with County building officials to familiarize them with our historic building and our plans to return it to public service after seismic strengthening and improvements. Following that, they developed two very different schematic designs for compliance with national accessibility requirements for disabled persons. One design attempted to fit accessible restrooms, an elevator and other amenities within the existing structure, while the second design proposed a detached auxiliary building to house accessible restrooms and kitchen facilities. Our Memorial Hall Advisory Committee concluded that the first option was entirely unworkable, leaving the building with inadequate space to hold even the smallest indoor events. The Committee also rejected the second option as likely to have an adverse visual impact on Memorial Hall and to take up too much of the small site.

Fortunately, committee discussion led to a third, entirely different concept, which the architects are now exploring. Mike Kirker is credited with remarkable insight that is generating a lot of enthusiasm. His concept would build an underground structure attached to the rear of Memorial Hall's basement. Little of this structure would be visible above ground, and it would take advantage of the steep topography in the rear of the site for the necessary exit. Ron Wilson suggested that its roof top become a patio for public use, with a commanding view of the Carquinez Strait. Kent Peterson prepared schematic drawings and presented the new concept to our architects. Seeing no fatal flaws in the concept, architects Tom Butt and Kimberly Butt met again with County building officials to discuss our project. Their next steps will be to prepare a construction cost estimate and a report on potential funding sources.

We look forward to presenting our concept to you at a town meeting, soon to be scheduled. We want to gather public comments and ideas from Crockett residents before committing any more time and money to design of this project. Close neighbors of Memorial Hall, in particular, will have every opportunity to make their opinions known before we proceed with the design work.

The 2012 *Walk of Honor for Our Veterans* was held on May 19, which is Armed Forces Day. This is our primary fundraiser for restoration of Memorial Hall. Last year we raised \$23,000 for our project, and this year we raised \$24,000, including \$5000 from the Crockett Community Foundation. We are very grateful to event organizers VietNam Veterans of Diablo Valley and Phillips 66, and to the many event sponsors, as well as the Crockett Community Foundation.

We have just submitted a grant application to the Crockett Community Foundation for \$76,500 in architectural costs. They have already granted us \$45,000 for engineering costs and have repeatedly expressed solid support for the restoration of Memorial Hall. It will be wonderful when we can finally reopen its door for veterans services and other community uses.

We welcome the interest of everyone who wants to see our historic Memorial Hall returned to public use. Those who want to be kept informed about our project can be added to our email list by sending your email address to Crockett CSD at: manager@town.crockett.ca.us. Past news updates on the project can be found on our website at: www.town.crockett.ca.us.

Dale McDonald and Kent Peterson
Crockett CSD
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