



CITY OF ORLAND STAFF REPORT: EDC MEETING DATE: April 9, 2024

TO: Honorable Chair and Commission

FROM: Pete Carr, City Manager

SUBJECT: **Vacant Property Listing Update** (Discussion/Direction/Action)

BACKGROUND:

The City's EDC in 2019 analyzed an inventory of vacant buildings and sent a letter to the owners of about ten of the properties; the letter encouraged redevelopment of the properties and offered Façade Improvement assistance. Recently, the EDC discussed an updated list and considered options, leaning toward notifying property owners of carrots (incentives) and sticks (potential negative consequences for allowing continued vacancy). The EDC also reviewed an ordinance in Corning municipal code assessing "maintenance fees" on vacant buildings.

ANALYSIS:

The list is updated with the addition and deletion of several properties, and the latest information about properties. Ownership and size data is taken from the City's online parcel look-up tool. The "Ltr 2019" column indicates properties whose owners received a letter from the City in 2019. Attached is an updated draft proposed letter to property owners, for EDC consideration, along with a sample letter mailed annually to business owners.

Commissioners also asked about designation of historic buildings and creation of historic districts. Property owners may become eligible for certain tax incentives for investing in rehabilitation of the properties. City staff has observed and experienced mixed reviews with such designations, as visitor attention is drawn to historic sites but owner freedom to improve the property becomes more limited.

- A. Historic designation overview/considerations: https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21410
- B. Historical building safety board/State Architect details:
<https://www.dgs.ca.gov/DSA/Resources/Page-Content/Resources-List-Folder/SHBSB>

Designation of historic districts requires state and local statutes including establishment of a board or commission with authority to review proposed alterations to structures in the district. There are twelve such districts in California, summarized here: https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=27283

Attachments:

1. Draft letter to owners of vacant property
2. Updated vacant property list
3. Sample notification to business owners about annual business license

RECOMMENDATION

Provide action or direction at EDC discretion. EDC actions become recommendations to the City Council.

Fiscal Impact of Recommendation: Production of letters is a minor administrative task of no significant fiscal impact. Redevelopment of vacant properties can result in increased property and sales tax revenues to the City, as well as reduced costs associated with maintaining security for abandoned or vacant properties.

Date: _____

DRAFT for EDC Review

[Property Owner]

[Mailing Address]

Dear [Property Owner]:

The Orland Economic Development Commission (EDC) has the responsibility of recommending to the Orland City Council actions that can be taken to improve the economic climate and opportunities in in our town. We have identified your commercial property:

[address]

as one qualifying for certain incentives and code enforcement treatment:

1. The City offers its Façade Improvement program to you as a 50¢-on-the-dollar reimbursement for your reinvestment in improving the appearance of your building. This is a simple, locally controlled (not State of California) program, available while funds last, normally up to \$3000 reimbursement.
2. Demolition permit, site plan, use permit and building permit fees may be reduced or waived on a case-by-case basis for reinvestment in your building, upon your request.
3. The Orland Art Commission offers free consultation in attractive architecture and color schemes.
4. City Staff and 3CORE consultants can work with you on an advisory basis, at no charge to you, to help you explore options and processes.

Please contact City Hall for more information on any of the above three opportunities.

You should also be advised that the City recognizes that vacant buildings increase the City's burden to provide police patrol as well as law enforcement, fire and rescue response. Vacant buildings tend to attract vagrancy, rodent harborage and graffiti, and are generally a blight to the neighborhood and town. Apparently abandoned buildings detract from economic development and depress real estate values generally.

Consequently, the Orland Municipal Code provides for active code enforcement including fines for owners of buildings determined to be dilapidated and/or dangerous. It is our hope to work with property owners to take advantage of incentive opportunities and avoid negative consequences.

Please reach out to any of our Commission members or to City Hall to explore what can be done to improve the appearance and potential reutilization of your vacant property.

Sincerely,

Ron Lane, Chair
Orland Economic Development Commission

cc: EDC Commissioners
City Manager