



P.O. Box 4173 Glendale CA 91202
www.GlendaleHistorical.org

October 7, 2023

Glendale City Council
City of Glendale
613 East Broadway
Glendale, CA 91206

Re: Item 7b, Community Development, re: Overview of Changes to Ordinance to Amend GMC 30.25.030 Regarding Streamlining the Historic District Designation Process (Oct 10th Meeting)

Dear Mayor Brotman and Glendale City Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this agenda item.

Supporting the establishment of historic districts is a critical priority for The Glendale Historical Society (TGHS). We have advocated for a streamlined process to evaluate and onboard historic districts and are pleased that a proposal has been brought forward.

As was stated in our letter dated Sept 10, we do have significant concerns about increasing the signature petition threshold and additional signature verification, as is noted in ordinance proposal 7b.

We believe that increasing the threshold will have the effect of discouraging the formation of new historic districts. The current threshold is already a hurdle to neighborhood applicants. Canvassing is tedious work and increasing it by 32% (16 points) will only sow additional discouragement.

We have found that canvassing is also more difficult post-COVID, so this is not the time to make it harder for historic district applicants to get a **hearing** (not automatic approval) with City Council to consider a historic district designation.

Included in the current and proposed streamlined process are multiple opportunities for those in opposition to express their concerns, both at a Planning Commission/HPC meeting and at the ultimate City Council Meeting. There is also a process for those in opposition to start a counter petition.

The Glendale Historical Society (TGHS) advocates for the preservation of important Glendale landmarks, supports maintaining the historic character of Glendale's neighborhoods, educates the public about and engages the community in celebrating and preserving Glendale's history and architectural heritage, and operates the Doctors House Museum. TGHS is a tax-exempt, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, and donations to TGHS are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

TGHS doesn't see the value in increasing the threshold percentage. If anything, it will further disqualify neighborhoods who have **majority** support (50% - 67%) and discourage new neighborhoods from starting the process.

Lastly, TGHS strongly agrees with city staff recommendation to not adopt the manual verification of signatures. We believe this process is contrary to streamlining efforts and would take already stretched staff resources to perform additional validation tasks. As there has never been an accusation of forgery by a homeowner, we believe this is not an issue.

For the reasons noted above, TGHS respectfully requests that you vote for Ordinance #7a, which will leave the petition threshold at 50% + 1 and not implement an additional process to verify signatures.

Both of these proposals have the appearance of a solution trying to find a problem, will have a detrimental impact on future potential districts, and only adds more bureaucracy and friction in a process that we desperately need to streamline.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Schwab-Sims", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Schwab-Sims
President
The Glendale Historical Society

cc: Suzie Abajian, City Clerk
Bradley Calvert, Director of Community Development
Jay Platt, Senior Urban Designer
Kasey Conley, Associate Planner