



**Contra
Costa
County**

To: Board of Supervisors
From: John Kopchik, Director, Conservation & Development Department
Date: September 26, 2017

Subject: Approval of a Historical Property Preservation Agreements (Mills Act Contracts) for 66 and 67 Stonecastle Ct, Alamo

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Chair to execute a Mills Act Contract for each of the following properties: 66 and 67 Stonecastle Court in the Alamo area;
2. DIRECT the Department of Conservation and Development to record the Mills Act Contracts with the County Recorder, and to forward copies to the California Office of Historic Preservation and the Office of the County Assessor;
3. DETERMINE that the proposed actions are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Regs, Section 15331, Class 31); and
4. DIRECT the Department of Conservation and Development to file a Notice of Exemption under CEQA with the County Clerk.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The applicant is responsible for application and processing costs for the nomination and preparation of the Mills Act Contracts. Approval of the Mills Act Contracts for 66 and 67 Stonecastle Court will result in a reduction of property taxes for the subject properties based

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD

ADMINISTRATOR

COMMITTEE

Action of Board On: **09/26/2017** ☒ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

VOTE OF SUPERVISORS

AYE: John Gioia, District I Supervisor
Candace Andersen, District II Supervisor
Diane Burgis, District III Supervisor
Karen Mitchoff, District IV Supervisor

ABSENT: Federal D. Glover, District V Supervisor

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: September 26, 2017

David Twa, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

Contact: Dominique Vogelpohl,
(925) 674-7814

By: June McHuen, Deputy

cc:

on the calculations used by the State Board of Equalization for use of assessing properties under the Mills Act.

BACKGROUND:

Mills Act: The Mills Act Program (Government Code, Sections 50280-50290) is a state law that grants participating local governments authority to enter into contracts with owners of qualified historic properties who actively participate in the restoration, rehabilitation, and maintenance of their historic properties while receiving property tax relief. The law enables the County to enter into 10-year agreements with owners of historic properties, which are automatically renewed for an additional 10-years, unless the County or owner files a notice of non-renewal. The Mills Act Program can be utilized with historic properties listed in any state, city, or county official register of historical or architecturally significant sites, places, or landmarks. Property taxes are recalculated using a formula in the Mills Act and Revenue and Taxation Code. The Mills Act requires that historic property owners spend the property tax money that is saved through the Mills Act on preserving and/or restoring their property. Once a Mills Act Contract is terminated for any reason, the property taxes would increase to the level they would have been before execution of the Mills Act Contract.

66 and 67 Stonecastle Court: The buildings and structures of the former Rosebrook estate located at 66 and 67 Stonecastle Court in Alamo have been designated as historical resources in the County Historic Resources Inventory (HRI). Upon incorporating the buildings and structures in the HRI, each property qualifies for a Mills Act contract which would reduce the property taxes for each property in exchange for restoration and maintenance of the historic resources.

As part of the application submittal for both 66 and 67 Stonecastle Court, the property owner commissioned a Historic Background & Evaluation report dated June 30, 2016, prepared by the architectural historian Caitlin Harvey. According to the evaluation, the Rosebrook House, Guest House, Garden House, and outdoor structures were designed and built by local architect Carr Jones. The buildings are exemplary of Storybook Style architecture and are one of only six Jones designs left in the County. Also, Jones' use of the Storybook Style is considered influential both historically and architecturally.

Various exterior and interior alterations have been made to the buildings over the years. Despite past alterations, the Storybook Style is still prevalent in the structures, and Carr's signature design features define the overall properties as a Carr original. The Schedule of Stabilization or Rehabilitation and Architectural Rehabilitation and/or Restoration prepared for both 66 and 67 Stonecastle Court in Alamo outlines specific alterations, repairs and maintenance of the buildings and structures for both properties. The proposed exterior and interior alterations will enhance the integrity of the architectural style, and implement more period appropriate materials and finishes.

Historical Landmarks Advisory Committee (HLAC) Recommendation: At the HLAC meeting held on November 30, 2016, the HLAC recommended that the Board of Supervisors include the Rosebrook House (single-family residence), the Garden House

(accessory building), stone walls, outdoor kitchen area, pool and pond of 66 Stonecastle Court, and the Guest House (single-family residence) and stone walls of 67 Stonecastle Court onto the County's HRI, and approve for each property a Mills Act Contract in order to restore and rehabilitate the historical resources. Their recommendation is warranted because the buildings' and structures' Storybook Style is unique and contains defining elements original to the noted local architect, Carr Jones.

Board of Supervisors Approval: At the Board of Supervisors meeting held on February 7, 2017, the Board adopted the recommendation of the HLAC to include the Rosebrook House (single-family residence), the Garden House (accessory building), stone walls, outdoor kitchen area, pool and pond of 66 Stonecastle Court, and the Guest House (single-family residence) and stone walls of 67 Stonecastle Court, in the Alamo area onto the County's HRI.

Conclusion: Approval of a Mills Act Contract for 66 and 67 Stonecastle Court in Alamo would secure the restoration, rehabilitation, and maintenance of the buildings' and structures' historical and architectural integrity by current and future owners of the properties.

CONSEQUENCE OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

If the subject properties, 66 and 67 Stonecastle Court in Alamo, are not approved for a Mills Act Contract the restoration, rehabilitation, and maintenance of the buildings' and structures' historical and architectural integrity would not be monitored and may not be maintained by current or future owners of the properties.

ATTACHMENTS

Historical Property Preservation Agreement for 66 Stonecastle Court, Alamo

Historical Property Preservation Agreement for 67 Stonecastle Court, Alamo

Maps and Architectural Plans

Historic Assessment for 66 and 67 Stonecastle Court, Alamo