



City of Oregon City

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Staff Report

File Number: 19-251

Agenda Date: 5/1/2019

Status: Agenda Ready

To: City Commission

Agenda #: 3a.

From: Community Development Director Laura Terway

File Type: Proclamation

SUBJECT:

Proclamation for Historic Preservation Month and Presentation of Award

RECOMMENDED ACTION (Motion):

Declare May of 2019 as Historic Preservation Month and presenting the Ruth McBride-Powers Preservation Award

BACKGROUND:

Citizens in Oregon City will join thousands of individuals across the country to celebrate National Preservation Month this May. Since the National Trust for Historic Preservation created Preservation Week in 1971 to spotlight grassroots preservation efforts in America, it has grown into an annual monthly celebration observed by small towns and big cities with events ranging from architectural and historic tours and award ceremonies, to fundraising events, educational programs and heritage travel opportunities. This Proclamation will declare May of 2019 as Historic Preservation Month.

Each year the Historic Review Board recommends a recipient of the Ruth McBride Powers Preservation Award during May Preservation Month to a citizen, building/business owner and other who has shown passion for preservation. The winner of the award will be announced at the City Commission hearing.

Ruth McBride was born in Michigan in 1903, graduating from Stanford University in California. According to a 1980 OHS oral history interview, she became interested in history when “as a young bride” she moved to the Coos County lumber town, Powers, Oregon, named after her husband’s family. She began studying the history of her adopted state, especially its architecture and pioneer furniture. Her knowledge increased and she was appointed to the Oregon Landmarks Committee (now the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation) and was a board member of the Oregon Historical Society for many years. She became involved in saving the Ox Barn in Aurora. Her initial preservation project, in 1956, was reconstruction of the badly burned 1852 Robert Newell house at Champoeg, subsequently given to the Daughters of the American Revolution to operate as an educational site. Alfred Powers, her husband died in 1961 in Portland.

She continued her efforts, using her financial resources to save many of Oregon’s oldest buildings; sometimes they were purchased outright, at other times she providing major

underwriting. In addition to the Ainsworth House, Rose and Locust Farms also known as the (Morton Mathew McCarver House), she is credited with saving the Philip Foster house and barn, Horace Dibble house, David Wagner log house, Murray Wade house, Lake Oswego IOOF hall, Pleasant Grove-Condit Church, John Boon house, and Francis Ermatinger house. In 1975 she received national recognition for her work from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

In the final 25 years of her life Mrs. Powers divided her time between The McCarver House and the Rose Farm. She often opened the latter for fund-raising tours and it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

The McCarver House (Locust Farm) 1852, the 1847 William and Louisa Holmes House ("Rose Farm"), and the Captain John Ainsworth House built in 1852, are the three remaining settlement-era houses built in the Mt. Pleasant area of Clackamas County. The survival of all three is due to the preservation efforts of a single benefactor, Mrs. Ruth McBride Powers.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has -Margaret Mead