

Comments of Kirk Callan Smith regarding the Arts and Cultural El Dorado proposal.

[These naturally are my views and not those of any other person nor of the Planning Commission. The then Chair of the Planning Commission at the last meeting said that we were free to offer our individual comments rather than collectively offer one position for that entire body. with one position from that body.] The following comments that had the last meeting.]

History

Art has always been part of this community from its earliest Gold Rush beginnings.¹ For the future, the prime questions posed by the El Dorado Arts and Culture El Dorado's proposal concerns the most appropriate and affective ways for the planning and arts policy for the city. Here are some of the issues that deserve attention.

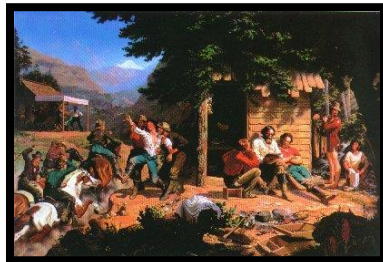
Why Parks and Recreation Commission and not Planning Commission

This proposal has been a number of years in the making. On July 12th of 2022, language was added to the city's Strategic Plan "for a policy and protocol approved through both the Recreation and Parks Commission and City Council." Why delegate the prime role given to the Recreation and Parks Commission and not other bodies that have long had a key role for city planning, namely the Placerville Planning Commission?

As the city's website explains, the advisory responsibilities of the Recreation and Parks Commission Parks is" in all matters pertaining to parks and public recreation as the city works to deliver quality parks and leisure services to the community." While it can be appropriate for the Recreation and Parks Commission to provide guidance on such matters as art installations in city parks, what sense does it make them to make advisory decisions about Main Street or any one of the designated historic districts?

Afterall, the 2022 language added to the city's Strategic Plan also gives states that a focus is on f art acquisition and installations "at other public sites." There was a sculptural installation at the Bell Tower on two occasions to promote cancer awareness on temporary during the last two years but was not a permanent installations.

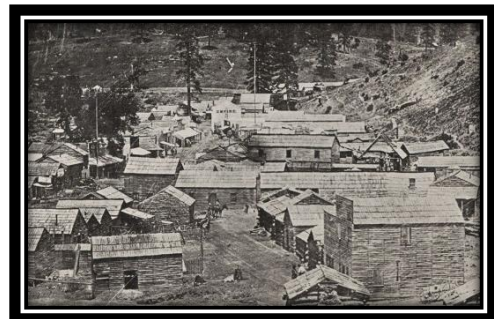
¹ The oldest known photograph of this town, said to have been taken in 1849, prominently shows on one large building towards the upper center the sign for the Empire that provided live performances. The Sigwart Opera House came a couple of decades later to Main Street that was also an entertainment



venue for plays as well as dance and music events. Prominent artists came from all over world to the Gold Rush including William Smith

Jewett, Charles Christian Nahl, William McIlvaine Jr., and George H. Goddard. Some of their most famous works can be found nearby at the Crocker Gallery. Writers and poets of note like Brete Harte and Edwin Markam were here along with famous performers of the day. Celebrated

singers and perforers including Lotta Crabtree and Lola Montez passed through these parts.



Does it make sense to have a body devoted to recreation and parks issues to be a prime source of guidance on matters that has long been the purview of the City Planning Commission that has long addressed planning matters and instead those involved in recreation?

. Although the added Strategic Plan language refers vaguely to other “art focused groups and organizations,” only one city organization is named for giving advice on these matters to the body that was created to handle recreation matters while the City’s Planning Commission is given the prime job for decision’s about land use planning including those duties previously conferred on the Historic Advisory Committee, “the preservation of historic resources, including buildings, structures, objects, monuments and markers as our legacy to future generations.” See, City website.

There are no facts or reasons given for the radical change of taking those responsibilities away from the Planning Commission that rely on the experience and expertise they have acquired over many decades. Those historic functions for the Planning Commission should remain with them.

The Role of Arts and Cultural El Dorado

For more than 150 years, the rich cultural history of this town has been for art to flow from the bottom up, Arts and Culture El Dorado does important professional work, providing many fine exhibits and activities. It has served implicitly as an art incubator, inspiring others by example.

That is an important role and should be encouraged. Giving them the prime or official role, however, is problematic as illustrated by the proposal to put a mural on the Mosquito Road underpass. Many of the ideas they have presented, such as encouraging local restaurants to display the work of local artists. Those are things it could have done in the past and can do in the future without having an official city role., art things they could do now as they have been able to do in the past. There is no need for them to have some official City role to do that.