



Sunnyvale Historical Society and Museum Association

P.O. Box 2187 Sunnyvale, California 94087-0187

www.heritageparkmuseum.org • 408.749.0220

December 15, 2015

Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members,

The Sunnyvale Historical Society is excited to reach this milestone with the City of Sunnyvale. Our 8-year dream of opening up the visual entrance to the museum by removing the maintenance building, shed and dumpsters is almost here. We will no longer be called the “hidden” museum. Our second dream has always been to move a historic house to this site to serve as an addition/annex to the museum. As part of this project, The Sunnyvale Historical Society has requested to move the 1912 Butcher’s Family house, and therefore saving the first historic structure of its kind in Sunnyvale. In order to preserve this history, a retaining wall will also need to be built to protect our special collection from floodwaters draining from the orchard.

When we proposed the original museum project back in 2001, we planned on building a museum at Murphy Park, home of the original Murphy Bayview Ranch. Both Staff and Council requested us to build it at Heritage Park as OHPIE was already there, the Heritage Orchard was already there, Bianchi Barn was planned there, and most of all, it had lots of room for expansion as the years went on. Now we are 14 years later, four City Managers later, and eleven council members later and we find our growth is restricted to a fence line that was designed to contain an arboretum in 1971, not a Heritage Park. This entire site is Heritage Park, not a small fenced in portion, plus a publicly owned but privately run orchard. It is important that the house is sited as requested so visitors can easily be taken on a docent led tour of the museum and seamlessly continue through the house maintaining the same number of volunteer staff currently used. All tours will begin and end at the museum front door.

The Historical Society has worked closely with the City to achieve a number of historical projects:

- In 1994, we worked closely with the City of Sunnyvale to **save the City-owned Apricot Orchard property**, and preserve it as the last agricultural orchard in Sunnyvale. After much lobbying, the City finally designated the Sunnyvale Heritage Park Orchard as a City Park.
- In 2001, we worked to develop and build the **Orchard Heritage Park Interpretive Exhibit [OHPIE]** at Sunnyvale Heritage Park to celebrate and preserve the area’s agricultural history.
- In 2003, we worked to **preserve the Bianchi Barn**. This public/private project is where the Historical Society orchestrated the moving of the historic barn to the Heritage Park site and preserving it.
- In 2006, the Society raised all funds to build the **Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum** to preserve Sunnyvale History (**after not being able to save the Murphy House in the 1960s**). The museum opened in 2008. It remains open to the public free of charge and is solely maintained by the Society.
- In 2012, we raised all funding to **rehab the old park building** on the site and continue to maintain it as well. This aging building became the storage facility for preserving our vast collection of historic treasures that are currently not on display at the museum.

As many know, we are rapidly losing all of our old farmhouses. The Butcher house happens to be a classic orchard ranch house and a historical treasure to be saved. It was built on the Butcher Orchard in 1912, the year the City of Sunnyvale was incorporated, and was a very expensive house for its time.

Please support our efforts to save this historic house and move it next to the Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum.

Leslie Lawton, President

Laura Babcock, Director

