



September 10, 2026

Sent Via Email

Chair, Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB)
(Attn: Mr. Kurt P. Bachman)
City of Palm Springs
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Subject: Palm Springs Drive Palm Allée Class 1 Historic Site Nomination

On August 2, 2026, we submitted the subject nomination. The city's Historic Preservation Officer has advised us that under Section 8.05.070(A) of the municipal code, only the city (as the property owner of the Palm Canyon Drive right-of-way), may initiate the subject application and that our nomination application cannot proceed as filed. (City staff accepted PSPF's nomination for the city-owned Thomas A. O'Donnell's Desert Golf Course nomination in 2019 which we believe set a precedent). To remedy this administrative obstruction, we are asking you to place this matter on a future HSPB agenda for discussion. In doing so you, as the relevant city board, you can determine if it is in the best interests of the city to deliberate this matter.

As you know, in 1948 Ruth Hardy became the first woman elected to the Palm Springs City Council. Within a year she had over three hundred palms in the ground the length of the business district, set roughly thirty-five feet apart, in two species, with each tree individually lit. The Tree Planting Committee was chaired by architect E. Stewart Williams. The stock came from Neel's Nursery. The planting was dedicated on October 1, 1949, and most of it is still standing. It is one of the city's most significant undesignated resources.

In the fall of 2017, PSPF board member Steven Keylon first wrote about the city's palm allée in *Eden* magazine, the prestigious quarterly journal of the California Garden & Landscape History Society. He has continued to gather information on the topic since then, amassing a considerable research collection in the hope that a nomination would someday be prepared. The subject 116-page nomination draws on that research and cites council resolutions, minute books, and contemporary newspaper accounts.

The nomination does address Palm tree frond skirts because recent public discussion has produced claims about the original appearance and maintenance of these trees that the record does not support. Keylon's scholarly nomination cites the city's own resolutions and council records on skirt maintenance from 1954 forward. Notably, the subject nomination does not argue for any particular trimming policy, and it does not need to. Under Section 8.05.070(B) of the code, character-defining features are established by the HSPB and the city council in their resolutions and not by an applicant. What the city decides about tree skirt maintenance is theirs to decide. Whether this is a historic resource is a separate question, and it can only serve the community's interest to be discussed and debated in a public forum.

We would be happy to discuss the nomination at the HSPB's convenience. The PSPF point of contact is board member Steven Keylon at info@pspreservationfoundation.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Johns". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gary" being more prominent than the last name "Johns".

Gary Johns
President