

Historic Preservation Board



Minutes

Location: Lower Level Council Chambers – 57 E First Street
Date: January 07, 2020 Time: 6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Greg Marek, Chair
Brandon Benzing, Vice-Chair
Laura Schaffer-Metcalf Ed.D.
Benjamin Ayers
Barbara Bingham
Milagros Zingoni

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Nana Appiah
Arianna Urban
Charlotte McDermott
Dawn Dallman
Rebecca Gorton

GUESTS:

Vic Linoff

1. **Call Meeting to Order.**

Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. **Approval of the minutes from the December 10, 2019 special session board meeting.** Chair Marek asked for discussion on the minutes or a motion to approve.

The December meeting was considered a “special session” as it was not held on the traditional first Tuesday of the month schedule.

As no Members of the Board raised any comments, Board Member Schaffer-Metcalf moved to approve the minutes with no changes, and Vice-Chair Benzing seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0

Ayes: Greg Marek, Brandon Benzing, Benjamin Ayers, Laura Schaffer-Metcalf, Barbara Bingham, Milagros Zingoni

Nays: None

3. **Items from citizens present***

Vic *Linoff*, President of the Mesa Preservation Foundation, announced that himself and Ron Peters would give a presentation on the Buckhorn Baths on Saturday January 11, 2020 at the Superstition Mountain Museum in Apache Junction at 1:00 pm in the Elvis Presley Room. This is open to the public.

4. Discuss and take action on supporting the Arizona Preservation Foundation letter to the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury supporting the federal tax incentive program for historic conservation easements.

Dr. Nana Appiah presented to the board that he and Ms. Urban had drafted a letter, and that it is currently under review by the Mesa Inter-governmental Relations Officer to ensure that it is acceptable to the City Council and Mayor from a public affairs standpoint. The original letter proposed by the Arizona Preservation Foundation included language that was unnecessarily extreme, and Mesa's goal is to refine the letter to convey the same intention in a more presentable way.

Chair Marek suggested that the Board move to allow himself to work with Dr. Appiah and Ms. Urban to finalize the language in the letter on behalf of the Board Members. Board Member Schaffer-Metcalf moved that the Board approves Dr. Appiah and Chair Marek to collaborate on the content of the letter to the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury. Board Member Zingoni seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0

Ayes: Greg Marek, Brandon Benzing, Benjamin Ayers, Laura Schaffer-Metcalf, Barbara Bingham, Milagros Zingoni

Nays: None

5. Discuss and finalize the date for the Board's upcoming strategic planning retreat.

Dr. Appiah referenced an email sent individually to each Board Member to confirm the proposed retreat date for February 15, 2020. He recommended that City staff work with Chair Marek to compose an agenda for the retreat and begin with the updated action plan for the administration of the Historic Preservation program and policies as stated by the City Council. In addition, an email was sent individually to each Board Member to solicit ideas for the retreat agenda.

Dr. Appiah also stated that lunch and tour is planned for the afternoon portion of the retreat, to visit historic sites within Mesa.

Chair Marek inquired of the Board if all Members are available on February 15, which was affirmative from all.

At this point, Ms. McDermott asked to clarify the motion to compose the letter referenced in agenda item 4. It was clarified that Chair Marek would work with City staff to compose the letter, and it would be brought back to the Board at the February meeting for comment and approval.

Chair Marek inquired of Mr. *Linoff* if he has the contact information for the owners of the Buckhorn Baths, in hopes the retreat tour may be conducted there. Mr. *Linoff* mentioned that the new owners may be reluctant to open the site to tours due to safety issues. Mr. *Linoff* committed to contacting the owners regarding a potential tour.

Board Member Zingoni mentioned she would be interested in touring a successful adaptive reuse project, and Chair Marek suggested the Alhambra Hotel as a potential location. Dr. Appiah suggested that the Board Members email City staff their recommendations for tour locations.

6. Hear an update and discuss the plan of action for the City's awarded grant from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to revise the City's design guidelines for historic properties and zoning text amendments.

Dr. Appiah reviewed the parameters of the State grant to update the zoning ordinance, in addition to the \$50,000 given by the City Council to the historic preservation program; to compose a Request for Proposals (RFP) that covers both design guidelines and zoning text amendments. Ideally, the design guidelines would be specific to each historic district, as the future consultant will review the historic property surveys completed for each neighborhood and understand their distinct character-defining features. The current design guidelines are overall, and act as blanket suggestions, but do not adequately cover the diversity of properties in the current historic districts.

Ms. Urban addressed the Board and explained that the funding from SHPO is currently being processed, and that the City is ready to begin processing it through the finance office as soon as the signed paperwork is received from SHPO. She and Dr. Appiah have already met with the Development Services finance staff person and understand the steps taken to begin utilizing the SHPO funds.

Dr. Appiah commented that it would be helpful to have several Board Members to sit on the RFP selection committee. The selected consultant should have expertise in historic preservation and land use, as well as architectural design and planning. An update to the status of the RFP will be presented prior to the Board retreat.

Chair Marek asked for clarification that through the RFP process, the proposed project will be looking at reexamining the current historic preservation ordinance and the design guidelines separately. Dr. Appiah replied that the endeavor will be one project with two parts. The guidelines and zoning text must go hand-in-hand; the design guidelines can only be given weight if the text of the zoning ordinance refers to them directly. In historic preservation, preservation design guidelines must be more strictly prescriptive and refined than aspirational general development design guidelines.

Chair Marek remarked that separate from the design guidelines, he believes that several pieces within the current historic preservation zoning ordinance should be updated as well. Dr. Appiah agreed that there are several deficiencies within the ordinance, and that it will be beneficial to refine the processes therein. City Council must ultimately approve the changes to the Ordinance. Extensive public outreach will be conducted, and the historic district communities will have a chance to provide input into the updated guidelines and ordinance.

Chair Marek offered that in the early 2000s, design guidelines were composed for the West Second Street Historic District, and that it may not be necessary to rewrite those specifically. A Request for Qualifications will likely not precede the RFP, as inquired by Board Member Zingoni, who also asked if the search will be local, regional, or national. Dr. Appiah answered that the City Purchasing Department has regulations for qualifications which will be followed. Board Member Zingoni was concerned that a local firm or team may not have adequate experience or qualifications to successfully execute this project. The ideal firm has well-qualified planners, architects, and historic preservationists. The currently deadline for project completion as per the CLG grant is at the end of October 2020.

7. Review and discuss the Historic Preservation Awards nomination for and finalize the awards schedule.

The nomination form for the Historic Preservation Awards is standard from year-to-year, as are the categories for nomination. At the previous Board meeting, a tentative deadline for nominations was set for March 27, 2020. As such, the Awards should be advertised at the beginning of February.

8. Historic Preservation Officer's Updates:

a. Provide status of the vacant Historic Preservation Board member position.

- A recommendation to the Mayor has been made through the City Clerk's office, and Dr. Appiah had made it clear that the Historic Preservation Board highly recommends the new Board Member be instated as soon as possible. The goal is to have the new Board Member instated prior to the upcoming Board retreat.
- The upcoming Mesa Historic Home Tour will be held on February 1, 2020, and Ms. Urban provided that the Historic Preservation Office intends to have a presence at the tour. The Serrine House will be open during the tour and staffed by the Arizona Museum of Natural History, as has been done in prior years.
- An email was sent to Board Members soliciting recommendations for the upcoming retreat.

9. Hear reports form Board Members on museum, exhibits, committees, and/or events related to historic preservation.

Board Member Bingham spoke with Anita Peters, organizer of the Historic Home Tour, who does not take issue with the Board advertising the Historic Preservation Awards at the tour. Board Member Schaffer-Metcalf has sent forty-six emails to every school in Mesa regarding the student writing and video contest. Her contact for Mesa Public Schools has retired, so they have yet to be contacted.

Chair Marek announced the Arizona State Historic Preservation Conference, which is upcoming in June in Tempe. He would like the City to pay the entry fees for any interested Board Members to attend the conference. It would also provide Mesa an opportunity to hold a session about the city's historic preservation developments.

10. Future agenda items.

Updates for Historic Preservation Board retreat
Status of the new Historic Preservation Board Member
RFP applicant updates and selection process

11. **Adjournment.**

Board Member Zingoni motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:31 p.m. and was seconded by Board Member Schaffer-Metcalf.

Vote: 6-0

Ayes: Greg Marek, Laura Schaffer-Metcalf, Brandon Benzing, Benjamin Ayers, Barbara Bingham

Nays: None

Supporting data is available for public review in the Planning Division, Municipal Building,
55 N. Center Street, Mesa, AZ 85201