

# Historic Preservation Board



## Minutes

Virtual Platform

Date: July 7, 2020 Time: 6:00 p.m.

### MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brandon Benzing, Vice-Chair  
Laura Schaffer-Metcalf Ed.D.  
Benjamin Ayers  
Barbara Bingham  
Jim Babos  
Michelle Dhalke

### MEMBERS ABSENT:

Milagros Zingoni

### STAFF PRESENT:

Nana Appiah  
Arianna Urban

### GUESTS:

Vic Linoff  
Greg Marek

#### 1. **Call Meeting to Order.**

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

#### 2. **Introduction of new Historic Preservation Board Member Michelle Dhalke.**

Board Member Dhalke has a background in urban development and zoning, with a passion for historic preservation. Each Board Member introduced themselves to the group.

#### 3. **Election of Historic Preservation Board Officers:**

- a. Chair
- b. Vice-Chair

Vice-Chair Benzing called for nominations to the Chair position. Board Member Schaffer-Metcalf nominated Vice-Chair Benzing, and Board Member Bingham seconded the nomination.

Vote: 5-0

Ayes: Laura Schaffer-Metcalf, Barbara Bingham, James Babos, Benjamin Ayers, Michelle Dhalke (Milagros Zingoni absent)

Nays: None

Board Member Bingham nominated Board Member Schaffer Metcalf to the Vice-Chair position, and Board Member Babos seconded the nomination.

Vote: 5-0

Ayes: Brandon Benzing, Barbara Bingham, James Babos, Benjamin Ayers, Michelle Dhalke (Milagros Zingoni absent)

Nays: None

**4. Approval of the minutes from the June 02, 2020 Historic Preservation Board meeting.**

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

Vote: 7-0

Ayes: Brandon Benzing, Laura Schaffer-Metcalf, Barbara Bingham, James Babos, Benjamin Ayers, Michelle Dhalke (Milagros Zingoni Absent)

Nays: None

Vic Linoff remarked that the agenda for the upcoming virtual historic preservation conference is now available online and is free to register.

**5. Items from the public.\***

Greg Marek used this opportunity to express his enjoyment in serving on the Board and helping to rebuild the preservation program. He feels that great strides have already been made and it was his privilege to work with the Board Members. He plans to stay involved in the rebuilding of the program. Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf thanked Greg Marek for his service.

Vic Linoff recognized Greg Marek in his role as the past Chair of the Historic Preservation Board and past Historic Preservation Officer. He is credited with continuing to move the preservation program forward and in the creation of the strong and active Board of today. He expressed his thanks and gratitude to Mr. Marek.

**6. Hear a presentation from staff and discuss the 2020 Arizona Historic Preservation Conference, including a summary of the conference and the effectiveness of the virtual platform used for the conference.**

Ms. Urban delivered a presentation summarizing the 2020 Arizona Historic Preservation Conference on June 18<sup>th</sup>. The Governor's Historic Preservation Awards were presented in the opening session, and downtown Mesa's Nile Theater restoration was an award recipient. Ms. Urban played the video highlighting the Nile Theater for the Board. Through an early façade improvement grant, preservation architect Ron Peters was able to restore the Nile's character-defining features and reveal much of the original façade. State Historic Preservation Officer Kathryn Leonard presented the video award. Chair Benzing added that this award is a positive boost for the Mesa preservation program, and adds to its visibility statewide. Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf agreed, and pointed to the Federal Building as a project with a potential similar outcome.

The presentation continued with a recap of Kathryn Leonard's "State of the SHPO" session, in which Mesa was recognized as a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant recipient. Ms. Urban summarized the session with an acknowledgement of the importance of stakeholder groups and their involvement in local preservation programs. Ms. Leonard presented several preservation-related legislative changes, including a proposed change in National Register nomination rulemaking which would rebalance the input of property owners in historic district formation based on property size. The session also outlined future CLG commissioner training webinars, which will be a positive way to learn and connect with other Arizona CLGs.

"How Disease Shapes Design" was a midday conference session about the history of the sanatorium movement in Arizona, and how the pursuit of health influenced the design of

new hospitals and resorts. The session continued with a conversation about the future of design, and how the Covid pandemic will force a reimagination of future architecture oriented toward health and safe spaces. As lives become more local, people are now participating in their neighborhoods and communities in new ways, and designing the built environment oriented towards this new reality can result in a healthier future.

The final conference session was a detailed account of all the grant and assistance opportunities available at the federal, state, and local level to support historic preservation programs. Additionally, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has published a virtual engagement toolkit, which serves as a reference for reaching the preservation community in new ways.

Ms. Urban felt that the online conference format was engaging and successful, while additionally benefitting from participation of those who may not have been able to attend in person. The chat feature allowed the conference participants to engage with each other without disturbing the presenter, as well as pose their queries for the question period following each presentation. Chair Benzing commented on the Disease Shapes Design presentation, and how keeping people close to their homes will positively affect neighborhoods. He believed that the digital platform worked fairly well, and was accessible to a wider audience, but does not replace an in-person conference. In the future, a hybrid format with online presentations as well as physical activities may be a good way to maintain that wide audience while affording opportunities for personal connection. Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf enjoyed the digital delivery of the conference, (she would not have been able to attend otherwise), and found it informative and successful, though it does not replace the face-to-face connections of an in-person conference.

Board Member Dhalke was not able to attend, but has been pleased with the way that public-facing committees and activities have been able to adapt. As public participation is so vital, virtual meetings do allow people to attend and participate that have obligations that may prevent them from attending in person. Chair Benzing concurred, and stressed that it is important that the public knows they are able to participate in this way as well.

## **7. Historic Preservation Officer's Updates:**

- a. Update on up-coming historic preservation outreach strategies, including holding virtual neighborhood meet and greet with residents in the various historic districts in August.

Dr. Nana Appiah addressed the board to communicate that the program is still prioritizing engaging with the community, and recounted that many communities have seen an increase in the public participation process through the use of virtual participation opportunities. As such, the Historic Preservation Office is planning a virtual community meet-and-greet with historic district residents to build the strength of the preservation program. Interfacing with community members and local advocates is essential in building a stronger preservation network in Mesa. The date for this meeting is August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020, at 6pm, and postcards will be mailed to advertise the meeting. HPO staff hopes to share goals and ideals of the preservation program, and plans for continuing to revive the program. Suggestions from Board Members for

the virtual meeting are welcome as the agenda is assembled. Board Member Dhalke wished to clarify the purpose of the meeting, to which Dr. Appiah elaborated that staff will introduce themselves, talk about the preservation program and its goals, upcoming projects, and provide for a question-and-answer session, and relay contact information. This will be the first in a series of meetings, to help the public become comfortable with participating in future meeting and events and spark interest in Mesa historic preservation. It has been over a year since such a community engagement effort was made; Chair Benzing recounted that two or three years ago several outreach meetings were had in the neighborhoods. Ms. Urban added that the goal is to introduce HPO staff and Board Members, and begin to make an authentic connection with the community. The meeting will be targeted to all the historic districts and any other community members interested in preservation. The August Board meeting will include further discussion and review of agenda items for the community meeting; staff hopes that as many Board Members as possible will be able to attend.

- b. Update on revising the historic preservation design guidelines and the historic preservation sections in the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.

A consultant has been selected to complete the project, and the contract for that consultant is currently under review. It is planned to present the consultant with the contract next week. Staff hopes to introduce the consultant at the August Board meeting.

- c. Update on the Board receiving meeting agendas and agenda materials including staff reports through Legistar.

Dr. Appiah noted that the other boards under the Planning Division purview use a program called Legistar to organize their agendas, minutes, and documents, and the Historic Preservation Board is now enrolled in Legistar as well. It will provide for a link to meeting agendas and documents rather than email attachments. Planning is also in the process of ordering iPads for Board Members for their use during meetings to review documents. Board Member Dhalke found Legistar greatly helpful from her time serving on the Planning and Zoning Board, and it is very user-friendly.

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

No Board Members presented any such reports.

- 9. **Future agenda items.**

Update on Design Guidelines and Zoning Ordinance project  
New timeline for video and essay contest

- 10. **Adjournment.**

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m. and was

seconded by Board Member Dhalke.

Vote: 6-0

Ayes: Laura Schaffer-Metcalf, Brandon Benzing, Benjamin Ayers, Barbara Bingham, James Babos, Michelle Dhalke (Milagros Zingoni absent)

Nays: None

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