



Historic Preservation Board

*Minutes*

Virtual Platform

Date: August 04, 2020 Time: 6:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brandon Benzing, Vice-Chair  
Laura Schaffer-Metcalf Ed.D.  
Milagros Zingoni  
Jim Babos  
Michelle Dahlke  
Niti Desai

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Barbara Bingham

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Dr. Nana Appiah  
Jeff McVay  
Arianna Urban

**GUESTS:**

Vic Linoff  
The Lakota Group: Nick  
Kalogeresis, Doug Karre, Richard  
Friedman, Peter Benton  
Gensler Architects: Jay Silverberg,  
Lindsey Feola, Benjamin Ayers

**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 Niti Desai.**

Board Member Desai is a registered architect and recently moved to Mesa from Chicago, where she practiced for sixteen years. She relocated with her family to Mesa for a job opportunity.

**3. Approval of the minutes from the August 04, 2020 Historic Preservation Board meeting.**

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

Vote: 6-0

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

Nays: None

**4. Items from the public.\***

No members of the public wished to comment.

**5. Introduce the consultant selected for the Historic Preservation Design Guidelines and Zoning Ordinance update project.**

Ms. Urban introduced the selected consultant, the Lakota Group, from Chicago, Illinois. Associate Principal Nick Kalogeresis introduced Lakota as a planning, landscape architecture, and preservation firm, and their two sub-consultants. The consultant's present team members consisted of Mr. Kalogeresis, historic

preservation planner Doug Kaarre, Chicago land use attorney Richard Friedman, Heritage Strategies Principal Peter Benton, while two other team members were not present at the meeting.

The Lakota Group was founded in 1993, where Mr. Kalogeresis began the historic preservation practice in 2008. Lakota's preservation projects specialize in preservation planning, design guidelines, surveys, and national register nominations around the country. Lakota, along with its two sub-consultants feel they have a comprehensive set of skills to bring to the project in Mesa, which will produce a set of design guidelines and an updated historic preservation ordinance.

Chair Benzing expressed his excitement for Lakota's selection, and that their interview had impressed the selection committee.

**6. Discuss the upcoming historic preservation virtual community meeting on August 19, 2020, and possible agenda topics.**

Chair Benzing began with a recounting of community outreach conducted in the past several years and how it largely focused on architecture and structures, while it would be beneficial for the future to also include cultural aspects of historic preservation to better incorporate the community.

Ms. Urban noted that the upcoming community meet-and-greet will involve a short formal program and that the bulk of the meeting will include questions and conversation with attendees in effort to introduce Board Members and build a rapport with the community. Chair Benzing will deliver remarks on behalf of the Board, as well as opening remarks from City Administrators, and staff will present a short powerpoint to outline the duties of the Historic Preservation Office and inform the public how they can interact with staff and get involved with preservation.

Board Member Zingoni inquired as to how Staff has reached out to the community, and encouraged the future use of social media and Instagram to reach community members in a modern way. In the previous weeks, Staff prepared a postcard mailer to send to every property in the historic districts advertising the meeting. An email list was also aggregated from past correspondence and permit applications, in order to reach some citizens electronically. Social media posts and updates were also planned to spread the word about the meeting, as well as a formal press release from the City's Public Information Officer. Dr. Appiah added that the recent Development Services newsletter also included the meeting, as well as a Nextdoor post.

Chair Benzing commented that it may be fruitful to reach out to local businesses that are adjacent to the historic districts, in an effort to build holistic community cohesion, perhaps through the RAIL network. Ms. Urban noted to look into performing such outreach. Dr. Appiah added that Jeff McVay, Director of Downtown Transformation, has been involved with outreach for the meeting as well.

As Board Member Dahlke asked how Board Members may help in preparation for the meeting, Dr. Appiah encouraged the Board to forward the meeting invitation to any contacts in the community they may have, in addition to participating in the meeting.

Vice-Chair Shaffer-Metcalf, Board Member Dahlke, Board Member Zingoni all stated their intent to attend the meeting. Ms. Urban replied that as the meeting will involve a quorum, it will be posted according to the Arizona Open Meeting Law.

7. **Hear a presentation and discuss the Mesa City Studios Project (59 E 1<sup>st</sup> Street-former Information Technology/Mesa Public Library building).**

Dr. Appiah introduced Jeff McVay, who began with an overview of the subject project, set to rehabilitate the now-vacant 1959 Mesa Public Library. In its designation report as a local landmark, certain architectural features were noted as significant character-defining features: the wavy canopies, the exterior breezeblock, and the interior terrazzo stair, which need special consideration prior to alteration or removal. Simultaneously, the Arizona State University project is currently under construction immediately adjacent to the Library building (the “Studios” building). This necessitated the removal of the wavy canopies, the plan for which was presented to the Board earlier this year and included several strategies for documentation and partial re-creation of the canopies. These concepts, along with the design for the Studios building itself has continued to be developed, the results of which were included in the presentation by Gensler Architects:

Jay Silverberg and Lindsey Feola of Gensler Architects opened their presentation with a history and context of the project and building, a mid-century modern landmark constructed in 1959, which at its time created a sense of community pride in the heart of Mesa. With the new project, the aim is to connect with that history and use it to inspire the goals for the future of the building. Materiality, color, lighting, and detail all embrace that history and feel of the building, in the historic attributes Mr. McVay had mentioned prior. Gensler hopes to clean up the breezeblock, and utilize it to connect the interior and exterior of the building with planned removal of the interior sill wall and introduce full-height glazing. The main terrazzo stair will remain intact, while opening the stair enclosure to emphasize its views and form. The wavy canopies acted to shade the south side entry and will inspire the new development of the project.

The design approach for the entry lobby is an extension of the experience of the space, both interior and exterior. The goal was to create a welcoming entry to the building, in the glazing-in of the existing outdoor patio space, while leaving intact the current mullion glazing pattern outside the main stair. Ms. Feola described this as an “extroverted aspect” of the building in an effort to engage with the new student community. The railing of the main stair will not need to be altered as egress is addressed with the building’s other stairs, and the historic overhead light fixtures will also be restored.

A new restroom core was also proposed to make interior space more flexible, situated between the Studios building and the Council Chambers. The two volumes are separated with a glass “gasket” bridge, to intentionally articulate each part of the building and create a new roof plane for the necessary new mechanical units.

The interior will include a flexible event space with the concrete “T” structure exposed and a utility grid hung below, while the new full-height glass will be backlit at night. Through the opening of the building’s interior, the stair will be visible from the collaborative work environments.

The design goal for the canopies is to recreate them in a historically-inspired way, with an integration of the salvaged remnants of the original canopies. One proposal includes the south entry covered by a short portion of a re-created canopy in a lighter-weight material. The remnants are intended to be re-engaged as a piece of artwork as a way to engage the history of the canopies, possibly as a gateway to frame the north sidewalk entrance to the building and situate them sculpturally.

They may also integrate some historical information, possibly etched or sandblasted onto the concrete remnants.

Chair Benzing commended Mr. Silverberg and Ms. Feola for their design efforts and encouraged the proposed outboard core and the lobby enclosure. He felt the south entry canopy recreation and space reworking is a positive development, as was the proposal to reuse the remnants without recreating the canopy.

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf inquired about the future of flood irrigation on the site; Mr. McVay replied that the intent for the project is to retain the flood irrigation, as the mature trees accustomed to irrigation will not survive a change in watering system.

Board Member Zingoni echoed Chair Benzing's comments and added that the architectural history of the modern movement was a response to health concerns around the turn of the century, namely the 1918 flu pandemic. She remarked that this may be an opportunity to incorporate operable windows and ventilation into the project design. She continued with the notion of the outdoor classroom, and posited if the new terrace at the north of the building could operate as such, as the terrace (much like the new restroom core) are distinctly modern additions to the historic building. Her closing comment regarded the canopy remnants, and her concern that the proposed perpendicular orientation of the remnant sculpture erodes the understanding of the original structures and suggested to use them parallel to the ground as a sitting area.

Board Member Babos noted that the northeast corner is currently a shaded outdoor area, and with the enclosure of the lobby, the outdoor shade opportunities are taken away. He suggested to recess the new glazed area or only enclose one of two vertical bays. He lauded the design of the new front east-west interior corridor and encouraged the outboard core but would like to see it recessed from the original building façade to preserve the prominence of the historic façade.

Board Member Dahlke inquired about the code-compliance of the main stair and its ability to be used as a main point of egress. Ms. Feola replied that the stair can remain in use but it does not need to be upgraded, as the two other stairways in the building will be brought up to code for safety purposes and public use. Plans for the basement are also proposed to be a flexible space while accommodating electrical equipment.

Mr. McVay voiced his role in communicating the realities of the budget to the Board, which currently can accommodate one floor of build-out on the interior space, while the second floor and basement will be shells. As the project ends schematic design, refining of both design and budget will continue in the next phases. The responsible parties for these future tenant improvements are to be determined, though the intent is for the building to always remain the property of the City.

Board Member Dahlke inquired of Mr. Linoff about his thoughts of the reuse of the canopy remnants sculpturally. Mr. Linoff recounted that the canopy was a character-defining feature and was pleased to learn of the remnants. He hoped for the possibility of recreating the canopies on the north side of the building over the sidewalk as a shade structure. Board Member Dahlke proposed that the group consider a way to recreate the wave canopy as a shade structure, in an effort to preserve the feature. Mr. McVay remarked that one design intent was to refrain from visually obstructing the main façade or corner entry views. Chair Benzing added that the lack of structural reinforcements in the salvaged remnants, which are original sections of the historic concrete canopies, may prevent them from being used horizontally, and the perpendicular orientation supports their installation on the

“strong” end of the structure. Ms. Urban noted that there may be an opportunity to incorporate an interpretive panel to convey the history of the building. Board Member Zingoni mentioned that she had seen etchings used as historic interpretation on a visit to Europe. On behalf of Staff, Dr. Appiah added that there has been a considerable effort to make sure the integrity of the building is maintained, while its programming is usable and functional.

**8. Discuss the historic preservation essay and video contest for the 2020-2021 academic year, including the timeline.**

Vice-Chair Schaffer Metcalfe began with an overview of the current state of education and its uncertainty. Should the Board move ahead with the essay and video contest for this year? Teachers are under stress to rewrite their curricula, and executing such a contest will be more difficult in an online environment. Chair Benzing agreed that it will be exceedingly difficult to do with online schooling, and proposed postponing to the fall of next year. Board Member Babos offered that his wife is a school teacher and is experiencing this difficulty first hand, and agrees with postponing the contest.

Board Member Zingoni presented a different perspective and felt that engaging children in such a contest will be beneficial to their extracurricular education. In place of advertising the contest through the schools and teachers, children can submit their work independently as a proactive enrichment activity. Chair Benzing asked the Board to brainstorm ways to broadcast the contest: activity emails through Mesa Public Schools, Parks and Recreation’s class efforts, Mesa11, the Public Information Officer, the online education app Peach Jar, etc. Board Member Dahlke agreed.

A cash award has been offered in the past, given by Board Members. Ms. Urban voiced that the Historic Preservation Office would be happy to fund the awards for this year, while Board Member Dahlke encouraged the Board to maintain the tradition of presenting the awards from the Mayor at a City Council Meeting, which would be highly formative to children. Board Member Babos offered that the Library often has summer programs and may be a way to circulate contest information. Dr. Appiah ensured that Staff will work with the Library, Parks, and the Public Information Officer to pursue all avenues to convey the contest information. Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalfe will work with City Staff to continue to develop the contest and communicate it out, as will Board Members Zingoni and Babos.

**9. Historic Preservation Officer’s Updates**

**a) Training opportunities for Board Members, such as the September Mesa Historic Preservation Board meeting**

Ms. Urban remarked that she plans to give a presentation about the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Preservation* as a training opportunity for the Board Members at the September meeting.

**10. Hear reports from Board Members on museums, exhibits, committees and/or events related to historic preservation.**

No Board Members presented such reports.

**11. Future Agenda Items**

Discuss topics for writing and video contest  
Recap of virtual community meeting

## 12. Adjournment

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 p.m. and was seconded by Board Member Zingoni.

Vote: 6-0 (Barbara Bingham Absent)

Ayes: Laura Schaffer-Metcalf, Brandon Benzing, Benjamin Ayers, James Babos, Michelle Dahlke, Milagros Zingoni

Nays: None

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