



## Historic Preservation Board

### *Minutes*

Virtual Platform

Date: September 01, 2020 Time: 6:00 p.m.

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brandon Benzing, Chair  
Milagros Zingoni  
Barbara Bingham  
Jim Babos  
Michelle Dahlke  
Niti Desai

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Laura Schaffer-Metcalf Ed.D.,  
Vice-Chair (arrived at 6:30pm)

#### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Dr. Nana Appiah  
Arianna Urban

#### **GUESTS:**

Vic Linoff

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

Chair Benzing called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

#### **2. 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 Board Member Zingoni seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0

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

Nays: None

#### **3. Items from the public.\***

No members of the public wished to comment.

#### **4. Discuss and receive feedback on the Historic Preservation virtual community meeting on August 19, 2020.**

Chair Benzing believed the meeting went very well, and proposed to better understand how to reach out to community members beyond the regularly involved citizens, to which Board Member Zingoni agreed. She later met with participant Bruce Nelson and assisted him with the grant writing process in the completion of the Nile Theater documentary. Chair Benzing suggested engaging with Mr. Nelson to learn more about his involvement and deep knowledge within the community.

Board Member Benzing commented on the participant that expressed interest in learning more about the historic home they had recently moved into, and proposed a "tell us about your house night" in order to get residents communicating and excited about their homes.

Board Member Bingham also voiced her feelings of success about the meeting, due in

part to the fact that property owners from across Mesa were interested and in attendance.

Ms. Urban recounted that this meeting served as evidence that virtual engagement is possible and can continue to be successful in the future. Board Member Zingoni suggested to do future meetings in a webinar format so it would be possible to create breakout rooms and share in smaller groups. She also suggested using an application called Our Town.

Dr. Appiah explained that public notification for such types of breakout meetings will need to be arranged prior.

Chair Benzing inquired of the Board as to the frequency of future meetings. Board Members Babos and Dahlke remarked that virtual meetings do able more residents to attend the meetings, and future meetings could be quarterly in an online-hybrid format. Board Member Zingoni proposed to select a specific district to target for the next outreach meeting; Chair Benzing offered that we can engage them, get their feedback, and see what they need help with. Ms. Urban proposed several suggestions, including engaging existing districts, or reaching out to proposed and upcoming postwar districts as well. The Flying Acres neighborhood is of note, as its designation stalled towards the end of 2018. With some attention, it could be revived, and the neighbors reengaged before support for the district wanes.

Dr. Appiah suggested that the Board continues with quarterly and standing, neighborhood-specific meetings. Additionally, the Lakota Group will be doing extensive neighborhood participation, and it should be considered to not fatigue residents with overwhelming outreach.

Chair Benzing proposed that the City's outreach should pick up in the new year, after Lakota is finished with their outreach. Board Member Babos also suggested that each meeting could highlight a knowledgeable resident who could recount the story of their property's history, which could be a draw for attendance.

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

Board Member Zingoni shared the contest information with the STEM coordinator for Mesa Public Schools, who will pass it on to teachers, though it was made clear that students will be able to submit on their own. She is still looking for a technology-video elective teach for the Mesa high schools.

Chair Benzing recounted the essay topics from last years' postponed contest, and inquired if the board is amenable to using the same information from last year. The plan is to coordinate the essay awards with May's historic preservation month, though a March deadline might conflict with the schools' spring break. It was decided that March 5<sup>th</sup> will be the contest deadline.

Board Member Babos reached out to Library Director Heather Wolfe who expressed her support for including flyers in each children's book pickup order.

**6. Hear and discuss a presentation form the Historic Preservation Office Staff regarding the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and its applicability to reviewing projects in Mesa.**

Ms. Urban began a presentation regarding the *Standards* as they apply to Mesa's historic preservation program: The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) provides the structure and framework for historic preservation in the United States. The NHPA

established, among other things, the National Register of Historic Places, the Section 1086 process, and the Certified Local Government program, of which Mesa is a part. In Mesa, the *Standards* are directly referred to in the Mesa Zoning Ordinance, in Chapter 11-74, in the review process for Certificates of Appropriateness. Many Certified Local Governments use the *Standards* in this way, rather than develop their own specific guidelines. The *Standards* provide the language for preservation treatments and ideas and formalize the way historic preservation is discussed. There are 10 specific standards: (1) use a property as it was intended or for a compatible new use, (2) retain important historic features and spaces, (3) avoid creating a false sense of history, (4) retain significant layers from changes over time, (5) retain character-defining materials or details, (6) replace or replicate in kind, (7) clean and treat historic fabric carefully, (8) archaeology should be left in place, (9) differentiate new construction from historic, and (10) new additions or modifications should be reversible. These ten standards are applied in four distinct ways: Preservation is focused on sustaining and maintaining the existing form of a historic building, Rehabilitation is creating a compatible use for a historic property through sensitive changes and alterations, Restoration is the returning of a historic property to a certain time in its past, and Reconstruction is the recreation of a historic resource that is no longer extant. In selecting a treatment, several things should be taken into account: the significance of the resource, the condition of the building's historic fabric, the proposed future use of the building, and code and other life safety regulations. Experienced historic architects are always recommended. Rehabilitation is the most-often executed treatment strategy and is very common in Mesa's historic buildings that are still in everyday use. Rehabilitation is often thought of as adaptive reuse, in ways that buildings can be modernized and upgraded in order to make them as useful as possible in the modern day. The National Park Service, designated to govern historic preservation in the United States, publishes historic preservation briefs to inform property looking for guidance about certain aspects of preservation projects and problem-solving solutions. The preservation briefs act as examples for carrying out the *Standards*. The *Standards* are considered as a starting point, but it is important to remember that each locale knows what's best for its historic resources. Mesa's designated Heritage Neighborhoods are an example of a project that is not part of traditional preservation convention but has become successful.

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf appreciated the presentation as it helped her to fill in some knowledge gaps. Board Member Dahlke asked a question about reconstruction, in the way that a reconstructed building is able to still gain historic significance. Ms. Urban described examples like Native American dwellings, and historic early military fortifications as ways that reconstructed resources can gain historic status through experiential and education purposes. Board Member Dahlke also inquired about the way that current building codes are applied to historic buildings. Ms. Urban replied with the existence of the Historic International Building Code, and ways that current codes may or may not apply to historic properties. Chair Benzing also offered that life safety regulations are often not negotiable, but if a building is able to meet those requirements, other non-compliant stairs or features can remain intact. Board Member Zingoni asked of Ms. Urban her thoughts about current adaptive reuse projects, and the balance between updating historic resources vs. the "frozen in time" approach. Ms. Urban replied with the importance to remember that buildings do need to change in order to continue to be used, and freezing buildings in time is generally not practical. It is always a balance, but adaptive reuse is generally the preservation strategy in Mesa. Board Member Zingoni brought up the Sunkist building as an example of a project that may be a good example of preservation and vocalized her interest in the importance of

the building's historic windows. Board Member Dahlke asked to better understand the idea of "fake history." Ms. Urban responded that preventing fake history is an attempt to avoid representing a different architectural style or time other than the one the historic resource relates to. Chair Benzing offered a past project of his on Madison Avenue in New York, in which the Landmarks Commission desired a similar building to be constructed on an empty corner lot in a historic row of houses, and the conversation about several ways to interpret the best way to build new in historic areas. Additionally, the difference between the quality of historic and new materials can often be a challenge in rehabilitating historic buildings.

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

**a) Updates on ongoing General Plan and Zoning Code text amendments, including but not limited to, site plan review process and adaptive reuse.**

Ms. Urban remarked that the historic design guidelines project is going well, and a kick-off call with The Lakota Group was productive in establishing a schedule and plan going forward.

Dr. Appiah commented about the greater General Plan amendments, which focus on character areas instead of specific zoning or uses, and the challenges of some new projects which have failed to foster that character. City Administration, Council, and Planning and Zoning Boards have been involved in several amendments to the General Plan which will serve to improve Mesa's character. Historic Preservation is part of a comprehensive development strategy, in creating a sense of place and community while continuing to promote growth.

**b. Update on using Legistar for Board meetings**

The new Board iPads and the use of Legistar helps the Historic Preservation Board to become on-par with the City's other planning boards, and is an improved system to organize and access documents. Staff is happy to hear feedback about the system and ways it can improve.

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

No Board Members presented such reports.

**9. Future Agenda Items**

Update on neighborhood events or interesting projects

**10. Adjournment**

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 p.m. and was seconded by Board Member Babos.

Vote: 7-0

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

Nays: None

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