

**Historic Preservation Board****Minutes**

**Virtual Platform**  
**Date: April 06, 2021 Time: 6:00 p.m.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brandon Benzing, Chair  
Laura Schaffer-Metcalf Ed.D., Vice-Chair  
Barbara Bingham  
Jim Babos  
Niti Desai  
Michelle Dahlke  
Bruce Nelson

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Arianna Urban  
Dr. Nana Appiah

**GUESTS:**

Vic Linoff

**1. Call meeting to order.**

**Chair Brandon Benzing:** We'll call the meeting to order for the April Historic Preservation Board meeting at 6:02 pm. The first order of business is to take roll. Chair benzing is President, Vice Chair Metcalf.

**2. Approval of minutes from previous meetings**

**Chair Benzing:** Next is approval of the minutes from the previous meeting, which was back in February, as we skipped the March meeting. Did anybody have any comments on the meeting minutes? They're fairly thorough since we went to the new recording system.

**Vice-Chair Laura Schaffer-Metcalf:** I don't have any comments or questions.

**Chair Benzing:** Do I have a motion to approve the minutes?

**Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf:** Motion to approve

**Boardmember Jim Babos:** Second

AYES: Benzing-Schaffer-Metcalf-Bingham-Babos-Desai-Dahlke-Nelson

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

**3. Introductions and welcome to new Boardmember Bruce Nelson**

**Chair Benzing:** We'll get into the more important part, which is the introductions. I'm sure everybody knows who Mr. Nelson is, as he's fairly present in the preservation community. We can just go around and introduce ourselves; I'm sure all of us have met you at one point or another. I'm Chair Benzing. I've probably been on the board now for five years or somewhere around there. I

lived in Mesa probably the past 35 or 36 years or so, almost my entire life. I'm a local architect and I work out of an office in Scottsdale. And I've been doing historical renovation work throughout the country and in other parts of the world, mostly rehabilitation projects; bringing buildings back to life for new purposes and trying to keep some of their integrity and history. so it's very exciting to try and help preserve that in Mesa as well. I want to move to Vice-Chair, you want to introduce yourself?

**Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf:** I'm Vice-Chair Metcalf. I've been on the board for six or seven years. I love historic preservation and I'm an educator by profession. I've lived in Mesa my entire life and graduated from Westwood High School. So at this point, I just want to make sure that historic preservation is at the forefront in Mesa, and make sure that we don't bulldoze any more of our historic properties and that they can be relatively saved and rehabbed and repurposed as necessary. Welcome to the Board Mr. Nelson.

**Boardmember Niti Desai:** my name is Niti Desai. I've lived in Mesa, probably two and a half years and moved here from Chicago. And I've been on the board since August, maybe September. I've done preservation work through architecture in Chicago, but nothing here yet. Although I do practice as an architect here.

**Chair Benzing:** Michelle, if you'd like to introduce yourself,

**Boardmember Michelle Dahlke:** I've never met Mr. Nelson, but I'm glad to meet you now. My name is Michelle Dahlke. So I've been on the Board for about a year this summer, and before that I was on the Planning and Zoning board for six years, for two of those I was the chair. I was really happy to be asked to be on this board right after the time I served with Planning and Zoning. I also just have a heart for historic preservation and wanting to make sure that we preserve our resources. And like Laura said, you know, anytime that we can reuse resources and keep them in our community, and have it serve its best purpose; I think that's so important. I'm a local planning and zoning consultant, so I do a little bit of consulting with jurisdictions throughout the state and some private stuff. We welcome you to the board; I look forward to meeting you in person someday when we can safely meet again.

**Chair Benzing:** Jim, if you'd like to give a brief introduction.

**Boardmember Babos:** Hi, Bruce. I'm Jim Babos, and I'm also an architect. I've lived in Mesa since 1990, when my wife and I came out here in '86, to go to ASU for graduate school. I don't have a lot of direct connections with historic preservation other than some work I've done in my own practice, and just a love of history and all things old. So it seemed to fit the bill for me. Welcome aboard.

**Chair Benzing:** Bruce, if you just like to give a background of yourself and introduce introduction.

**Boardmember Bruce Nelson:** Great. Well, thank you all for having me to the meeting, I hope I can have some kind of positive impact on what you're doing here. I am a resident of Mesa, and grew up in what is known as the Washington Escobedo community. It was the segregated community in Mesa, starting in around 1900. I have been creating documentaries and exhibits, and in trying to highlight that community I want people to know that we existed, and there are some positive things coming out of there. It's been a real challenge in our community: back in 1986, we were under siege by the city for gentrification and just about lost a lot of things in the neighborhood, and the community fought back and was able to save the community. When developers come in,

we didn't want them building four, five, or six story apartment building throughout the neighborhood. Now, we are designated as a Heritage Neighborhood through the efforts of myself and other folks.

I'm really an artist. My background is an artist, and I'm an actor, working in many years in theater and film. So hopefully, I'll have something to offer to the to the Board. I was on the Mesa Historical Board for about two years, and that was an interesting thing. I do also like history and think things should be saved or recognized in some capacity at least. So, thank you for having me. And I hope I can have some type of impact that's positive to the Board.

**Chair Benzing:** Well, it's great to have you, and I probably speak for everybody on the Board in that it's great to have someone with the amount of knowledge you have of local history, especially downtown Mesa, and just your love of activism for what you've done in your neighborhood. So, very happy to have you.

#### 4. **Items from citizens present**

**Arianna Urban:** We have our citizen here with us, Vic, if you want to go ahead.

**Vic Linoff:** Let me just first say welcome to Bruce. I think he will be a terrific addition to the Historic Preservation Board. His depth of knowledge and experience in Mesa will be invaluable in moving forward. I think you're going to do a great job for us and welcome to the board.

There are probably some things that that you should know that have taken place literally in the last month. First, the Buckhorn Baths went into receivership in December, and was part of a very complicated disagreement between the principles of ownership, which that included five other properties. So, their dispute amounted to about \$60 million, of which the Buckhorn was a very small component. It has been purchased, but has not yet closed, and we expect that to take place very soon, this month. Most important to us from a historic standpoint, is the fact that the Alice Sliger kept a binder for each year they were in business that listed all the activities that took place at the Buckhorn: who was there, where they stayed on the property, and the services they got. We've been trying for a long time to get those binders, and we were very worried that they might be lost in this sale. And through work with the receiver, we were able to get those binders and some other materials of Alice's. I happened to open one today, and on the first page, it said, "Chicago Cubs billing", and the first name was Hank Aaron's. So, we know that we're going to get a lot of information, even to the point that we'll find out what room Willie Mays stayed in when he was at the Buckhorn. We believe that we have not met the owner, but we have met the architect, Tim Boyle, and I think he's had conversations with Arianna. From everything we've heard, there is very strong interest in saving the Buckhorn, and even restoring the baths. So that's very encouraging.

Another bit of news is the Woman's club has sold. My understanding is now that don't know who the owner is because it has not closed as of yet. But, this is an individual who has some connection to the downtown and owns other properties, and we're told wants to use it as a an event center. I'm not a big fan of event centers, but that's what its use has been since it was built back in the 1930s. So there's every indication that that's going to be saved. Finally, and again, I don't think it has closed yet but Chicanos Por La Causa has purchased the Kiva Lodge. This one is of concern to us. They have expressed knowledge of the significance of the neon sign with an intent to keep it or donate it, so it certainly won't be lost. But this is where the Board could come in. With some help, we think it would be really important to preserve the entire site. It is now is the oldest motel lodging on Main Street. The original front building from when it was first a curio shop opened in about 1925,

and then the lodging units were started in the late 1930s. Chicanos Por La Causa wants to put affordable housing on the Mesa Royale and the Knights Inn; they are buying up all the properties surrounding. We think that if you have that many residents in the surrounding area, those cottages could be used for small businesses and services to that community. So, I think that because of its history, this is something that the preservation board is going to want to take a look at in the days ahead. So in just a month, we've had three major properties go up for sale, and we're assured that two of them will be saved, and one we're still working on. So thank you for the opportunity to just give you that update.

**Chair Benzing:** Wow, that's good news on 66% of it, we'll see what we can do about the other 33%. Thank you very much Vic. Okay, moving into item number five.

5. **Discuss and receive feedback from the February 03, 2021 Historic Design Guidelines and Zoning Ordinance update virtual community meeting.**

**Arianna Urban:** Thank you, Chair Benzing and Members of the Board, we did have a virtual meeting back on February 3 of this year. Its purpose was to introduce the zoning ordinance and design guidelines update project to the community. The meeting lasted about an hour and we had about 60 people that were able to attend, which was great. We got a lot of feedback, mostly that we need to improve our communication with the with the neighbors and with the residents. We didn't distribute a mailing like we did for our previous community meeting in August, and this time we relied on our on our email list, which didn't reach as much people as many people as we would have liked to. So, we got a lot of good feedback. Our plans going forward will include much more time and more resources devoted to getting the word out when we when we have our next meeting.

**Chair Benzing:** I think that fairly sums it up. There's always some hesitation when the when you talk about ordinances and stuff and updates. A lot of the discussion about the ordinance as I observed it was just not understanding that the update is intended to modernize the preservation guidelines. There were some concerns that there were more overlying restrictions being put on the neighborhoods, which definitely is not the intent. The intent is just to update it so that it provides the protection that is needed with the current trend of development. So, I think we were able to get that across, and Arianna did a really good job expressing that, and I think everyone there understood. So hopefully the next meeting we have on the project, there's some more feedback that's less about the communication of getting the word out about the meeting and more about the content of the ordinance.

**Arianna Urban:** Chair Benzing and Boardmembers, I've been describing it as a how-to guide or a handbook for property owners rather than guidelines or standards. I'm hoping that we can we can assuage any fears and let the neighbors know that we are not trying to impose any new regulations.

**Chair Benzing:** Did anybody have any other thoughts on that meeting?

**Arianna Urban:** Well, the next time we have one, I will be sure to of course involve all of you and we'd love to have as many Boardmembers as possible attend.

6. **Review and discuss the entries received and select the winners of the 2020-2021 Historical Fiction Essay and Video Contest.**

**Chair Benzing:** Item number 6 is to review and discuss the entries received from the historic fiction and essay and video contest. We got eight entries in total, which is pleasant surprise given where we were at the last time we met. I don't know Arianna how would you like to discuss these?

**Arianna Urban:** Chair Benzing and Members of the Board as a staff member I will not be an active participant in the discussion, and I will let the Board Members deliberate and then vote on your own. I'm privy to the names and the ages of the entrants, so I need to excuse myself from the discussion.

**Chair Benzing:** Understood. We decided that we were doing one prize for videos and one prize for essays, correct?

**Arianna Urban:** That was what we'd intended, yes.

**Chair Benzing:** So I can start. I read through the essays and to me, two of them stood out as a little bit more complete than the others. I had entry number two and entering number seven listed the highest in mine. They seem like they followed much more of a theme and were a little bit better constructed, in my opinion.

**Boardmember Dahlke:** Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry, which entries did you say you were considering?

**Chair Benzing:** I had number two and number seven. I will hold off the exact score of them for later, but those were the two highest ranked in my score sheet.

**Boardmember Bingham:** Seven was included in mine as well, along with five and six.

**Dr. Nana Appiah:** Chair, Boardmembers, my recommendation is we go through one to seven, and then you guys vote on each and decide on a winner based on majority vote. You can discuss them if there is a tie, but I think that will be a way to go.

**Boardmember Nelson:** I have a quick question. The rubric was great, as they can help you put things in perspective. I wasn't really sure when I looked at it what the guidelines were, whether it was to choose the most exciting or the most accurate essay. In looking at the video as compared to the written statement, they're very different in context. The video is more about interview skills, which is very different from something written. When I used to teach school I taught in the drama and dance department. What I said to my students was, here's the deal, you have an A, but you must complete all of your assignments, that gives you an A. Now, I'm going to look at the grammar and the punctuation, and if anything is really, really bad I'm going to point it out but I'm not going to take points away from that, because that's not what this class is. It's more about completing every task that you have before you. So, when I looked at that, six, seven, and two stood out to me, and I think it was seven that might have been a little different than the others in terms of vocabulary. I did wonder if is this the same age as the others, and if not, then it's not a fair comparison. But the ones that stood out to me were six, seven, and two. And I was charmed.

One thing that I did think about when they were talking about the history. is the way that we are teaching history in the schools. And some of the comments that they made, as a person of color, I found very disturbing in terms of how they related to Hohokams, and when they were here and the history of who those people are. I thought, well, the way that is taught is very different. They were here first, thousands of years before, and the way they sort of equated it in the essays, it didn't sound that way. However, there was one essay that sort of said yes, they have been here. But, it

made me think of my neighborhood, Washington Park. If you write a history about it in a certain way, it will sound more positive than it really was. One of the things they say with Dr. Alston's house, that he was the first African American doctor to practice in Mesa. But, they always omit the fact he was the first African American doctor for *humans* allowed to practice, which is very different. Before him there was John Stevenson, who was a veterinarian around 1905 and 1910. Well, guess what? He took care of people, because he was the black doctor. And doctors were not going to see them, or they had to go to Phoenix or Chandler. So, the way we lay out history, for me to come back around, I found a little interesting. When we teach these things about Mesa, it needs to be, for me, about clarification that the natives who were here. This was their land; they were here first. There was a whole history of water, that if you went over to McDowell and talk to the natives there, they will tell you some very interesting stories about it. But, to your point, six, seven, and two were the ones that stood out to me. I would vote strongly for those, but just also to make a point of information in terms of how we're teaching history. And that's across America, not just here in Arizona.

**Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf:** Mr. Nelson, you brought up a really good point. Since these are public school students in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades (at least for the writing portion, the video portion is for older students), these are state standards, and the state standards haven't been updated to reflect a change in opinion on what history is and what it really should be. I do know that there's a movement for the 1619 curriculum program that Balz or Creighton has already adopted, but unfortunately, what we're seeing is what's being taught and the timeline in which it's being taught in. It merits a serious update. Unfortunately, I don't know if we can do anything about it here, because the state being the state, sadly, and as a teacher, you probably already know that. It's embarrassing, and it's unnecessary. Maybe we need to think about looking a little bit more specifically on a topic for our next writing contest and video contest. We did do this as a very broad spectrum announcement, because we really didn't think we get anybody to submit. So, to your point, it's very, very important that we be able to acknowledge and understand those elements. Unfortunately, teachers are forced to teach what they have to teach in the state standards, which are outdated and unnecessarily myopic. So I think you're right, going back to the voting, I agree that taking a vote based on what we feel was most appropriate, and the ones with the most votes would probably be the best way to go.

**Boardmember Nelson:** Thank you for that. I will tell you though, I was very excited reading them, and I love their enthusiasm and the way they framed it: "I'm going to tell you something." I loved the one that said "so I'm going to take you on a journey," that was charming, I did enjoy it. And that's what I tried to think back on, when I was doing book reports and things like that. So I definitely enjoyed reading them, it was a good time.

**Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf:** To the teacher's credit, these are excellently organized, well written, well structured, five paragraph essay assignments. They started with a zinger, when you start with a question and you catch their attention. So it's really, really, to the credit of the teacher they did a great organizing these writing samples.

**Chair Benzing:** Let's just go through them first. We can say our top two or three, and then we'll see which ones have the most interest, then narrow it down from there. Did anyone have number one in their top two or three?

**Boardmember Babos:** I actually liked number one, it was the only one that actually talked about the history of the name of the city for Mesa. And I personally found that kind of interesting and off topic, but part of the topic, so I liked one.

**Chair Benzing:** How many do we have for...Entry two: 5. Entry number three: 1. Entry number four: 0. Entry number five: 2. Entry number six: 3. Entry number seven: 5. So we have 5 for two, and 5 five for seven.

**Arianna Urban:** Chair Benzing, Members of the Board, we do have a first, second, and third place. We can decide how to distribute those prizes.

**Chair Benzing:** Right now both two and seven have 5 votes, and six has 3 votes.

**Arianna Urban:** We can also do a tie for the winners if you'd like.

**Chair Benzing:** do we want to talk more about two and seven? Or do we just want to split it down the middle and say it's a tie for first?

**Boardmember Nelson:** I'd like to say it's a tie.

**Boardmember Dahlke:** I agree.

**Chair Benzing:** Well, that seems like that the answer then. Entry number six will come in third place, and entries number two and seven will come in first place as a tie.

**Boardmember Dahlke:** Mr. Chairman, is there a way for us to at least acknowledge the other entries, by sending them a letter or an email or something? If we can do that, I would be happy to be the person on behalf of the Board that thanks them for their entries.

**Chair Benzing:** I think that'd be a very good idea. I think it's good to give a little bit of encouragement, especially since you could tell some were different ages. Something like "thank you for entry and we enjoyed reading your story," and that they still have time to enter the contest next year.

**Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf:** I think you're right, because the teachers from year to year will keep this going in their lesson plans. What would be really cool is if either a letter or a certificate of participation signed by everybody on the board and the city staff. If you're in fourth grade, that's pretty good deal. You've got that little piece of paper that you participated, even though you may not have won the \$20, or the \$50, that's really valuable. So I think we should give every every participant, video and written, a certificate of participation so they'll know they have been valued for their submission. Is it possible that we could create something like that, Arianna? Then we could figure out how to do a signature on those.

**Arianna Urban:** Yes, Chair Benzing, Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf we, we can certainly write up a letter of participation or do a certificate, and we can figure out how the signatures will work.

**Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf:** I think everybody who submitted an essay should receive something like that. Also, is there something that we can give to the teacher as well for taking the extra time to incorporate this into their lesson plans, given the fact that teaching is quite compounded this year? Even just a letter of appreciation; I usually go and buy a gift card and I dropped that off at the front office for the teacher. But you know, if we can do something from the Board, that would be highly supportive.

**Arianna Urban:** Yeah, of course, if the Board wants to support the teacher in that way that would be great.

**Chair Benzing:** For the video contest, we had a first, second, and third prize, correct?

**Arianna Urban:** Technically, yes.

**Chair Benzing:** So we could potentially take a little bit of that, that we had set aside for the contest and use it for the teachers' recognition. Is it a single teacher that all the entries came from?

**Arianna Urban:** Chair Benzing, until there's a vote on the prizes I actually will refrain from disclosing whether it's just one teacher or not.

**Chair Benzing:** Okay. Yes.

**Arianna Urban:** I don't believe we'll be able to give the teacher an award funded by staff.

**Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf:** It might be a conflict of interest.

**Chair Benzing:** Yes, okay. We could write a letter though, thanking them for supporting the contest in their classroom.

**Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf:** Then usually what I do is go and buy something and put it in a thank you card and note that this is on behalf of my own purchase, not the Board or the City. Just my own token of appreciation.

**Arianna Urban:** That sounds good. Okay.

**Chair Benzing:** Do we want to vote then on entry number entry six in third place, and entry two and seven are tied for first? We'll take a vote for all in favor.

AYES: Benzing-Schaffer-Metcalf-Bingham-Babos-Desai-Dahlke-Nelson

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

**Chair Benzing:** Okay, so moving on to the video contest. There is only one, and it's the first one we have ever gotten. So I do appreciate the student finding somebody to interview, and their questions were very in line. I don't think they exactly got the responses they were looking for, but it is a start for that program. I'll just open it up for what everybody else thought.

**Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf:** I think, since we had the one submission, they would win first prize. I don't know who the teacher is, because it's for an older group of students, but I think we should probably do the same thing for this teacher, and provide a letter of appreciation signed by all of us and keep the recognition going. Because we've done this now for three years and this is our first video. So we want to try to build that rapport.

**Chair Benzing:** Because if we could get six or seven videos in a couple years, they will start to get really interesting from the older kids.

**Boardmember Nelson:** I thought it was great. I'm a documentary filmmaker, and I thought the interviewer did a pretty good job at holding that silence, which is a real challenge. As a filmmaker, when you interview people, you want to jump in there, and I thought they held back pretty darn well when caught off guard by the responses. They were hoping they would elaborate a little bit more,



but I thought they stood their ground and I thought, that's how you do it. You wait and just let that silence sit there and see what they're going to come up with. So, I have to commend the student for that. The story about what they were looking for wasn't as full as I'm sure the interviewer thought it would be. But, I got to give them kudos to be that age and interview adults. I mean, you got to be intimidated to ask these questions, and when they don't give you what you want you're probably looking for your dad or your mom, like, they're not cooperating?

**Chair Benzing:** There was a couple of those questions. They summarized every single question and there was one, where they asked if there was anything like the current pandemic that went on during the time and there were a number of answers that went out there. And they did a very good job of bringing it back together to get a solidified answer to that question.

**Boardmember Nelson:** Yes, give them kudos for that. Definitely tell them that the Boardmember filmmaker said, Hey, you need to, you need to work in that direction and you may have some productivity in that direction. So, great job.

**Chair Benzing:** Given the current circumstances, there probably weren't a whole lot of people to interview because of the lack of gatherings, which may be even more challenging. We still need to vote on first place.

AYES: Benzing-Schaffer-Metcalf-Bingham-Babos-Desai-Dahlke-Nelson

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

## **7. Discuss potential dates and agenda items for the 2021 Historic Preservation Board Virtual Retreat.**

**Chair Benzing:** I know we've talked a little bit about how we're getting close to possibly being in-person in the fall. Just given that the heat is upon us, postponing a few months and doing an actual in-person retreat, rather than a virtual retreat, and really having the time to sit down together might be better. Does anybody have any objection to that? I know we talked about last time in February, if we could get something sooner might be more beneficial.

**Dr. Appiah:** Chair, Members of the Board, one of the things I was going to talk to you about when we get to the Historic Preservation Officers' update is about returning back to in-person for the meetings, because our City Council actually started meeting in person this past Thursday. What we're doing with our public hearing boards is beginning to encourage them to come back in person starting in May. So, I wanted to talk to the Board and see how you guys feel; what's your perception about coming back in person in May, which also might influence the retreat. If we are coming back in person, I think we can work with the Board to have the retreat in person, instead of virtual, as well. Our recommendation will be probably do it in June because we have a couple of the board members that may be terming out. We don't want to lose the knowledge, goals, and the vision that we've been talking about in the past year. Then we can do one in the fall if there's there are going to be new members coming on board as well.

**Chair Benzing:** I'm speaking for myself, I'd be very much in favor of going back in person in May.

**Boardmember Babos:** I don't have a problem meeting in person either.

**Boardmember Dahlke:** Would we still have masks required? What kind of COVID measures will we be taking if we do meet in person?

**Dr. Appiah:** Chair, Members of the Board, here in the Council Chambers they've installed plexiglass between each chair separating people from each other. In terms of masks, on Thursday the Council was seated they actually took off their mask, because they will be speaking. This is also all based on the presumption or the assumption that everybody coming to the chamber would have opted to have had the opportunity to be vaccinated. That that was actually the main reason why Council came back, because all of them had been vaccinated. Now we are hoping that all our boardmembers who choose to give get vaccinated would have had the opportunity, and pass the two week period as well. That's the main premise. We believe that by May, everybody would have had the opportunity after getting the email from Christine [Zielonka]. That was one of the reasons why it was sent out, given the vaccination and two-week period, it would probably fall within that time we bring the board back in person.

**Boardmember Dahkle:** Hopefully!

**Boardmember Nelson:** Will there'll be an option to get the meeting virtually even though most people would be in-person? If we come back in May and do the CDC guidelines, will there be a virtual option for folks as well? I'm curious to know.

**Dr. Appiah:** Chair, Boardmembers, we are working with the Channel 11 to see if there is a possibility of a hybrid, where those who want to be here in person can be, and then those who want to participate virtually can be. The difference between Historic Preservation and Planning and Zoning meeting is that Planning and Zoning meetings are televised. So, the setup sometimes is different, but we do have Channel 11 helping us so we will see what we can do. We will send a communication out to you guys and see. I know there was a possibility with Council for doing that, so I think they could be the same possibility with your Board as well.

**Boardmember Nelson:** That sounds great. I'm all for meeting in person, but I just wanted to flesh out all the possibilities, just in case I'm at the beach in June. And I can just get on my computer for an hour and check in and then go back to the beach.

**Chair Benzing:** Maybe that should be where the retreat is at.

**Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf:** Beaches are historic! You'd be surprised the funny things you could find there. And we could talk about that all day.

**Arianna Urban:** Chair Benzing and Members of the Board I attached the agenda from last year's retreat, just as a reference point to see how we structured it. We'll probably forego a tour, or some sort of afternoon field trip, but like Nana said, perhaps in the fall, if we if we can do another one, that would be great. We don't have to decide today, but we normally do a Saturday morning, and so we can find a day that most of us can make it.

**Dr. Appiah:** Chair, Boardmembers, typically we do a Saturday, but we could also do a Friday morning if it may work for you guys. We'll schedule a time around it to make it happen, but probably plan for about two hours.

**Arianna Urban:** If it's helpful, I can put out one of the survey calendar polls, and we can come up with a date that way.

**Chair Benzing:** That would be good. I know I have a few weeks, at least one weekend, in June where I'm not available.

**Bruce Nelson:** That'll be great. Just to point out Juneteenth is coming in this year, and the Mesa Historical Museum is hoping to do something. The City hasn't really done anything, as a City, but Zen Nights does do a thing. So that weekend usually events happened Friday and Saturday; that I'm a part of. Just so you know, whenever we have the retreat, even if we can do another one in the fall, I'd love for you all to come to my neighborhood, and perhaps go to the Alston House so you can see what that looks like. So that's something I would easily do and talk you through that.

**Arianna Urban:** That would be an ideal location, yes.

**Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf:** We did take a tour of the Washington-Escobedo neighborhood a long time ago, I want to say at least five years ago, and we did see Dr. Alston's home, but I don't think we went in. I don't recall that. Were you there, Brandon?

**Chair Benzing:** I don't think so. That must have been great before I'd started.

**Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf:** Yeah, it would be fantastic to go there.

**Arianna Urban:** Okay, so just going forward on that item, Chair Benzing and Members of the Board, I'll send out a survey calendar and we will find a weekend perhaps in June that works for everyone.

**Chair Benzing:** Okay. I think if everybody just wants to review that last year's agenda, it seems like it's fairly generally covers everything that we would need to discuss. I don't think there's anything more specific that we need for the retreat. But if anybody has anything they'd like to add or adjust, we can talk about at next month's meeting. Maybe we just keep it on the agenda.

**Arianna Urban:** Yes, definitely Chair Benzing. I'll keep this agenda item for May. And we can finalize the retreat agenda at that at that meeting.

**Boardmember Babos:** Mr. Chairman, I just have a question. Are we shooting for June because hopefully things will be relaxed for COVID by then? The reason I asked is that my wife is a teacher and we're out of town a lot in the summer. I'll make myself available if that's when it is but a weekend in June is kind of hot around here.

**Chair Benzing:** Is there any reason why we couldn't do it sooner?

**Boardmember Nelson:** I heard a comment that they were thinking that most of the Boardmembers, like the Council, will have had an opportunity to get vaccinated; that's just another level of safety. That makes sense, if people choose to or choose not to, the opportunity is there. There's plenty of time if you want to, as the as the more vaccines become available. I think that's what I heard someone saying, I think that's why they said June as opposed to earlier.

**Dr. Appiah:** Chair, Members of the Board, that's absolutely correct.

**Chair Benzing:** Let's just poll everybody's availability in June. And if there isn't a good weekend, it will just make sure that we can get everybody there and we can keep pushing it. We'll see when the earliest date is that works for everybody. I definitely don't think we should have it without everybody. I know, Nana, you had mentioned that there may be members that are terming out.

**Dr. Appiah:** That's correct.

**Chair Benzing:** Okay, maybe if that's the case, maybe if we can't have it before they term out, since it's open to the public, we just provide an agenda item for the meeting that is public input.

**Arianna Urban:** That sounds good.

**Chair Benzing:** Okay, let's just keep it as a calendar poll and we'll just see when we can make it work with everybody.

**8. Review and discuss the applications received and select the 2021 Historic Preservation Awards recipients.**

**Arianna Urban:** Yes, Chair Benzing and Members of the Board, we did get some extra nominations, and staff did want to make sure that there was ample time for Boardmembers to review and consider all of the nominations. Because of that, I will ask I will ask for a continuance on that item to the May meeting.

**Chair Benzing:** Okay, we don't need to do a vote so we can just put it back on the agenda.

**Arianna Urban:** Thank you.

**9. Present and discuss the final report for the December 2020 traffic study conducted in the Evergreen, Glenwood-Wilbur, Fraser Field, and Washington-Escobedo districts.**

**Arianna Urban:** Chair Benzing and Members of the Board, this is substantially the same as the draft that I presented a little bit earlier this year. We had some tweaks to the to the introduction and conclusion paragraphs, but other than that, the data remains the same. Just to catch up, Boardmember Nelson, we received a grant in 2018 from the SRP-MIC folks to conduct a traffic study in in the historic districts as speeding became a concern for residents. We put out some traffic strips and were able to take two full days of speed and traffic counts at the end of December. The report that staff was able to write up is the result of that data; the scope of the project was intended to encompass data collection and the interpretation of that data in order present it to residents of the districts, and empower them to make decisions in the future about traffic and what mitigation measures might look like.

**Boardmember Nelson:** I know the Evergreen area, and back in the day, there was a little alley called food alley when I was a kid. But, Washington Park right there at 6th Street and University I know has always been a challenge, and as you go further north to the park, for the students coming out of Eisenhower, right at 6<sup>th</sup> and Center Street, there is no crosswalk there. We have raised concerns years ago about that. Now, most of the students at that school are not from the neighborhood, they're from outside the neighborhood. So, once we get all the information, you're saying that folks in that community can say, hey, based on this data, we would like to request a crosswalk or some type of thing to help us. Is that what this is for? Or what exactly is it for?

**Arianna Urban:** Yes, it's possible that an amalgamation of that data and in the future can be used to make decisions in the community about things like traffic calmings, speed bumps, and crosswalks.

**Boardmember Nelson:** Right, thank you, if you make that available and look at it and share that with other folks in the community, and let them know that you have done something. Thank you very much.

**Arianna Urban:** Of course, we were going to be posting the report to the website, and also doing another postcard mailer to let everyone know that it's available.

**10. Historic Preservation Officer's updates.**

**a. Update of the status of the Historic Design Guidelines and associated amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.**

**Arianna Urban:** Chair Benzing and Members of the Board, we are very happy to let you guys know that we've received our first draft of the design guidelines from The Lakota Group consultants, and we're, working on it right now. Nana and I are going through our revisions, and we'll be able to be able to make it available to you guys shortly. And we really look forward to having that discussion with the Boardmembers.

**Boardmember Dahlke:** Did you have a lot of revisions?

**Nana Appiah:** Chair, Members of the Board, this document will be available, and we will pass it on to the Board for review. Right now, this is just a first draft, so we just helping to clean it up. It will definitely be published on our website, and the Board will have the opportunity to review it. So I just want to make sure that you are aware that the document will be coming to you for review as well.

**Chair Benzing:** Do we want to put it on next month's agenda, to discuss it?

**Arianna Urban:** That's the plan, yes.

**Boardmember Dahlke:** I'm looking forward to Yeah.

**Chair Benzing:** Did you have any other updates at the moment?

**Arianna Urban:** Chair Benzing and Members of the Board, we've already discussed the potential of coming back in person next month. That was everything I wanted to cover.

**Chair Benzing:** Okay, and then you'll follow up with us later this month on the potential for the hybrid, if it's necessary, at least to start off.

**Arianna Urban:** Yes, as soon as we get some guidance from the from the technical staff here, we'll pass it along to you guys.

**Chair Benzing:** Okay, thank you.

**11. Hear current events summaries including reports from Boardmembers on museums, exhibits, committees, and/or events related to historic preservation.**

**Boardmember Babos:** Chair Benzing, can I circle back to the essay contest? Are we allowed to find out if there was one teacher involved now that we voted on it?

**Arianna Urban:** Chair Benzing and Boardmember Babos, sure that's fine. It is one teacher and I believe all of the entrants are in the same grade.

**Boardmember Babos:** May I ask what school and what grade are now?

**Arianna Urban:** I don't have that off the top of my head, but when we send out the letters we'll acknowledge the school. I don't want to guess I don't want to guess wrong, but I'll let you guys know.

**Boardmember Babos:** I think that's fantastic that this teacher did it, and Laura, I appreciate the idea of giving the teacher a little statement if possible. We also talked at one point about acknowledging the winners at a future Council meeting, if possible. I think verbally acknowledging the teacher at that would go a long way for the teacher as well. So maybe that's something we can do.

**Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf:** Absolutely. In the past, we've actually invited the teacher to come and we present, of course, the certificates and awards, but there's also a photo opportunity and we've always invited the teacher, if they're available, to come and take picture with us and the student who's won. It just really adds a lot of depth, especially when the child's family's there too then it becomes like a portrait. It's a real celebration. Usually we get going to get moved out to the side and everybody else is in the middle. What I'm saying is, to invite the teacher and to have the child's family involved is just really beneficial.

**Boardmember Babos:** We can use that in next year's flyer as advertising to get more students to enter the contest.

**Arianna Urban:** Yes, certainly, and the essay contest winners get posted on the preservation website as well.

**Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf:** And, they're on TV!

**Arianna Urban:** Yes, we'll figure out the best way to do that at a Council meeting whether we present the awards online soon, and then perhaps invite them in for a ceremony later in the year when the public is invited to return as well. We'll figure something out.

**Boardmember Nelson:** Going back to information, I've learned one thing, and I think we might want to jump on the bandwagon here. You probably heard over in Phoenix, they're doing a mural for Calvin Goode, who was the first African American Council Member there. My aunt was married to his brother, so I know him very well. So here in Mesa, our first African American Councilman was Jerry Boyd, and also in Mesa, some of you probably don't know, we were the first city to have a MLK Street. So, let's not get left by the wayside in acknowledging something like that and let's keep up with the times. So in historic preservation, it's something we should consider, because his mother's home is still there on Center Street, just north of the churches there on 6th Street. That's where Jerry grew up in. He worked starting at Basha's he kind of worked his way up and then got into banking. So yeah, I think we should do something. I don't know if it's a mural, but we should do something. He and his father are still alive, he's 99 years old so we probably want to do something soon, to just acknowledge that. Him and my brother were best friends. That's why I know that.

**Boardmember Dahlke:** That's very neat.

**Chair Benzing:** I would just like to say, I have thoroughly enjoyed the little tidbits of knowledge you've shared throughout this meeting, it's something that we've lacked, I think. As far as the history here, and it's a part of the reason I've been trying to get involved with the Board is to obtain some of that knowledge. So, I very much appreciate all the commentaries.

**Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf:** Regarding reports from Boardmembers, Mr. Nelson, you've done a great job of doing that, and maybe if there's any way that we could post little two minute videos about historical elements in Mesa, like who you're talking about. Maybe we just have a video library

of quick historical pieces of information about Mesa, you know, some of the MLK pieces which, I knew about but I didn't really remember until you mentioned it. Some of those pieces would be really, really helpful. I don't know if we can do that on our website or not, but it would be quick and easy for people to just click on that and be able to learn more.

**Boardmember Nelson:** I know they did call me from the City for Black History Month, and they wanted to do a couple things. I sent them some photos of Booker T Washington, and they did a little video collage. They had someone that could do that, because they didn't have a budget for me to do it, and that came out really well. I have photographs from about 1924 students at Booker T, Washington all the way up to the 60s; pictures of Miss Johnson and the other teachers, and they did a nice collage. I always just kind of let you know of the things that are going on, because I'm from here, and it's important. I'm really proud of the fact that we were the first city in Arizona to recognize King Street; that's a big deal. We fought for that, when we wanted to put it in the neighborhood, and believe it or not, we got pushback. We wanted to change Hibbert Street, and the people who live on Hibbert Street got upset and I said, do you know who the street is named for? He was a farmer. Then we jumped over to the other side, which was kind of great. Because, remember, Washington was also referred to as North town. Because it wasn't within the main town site, it was the only place you could live. Now, we have King across the street, and we should look at it as inviting us to come to the downtown. So all that kind of stuff is in my head, and Vic is another one too who has a lot of that stuff in his head. So anytime I can share something I will definitely consider how I can make that happen.

**Boardmember Dahlke:** Sounds good. I had just a quick question about the museums and in downtown. Are they partially open to the public or not at all? Or what's what is the status?

**Chair Benzing:** I believe the historical museum opened back up. I've seen a few flyers from that. I don't know if the Natural History Museum has opened back up yet.

**Arianna Urban:** Chair Benzing and Boardmember Dahlke, I believe all of the museums are open at some capacity.

**Boardmember Dahlke:** Well, that's good. Yeah. Just in time for the hot summer.

**Vic Linoff:** I was just going to say, AZNMH (Arizona Museum of Natural History) is open. But it's by reservation. The numbers in the museum are quite limited. Something like 50 an hour, I think. And the mesa Historical Museum, because of its location, you can walk in any time.

**Chair Benzing:** We're slowly getting there, back open all the way, but we'll get there.

**Boardmember Nelson:** As a matter of fact, one of the busiest times for the historical museum is in the summer. I think July is like one of their busiest months, believe it or not, you would think it would be winter.

## **12. Future agenda items.**

**Chair Benzing:** I believe we covered a couple already for next month. I don't have any additional ones currently. If anybody has some come up again, before next meeting, just send an email and we'll get them on the agenda.

## **13. Adjournment**

**Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf:** Motion to adjourn.

**Boardmember Dhalke:** Second

AYES: Benzing-Schaffer-Metcalf-Bingham-Babos-Desai-Dahlke-Nelson

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None