

Virtual Platform

Date: January 05, 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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Arianna Urban

GUESTS:

Vic Linoff

1. **Call Meeting to Order.**

Chair Brandon Benzing: I'll call this meeting on January 5 of the Historic Preservation Board to order at 6:03pm.

2. **Approval of the minutes from the November 03, 2020 Historic Preservation Board meeting.**

Chair Brandon Benzing: The second order of business is to approve the minutes from the November 03, 2020, meeting as we skipped the December meeting. Did anybody have any comments on the meeting minutes? They appear very thorough with the new automated system. Do we have a motion to pass?

Vice-Chair Laura Schaffer-Metcalf: I move to pass the November 3 meeting minutes.

Boardmember Jim Babos: I second.

Vote: 6-0.

Ayes: Benzing, Schaffer-Metcalf, Bingham, Babos, Desai, Dahlke.

Nays: None

3. **Items from citizens present.***

Chair Benzing: The next item is items from citizens present.

Arianna Urban I think we have Vic Linoff online.

Chair Benzing I don't know if Mr. Linoff off if you have anything at the moment.

Vic Linoff: Nothing except to wish everyone a Happy New Year. In listening in on the conversation, I'm hoping soon everybody can be together, and we can advance the

cause of preservation in a more appropriate fashion rather than doing it through Zoom meetings.

Chair Benzing: I completely agree.

4. **Discuss and provide update for the 2020-2021 Historical Writing Video and Essay Contest, including materials.**

Chair Benzing: Item number four, discuss and provide an update on the 2020-2021 historic writing video and essay contest.

Arianna Urban: Thank you Chair Benzing and Members of the Board. We are still the contest is still ongoing; the deadline is at the beginning of March. Unfortunately, we haven't received any submissions yet. I did get an email from a sixth grader who asked if she and her friends could make a video together. I talked with Vice-Chair (Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf) about it, and we decided that that would be fine. But I did let them know that they would have to split the prize money if they won the contest. I'm hoping that it didn't deter them from entering.

Chair Benzing: I would doubt we'd start seeing anything rolling until the end of January or beginning of February.

Arianna Urban: We did get a scrolling chyron on Mesa11; I see it roll past the screen every couple of minutes, which is exciting. And just today actually, I dropped off the flyer and application packets at Jim's house to distribute into the children's book orders at the library. We made over 500 of them and are hopeful that we can get that word out that way too.

Boardmember Babos: I will be contacting the librarian tomorrow via email, and hopefully in the next couple of days I'll hand deliver the paperwork to her.

Chair Benzing: Perfect, thank you for doing that.

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf: I actually have a student teacher and supervising at Mountain View, I have to be there quite a bit, so I could even drop off something at the Mountain View library for the video portion of the contest which would get some information into the hands of some high school students. Also, my neighbor is the principal at Westwood, and I could probably contact her as well.

Arianna Urban: Sure, I can print up some more flyers, if you think that would be the way to go, or you can always email the contacts you have as well.

Boardmember Babos: When I get the flyers to the main library, I can just ask the staff to distribute them to the other branches if they're open and have them feed them out that way.

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf: Okay, so then in that case, what is the board's feeling about dropping flyers off at Mountain View and Westwood? I'm happy to do whatever we want.

Chair Benzing: I would think that any word we can get out there was good word. And given that those are two of the high school that are close to the historic districts, I think it'd be beneficial for those schools in particular.

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf: I'm happy to take them out to any of the high schools, I can drop them off at any of them.

Boardmember Babos: Instead of making fliers, is there a way we can post it on a bulletin board or something? So, if you just dropped off a couple, or even if they have an electronic newsletter that they send to the students, we could do it that way.

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf: They also use Peach Jar, which is a communication portal between students, parents and teachers. We might be able to use that to send a message just to students, and not parents or teachers.

Chair Benzing: Yeah, I would think anything to kind of go digital, and minimize the amount of paper we have to produce, for just for budget reasons, will probably be beneficial.

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf: Because all the Mesa schools really use Peach Jar, I can ask how that's done. If it's okay, I can find out what their process is to submit something like that electronically, and then maybe they can upload it.

Boardmember Babos: My wife is a teacher at Highland Arts Elementary. I'll have her ask around; she can put in some calls or emails and find out what the process is. I'll see if I can't take care of getting it submitted to peach jar.

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf: Okay, that's great. I forgot your wife was teacher, that's probably going to be easier than me trying to figure it all out on the external end of things.

Chair Benzing: Does anybody have any other comments on the writing and video contest? So hopefully we start seeing some interest start piquing in the next month and seeing some entries rolling in in mid to end of February.

5. Discuss and provide update on the Historic District Traffic Study funded by the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community grant.

Chair Benzing: Item number five is to discuss and provide an update on the historic district traffic study. This was the project funded by the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community back in 2018.

Arianna Urban: Yes, Chair Benzing and Members of the Board this was a grant that I inherited from the previous Historic Preservation contract person that held my position in 2018. From what I can gather, she had a great deal of correspondence with residents in the historic districts that informed her speeding was a concern of theirs, especially in Evergreen. She was able to submit for a grant from the Salt River Pima- Maricopa folks, and we received \$3,000 to spend studying traffic and speeding in the historic districts. Engineering was kind enough to organize the count data collection strips for us, and staff worked with the City's traffic engineer who was extremely helpful. We ended up with 16 count locations in Evergreen, Wilbur, and Fraser Fields Historic Districts. We also ended up putting two counts off in Washington-Escobedo (Heritage Neighborhood) after hearing from one of the community members there as well. We identified these locations as they were thought to be representative of the areas where speeding is most his most concerning, and after the counts were placed, we received back some data.

The draft report was included in your attachments for this meeting. We got some interesting information in the sense that the counts were taken over the course of two weekdays in December, so it was really a snapshot of the traffic conditions. We did record some instances of extreme speeding, cars traveling 50+ miles an hour, but on the whole, the results showed that the speeds mostly exceed the speed limit only by several miles per hour above the posted 25 MPH speed limit. This was just for the Boardmembers to take a look, and at I am happy to answer any questions about the process. Ultimately, we did only have \$3,000, so this was not a this was not an undertaking to do any traffic calming or put in any speed bumps This this was really for us to be able to collect the data, analyze it a little bit, but most importantly, empower the residents of the historic districts to take this information and use it to inform traffic mitigation and speeding issues in the future.

Chair Benzing: So, when this report is finalized, is this getting distributed to the residents?

Arianna Urban: Yes, we did send out a postcard at the beginning of November advertising the plans for this project and solicited information and any feedback from residents. Staff received mostly emails and several phone calls. The idea is, after this is finalized, we will do another postcard advertising the results, that indicates if you would like to see them, you can go to the website and download the report.

Boardmember Barbara Bingham: I appreciate you doing this Arianna, because it is a real problem. I happen to live at a three-way intersection (in Evergreen) and people shoot through the stop signs, with some definite near misses. I think it's a great start for us to start addressing it with our neighbors.

Chair Benzing: That's the one thing, the rolling stops, that aren't captured in the study. They are just as dangerous as the increased speed limits.

Boardmember Bingham: There are some areas with trees and bushes that need to be trimmed back (to improve sight lines). But you know, somebody comes up and down the street. Where I am, people come in off of Country Club and treat it like a little drag strip there, especially during the school year. So anyway, I appreciate you starting the process for us.

Arianna Urban: In talking to the city's Traffic Engineer, there are other steps that can be taken. The Mesa Police Department does offer some speeding monitoring, if that's something that residents seem like would be helpful, we can explore that as well. We can also dispatch the portable speeding signs that tell you how fast you're going as well. So, there are there are a couple of ideas here, but the count strips were our way to start off.

Chair Benzing: Well, it's good to hear that that funding was able to be utilized, this seems like a good start.

Boardmember Michelle Dahlke: Mr. Chairman and Arianna, just a quick question. In each of these historic neighborhoods, is there a designated leader or a point of contact for each neighborhood in order to keep in touch with the residents rather than trying to always reach out to every single homeowner?

Chair Benzing: We have tried that over the years. We've tried to do the community meetings in the different districts and appoint different people in the neighborhoods. There are some districts that have a very heavy presence as far as leadership in their communities, and there's some that don't at all. The challenge is really identifying those people.

Arianna Urban: I would say informally we have residents like residents that act as representatives for their districts, but a more formal list is in the works. Right now, we don't really have someone that has stepped up to represent the Robson District. I think that (district representatives) is something that I would like to pursue.

Chair Benzing: Hopefully, when we get over the COVID era, and finalize the design guidelines for the historic districts, we can start having those (in-person) community meetings, introducing these guidelines, and identifying those key participants in each neighborhood.

Boardmember Dahlke: That sounds good. I was curious, because what happens now with this study is limited as we don't have any more funds or anything to take it any further. So Arianna, just the hope is just to send out a postcard when it's the study is finalized, just of keep everybody apprised? And there really isn't anything in the works after that.

Arianna Urban: That's correct, this really was intended to be an informational study. The way the grant was written, its scope only included collection and analysis of the data.

Boardmember Dahlke: Perhaps like you said Arianna, there are some things the Police Department can do: maybe in maybe in the postcard you can have a little bullet point that points to some other resources that might be able to help with this problem in the neighborhood. Just an idea.

Arianna Urban: Sure. We are still going to continue to take comments on this, so at some point I can compile all of those comments and see where and what the biggest problems are from the anecdotal evidence from each person that reaches out.

Boardmember Dahlke: Right, because I would hate to have your work disappear and have this project just evaporate. It seems like it could be useful.

Chair Benzing: Any other comments on the traffic study? Thank you.

6. **Historic Preservation Officer's Updates:**

a. **Update on staff-approved Certificates of Appropriateness for the months of October-November 2020.**

Arianna Urban: First is the latest Certificates of Appropriateness that have passed their appeal period. We are just going to talk about one tonight, but it's kind of neat one so I wanted to share it with you. This property is in Evergreen on the corner of West Seventh Street and Grand, I believe and is somewhat of a strange lot. As you can see, it's very long and very skinny, and the house is oriented towards West Seventh Street along the long end of the lot. This is not the most picturesque portion of Evergreen; the house in question and the property across the street are both non-contributing to the district, and this particular corner doesn't have a ton of historic character to be honest with you. So, the intent of the property owner was to build a new accessory dwelling unit (ADU) in what is technically his rear yard, but it functions as a side yard and parking area. This is what the house looks like, it was built in the 70s, and not considered contributing, and doesn't possess a lot of architectural value.

The initial design for the ADU was a two-story two car garage proposal, and it didn't feel like it was going to fit in in the district. So, I worked with the property owner and we came up with a one-story idea, as you can see, it had it had a similar little gable over the front door which would have been appropriate for the neighborhood. Because this is so visible from the street, what we are really trying to prevent with accessory dwelling units is making it look like two houses were built on one lot in a Single Residence zoning district, though ADUs are legally allowed. So, in an interesting twist, this property owner decided to hire an architect, someone who was trained in the in the School of Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture, and you can see his Wrightian influences in the new

design. He is now proposing a full remodel to his main residence in addition to a corresponding ADU. We went through some detached and attached iterations with a cantilevered carport, and some interesting lines. I think that this is going to add a lot of architectural value to this particular corner which doesn't have a lot of historic, contributing features. This project was actually a year in the making, but I think it was worth it.

Boardmember Dahlke: Thank you so much for working so hard to get the end product here and I'm so happy that he was agreeable. He went way beyond what was expected. And that's a great job for you, I'd say. You were a good steward of the historic preservation program.

Arianna Urban: Thank you.

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf: I'd say that's great follow through and tenacity to stay with him on this.

Arianna Urban: Thank you, guys.

Chair Benzing: On a project like this, it seems like this would be a good case study for the process of working with Historic Preservation Office to come out the other end of discussion with a better end product. It serves both our desires as preservationists to keep everything in character as far as scale, but it also benefits the homeowner and produces a greatly nicer property than what it started off as just a simple ADU project.

Arianna Urban: That is we're certainly trying to stress in this new era of preservation, is high architectural value when it comes to new construction. So this is a good start, I agree.

Boardmember Bingham: Arianna, this is a home that I walk by almost every day. So, I appreciate the original (as built) look, but I also appreciate what you've done with the changes and helping them to stay within what we're looking for in our neighborhood. I appreciate that.

b. Project update for the Historic Design Guidelines and related Zoning Ordinance provisions.

Arianna Urban: We are chugging along and are on our historic guidelines and zoning ordinance update project. I know that you all were given the opportunity to meet with our consultants, and I hope that that went very well. I'm glad that you all, as our local preservation experts, had a chance to give them your input, and give them the feedback that they need to really personalize this project and make sure that it is Mesa-specific. We were able to also set up several meetings with our consultants and Council Members. Additionally, just yesterday, we had a meeting with our consultants, Mayor Giles, Chris Brady, and Christine Zielonka,

our Development Services director, which was really exciting. Mayor Giles is a huge proponent of historic preservation in Mesa and he was really excited to be involved.

c. Board Member vacancy.

Chair Benzing: I don't know if everybody has heard but Milagros has accepted a job in another state at a university. I'm trying to recall where she said it was.

Arianna Urban: Yes, Milagros has accepted a position at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, to head up interior architecture there, which is extremely exciting. We're very happy for her.

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf: That's good!

Arianna Urban: We have received a couple of applications already for the vacancy, those are under review right now and will ultimately go to the Mayor's office for consideration. So we'll keep you posted as soon as we know anything about it.

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf: When did she resign? Because we didn't have a meeting in December, and I know she was here in November. So was it just last month?

Chair Benzing: I think it was a week and a half after the November meeting that she accepted the position. I know it was in the works and she was in discussion with the University. She did decide that it was the right move and she wanted to take on new responsibilities.

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

Chair Benzing: I'll start. I'm kind of a fly on the wall for the American Institute of Architects' Archives Committee what helps gather the historic documents of architecture firms that are either going out of business or retiring, that have historically influential work in Arizona. We hold an annual event every year; last years was virtual, and it usually takes place in March. Once I have a firm date and the flyer for the information, I'll be sure to pass the Board Members. It's usually based on an architect or a structure in the Phoenix area, but this upcoming one, because it's virtual, we're going to expand it statewide, and we're touching on some stuff in Prescott, Tucson, and the Phoenix area. It's usually only about an hour and a half total, with a nice presentation and discussion. Once I know a little bit more, I'll let you all know. Okay.

Arianna Urban: That's really cool.

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf: Yeah, that sounds awesome.

Chair Benzing: The committee has placed so many different collections from different firms into different places, like with the universities and the state government. And the big goal is to find a conglomerated space where we could make it more easily accessible for people, instead of having it buried in different spots across the state. So, that's an ongoing mission of the archives committee that hopefully one day will be achieved.

8. Future Agenda Items

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf: I'd like to keep an item for the historical writing video and video and essay contest on the agenda moving forward.

Chair Benzing: One item I'd like to add, is to discuss the upcoming Historic Preservation Awards. We really don't have one for new construction infill in the historic districts or in the downtown area. It might be one way to celebrate this type of new design in older neighborhoods that I would like to discuss at the next meeting, and if we see it's appropriate to add an award for an infill situation that isn't necessarily preservation, but that preserves the integrity of a neighborhood or its streetscape.

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf: To piggyback on that, where are we on the Historic Preservation Awards? I know it got changed around due to the pandemic. So do we need to start talking about it this time?

Chair Benzing

I do know was decided that we were going to present the awards at the City Council. I'm not sure if we received any entries, because I don't even know if we advertised.

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf: I don't think we've done anything with it. Have we?

Arianna Urban

We have received a couple of submissions over the past year. And I've been taking them just on a rolling basis at this point because we haven't we haven't updated the awards guidelines for this for this upcoming year. It might be something that we could talk about the next meeting, whether we want to do virtually or plan to see what happens. I can itemize that for sure.

Chair Benzing: Okay that would be great. Also maybe we can have an update on just the number of submissions, because that might determine, if we roll this over into 2022, or if we see it fitting to stay on course for 2021.

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf: I think that's a good idea. Let's add that to the agenda for next month.

Arianna Urban: Sounds great.

Chair Benzing: Are there any other agenda items anybody would like to add?

Vice-Chair Schaffer-Metcalf: Just one more thing, is there any way that we could get an update on what we've done so far, and where things are at this point in time? I'm just curious about things like current projects, projects pending, projects closed, just a quick update on where we're at.

Arianna Urban: Sure.

9. Adjournment.

Chair Benzing: Okay, moving on to item number nine is adjournment. Do I have a motion to adjourn?

Boardmember Dahlke: I'll move to adjourn the meeting.

Boardmember Bingham: I'll second.

Vote: 6-0

Ayes: Schaffer-Metcalf, Benzing, Bingham, Babos, Dahlke, Desai,

Nays: None

Chair Benzing: Okay, this meeting is adjourned at 639. Everybody, we'll see you next month and stay healthy. We meet again at the beginning of February.

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