

CITY OF MESA
MINUTES OF THE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

DATE: November 8, 2001 **TIME:** 6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chair Victor Linoff
Vince Anderson
Pat Mendivil
Christi Miller
Tracy Wright Wagner

STAFF PRESENT

Kathy Guthmiller
Greg Marek
Amy Morales

OTHERS PRESENT

Teresa Brice-Heames
Ray Hart
Ron Peters

MEMBERS ABSENT

David Dean
Lori Osiecki

1. Call to Order

The November 8, 2001 Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Committee was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. Consider Minutes of October 11, 2001 Regular Meeting

It was moved by Vince Anderson, seconded by Pat Mendivil, to RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE October 11, 2001 Minutes, as amended.

**Vote: 5 in favor
0 opposed**

3. Items from Citizens Present (no action to be taken)

Ms. Teresa Brice-Heames spoke about the upcoming public workshop on the General Plan, scheduled for November 14th starting at 5 p.m. The public will be able to offer comments on the Preliminary Draft General Plan for the City of Mesa. One of the elements to be discussed is Environmental Planning and Conservation, which contains the historic preservation component.

Ms. Brice-Heames pointed out that in the Housing element, it was recommended (by an independent community housing policy committee, of which she was chairperson) that the City consider adopting rehabilitation standards to make it easier for owners of historic properties to rehabilitate and maintain their properties, and not have to face all the barriers of current code requirements.

Ms. Brice-Heames noted that the City Council will make a decision on November 19th about whether or not to postpone the election date on the General Plan.

Chair Victor Linoff thanked Ms. Brice-Heames for the information.

4. Discuss and Consider Historic Preservation Plan

Mr. Greg Marek acknowledged that Ms. Debbie Abele was present to address questions about the Historic Preservation Plan, and that some suggestions from the previous month's meeting have been incorporated into the Final Draft.

Mr. Marek reminded Committee members that once they vote to approve the Historic Preservation Plan, it would go before the City Council to be considered as a stand-alone Historic Preservation Plan.

Mr. Marek commented on the Preliminary Draft General Plan that Ms. Brice-Heames had addressed, noting that the historic preservation section is comprised of two paragraphs, and the archeological section is one paragraph (both are in the Environmental Planning and Conservation section). Mr. Marek stated that the historic preservation element only recites current conditions, not taking the future into account.

Mr. Marek suggested that the stand-alone Historic Preservation Plan, once approved, be referenced in the General Plan.

Committee members presented comments on the Historic Preservation Plan Final Draft, including the following:

- page numbers had been left off
- several typos were pointed out
- page 14, referenced "pie chart" had been replaced with different chart
- page 13, Sunkist Orange Company should be referenced as "Sunkist/Mesa Citrus Growers"

- boarded-up home photo – find different example or eliminate negative image
- include photos of Sirrine House (before and after photos), Lehi School, E.V.I.T. barn, and other examples of adaptive reuse
- near the end of the document-- possibly use open boxes as bullets (instead of using solid black boxes) in order to resemble a checklist

Mr. Ron Peters commented that he hopes the Historic Preservation Plan addresses more than historic structures, also looking at landscape features and other elements of the City that go beyond buildings. Examples given: the granite curbs of the West 2nd Street neighborhood, median strips, and lines of sight (such as the view line from 1st Avenue to the Temple, and the historic palm line going into E.V.I.T.).

Mr. Peters questioned what would happen if the City of Mesa decided to put in a median down 1st Avenue, and/or put in trees and light fixtures that would change the view line. He cautioned that guidelines need to be established to protect historic elements, not just buildings and structures.

Mr. Vince Anderson noted a streetscape photo in the Historic Preservation Plan on page 9 that exemplifies preserving a sense of place.

Ms. Abele read the picture caption: “Preservation Planning works to preserve the many character defining features that set apart historic districts.”

Mr. Marek added that a section of the Plan discusses developing design guidelines for historic districts; this section could take such issues (preserving more than buildings) into consideration.

Chair Linoff suggested adding a sentence somewhere to clarify that the Historic Preservation Plan would address more than just structures.

Ms. Debbie Abele commented that under the Survey and Designation section of the HP Plan, there is a sentence that recommends: “More clearly delineate the criteria, documentation requirements and procedures used for listing districts and Landmarks on the Mesa Historic Property Register.” Ms Abele said that this detailing happens during the writing of the documentation during the process to be listed on the Register.

Ms. Abele offered that wording to the following effect could be added in the Design Guidelines section: “Continue the development of design guidelines for designated historic districts and ensure they comprehensively address district character.”

Chair Linoff suggested adding wording to the photo caption of page 9, mentioned earlier.

Ms. Chris Miller requested that landscaping should be referred to, along with view lines.

Ms. Abele stated that the term used in referring to things other than buildings is "character-defining features."

It was moved by Vince Anderson, seconded by Christi Miller, to forward a recommendation of approval to City Council for adoption of the Historic Preservation Plan (with discussed changes incorporated).

**Vote: 5 in favor
0 opposed**

5. Discuss a Request for Qualifications Submittal for the Adaptive Reuse of the Current Mesa Arts Center Building (Irving School) located at 155 N Center Street

Mr. Greg Marek informed the Committee that the Arts & Cultural Advisory Board would be meeting November 21st at 7:30 a.m., and invited Historic Preservation Committee members to attend this meeting instead of setting up a separate joint meeting. Mr. Marek handed out a map of the meeting location to Committee members. After comments have been received from the Arts & Cultural Advisory Board, the Request for Qualifications can be issued.

Chair Linoff noted that the Historic Preservation Committee has not placed any parameters on the RFQ, other than trying to retain the building as a public use facility, preferably support for the arts. The primary concern is saving the building by adaptive reuse.

Mr. Marek stated that when he spoke to Gerry Gerber, he had informed her that the HPC did prefer to try to find an arts-related use for the building. If for some reason that was not possible, other types of adaptive reuse could be utilized with the main goal of saving the building.

Ms. Miller asked how that would fit into having an arts and cultural district, with the building being a key facility.

Mr. Marek said the building is located at the northern boundary of where the arts and cultural district would be, and would be tied in with the pedestrian pathway. By having arts-related uses in the building, it would help further identify the planned arts and cultural district.

Ms. Miller stated that one of the projects she looked at in Pittsburgh was the Penn Avenue Arts Initiative, which utilized creative funding and encouraged incubator space for artists. Ms. Miller said she had a videotape and information about the project that would be available for any Committee member to review.

Mr. Marek noted that once an interested group is found to work on the building, the next step would be to hire someone to do a thorough structural analysis of the building.

Chair Linoff encouraged Committee members to attend the Arts & Cultural Advisory Board meeting.

6. Update on the Relocation of the Mitten House and the Pomeroy House

Mr. Marek informed Committee members that the houses are expected to be moved in December or January. The Pomeroy house cannot be moved until the Masonic Lodge is demolished. The Masonic Lodge will not be able to vacate the designated lot for the Pomeroy house until the end of December, when their new facility is completed.

Mr. Marek acknowledged that Ms. Barbara Atkinson, from the Robson Historic District, said that the neighborhood's appearance drastically improved after the dilapidated home (on the Mitten House future site) was demolished.

7. Discuss and Report on the National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference

Mr. Marek and Mr. Anderson relayed their experiences from the National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference held in Providence, Rhode Island.

Mr. Marek told Committee members about a mobile tour he went on and how he could relate Mesa's challenges, being in the shadow of Phoenix, with the challenges of Providence, being in the shadow of Boston.

Mr. Marek explained numerous obstacles that the City of Providence faced, and how it overcame them to preserve historic resources.

Mr. Marek also went to a Building Rehab Code session and found that other cities' building officials had the same reservations about the New Jersey Rehab Code that the City of Mesa's Building Department has.

Wichita, Kansas just adopted a Rehab Code in June of this year, which seems to be working very well (Mr. Marek has copies available). All of the cities that had a Rehab Code accepted agreed that it was necessary to have a really good cross-section of stakeholders (including mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and Fire Department personnel) in order to have the Rehab Code accepted.

Mr. Marek noted that a good definition for an existing building is: “any building that was constructed prior to the current building code.”

Mr. Anderson discussed how Providence utilizes revolving funds, and how this has stimulated restoration in low and middle-income neighborhoods, leading to increased investments in these neighborhoods.

Mr. Anderson stated he was impressed to see how the neighborhoods had been revitalized and preserved.

Mr. Anderson commented that the City of Mesa could follow Providence’s example: on the other side of Country Club are some post-war houses that could be revitalized by encouraging low and middle-income homeowners with pride of homeownership; not by tearing the houses down to clear the land, but by stimulating preservation and improving what is already there.

Ms. Miller said that she has seen a substantial change in that neighborhood in the last four years; more specifically, after the Housing Code was passed. Ms. Miller suggested that this would be a good area to remain residential, since it is improving.

Mr. Marek agreed with Mr. Anderson that the revolving loan fund is important in helping homeowners rehabilitate their homes. The best opportunity may be at the next bond election in a couple of years; a historic preservation bond issue is needed.

Mr. Anderson noted it would be a good idea to get some type of an educational institution in or near downtown Mesa to attract people.

Chair Linoff stated that, as an advisory board, the Historic Preservation Committee needs to provide the background research and advice necessary to push these ideas forward.

Ms. Mendivil excused herself from the meeting.

8. Director's Report

Mr. Marek informed Committee members that he would be meeting with Crystal Pearl, the Building Director, to discuss the Rehab Code. The goal is to have the Code drafted by Spring 2002.

Chair Linoff asked if the meeting would involve all the stakeholders.

Mr. Marek said that his meeting with Crystal Pearl is an in-house meeting, but the stakeholders would be involved in future meetings.

Mr. Marek told Committee members that he would report back to them on the results of the meeting.

Mr. Marek updated the Historic Preservation Committee about a meeting he was at this morning with Jerry Howard and the Light Rail Team. The City of Phoenix archeologist has taken the lead in the Section 106 environmental review for historic preservation on the light rail corridor, looking at archeological issues.

A meeting will be held with Jerry Howard to discuss guidelines (for internal use by the City) dealing with archeological sites on private developments.

Mr. Marek said that the Façade Program is in the process of going back to City Council. Available funding includes \$10,000 in seed money as part of a grant program, and also \$5,000 of Community Development Block Grant funds to do some conceptual designs.

Mr. Marek showed the Committee an "Awards Program" binder, which documents past Historic Preservation Award winners, and will be available for viewing at the Mesa Room of the Library, and also at the Historic Preservation Office.

Locations for the upcoming Historic Preservation Retreat on December 10, 2001 were discussed. Ms. Wright Wagner offered the Mesa Historical Museum as a possibility. Committee members agreed they wanted to meet at a place with historic significance, and the Mesa Historical Museum would be the preferred site for the retreat. Catering details for lunch will still need to be worked out.

Mr. Marek noted that Donovan Rypkema gave a presentation at the Mesa Town Center Corporation's annual meeting in October. A videotape of his presentation is available for viewing from the Redevelopment Office.

9. **Committee Member Comments and Questions and Future Agenda Items**

Mr. Anderson asked who was restoring the house on 1st Street next to the parking lot across from the mortuary.

Mr. Marek answered that Mr. Mark Reeb purchased the house and was restoring it.

Mr. Anderson commented that it was progressing nicely.

10. **Adjournment**

7:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory J. Marek, Historic Preservation Officer
Minutes prepared by Kathy Guthmiller