

CITY OF MESA
MINUTES OF THE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

DATE: June 14, 2001 **TIME:** 4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chair Victor Linoff
David Dean
Dan Eccles
Pat Mendivil

STAFF PRESENT

Tony Felice
Kathy Guthmiller
Greg Marek
Amy Morales
Patrick Murphy

OTHERS PRESENT

Debbie Abele
Barbara Atkinson
Jim Britton
Marian Dean
Christi Miller
Tracy Wright Wagner

MEMBERS ABSENT

Vince Anderson
Lori Osiecki
Boyd Thacker

1. Call to Order

The June 14, 2001 Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Committee was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. Consider Minutes of May 10, 2001 Regular Meeting

It was moved by David Dean, seconded by Pat Mendivil, to RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE May 10, 2001 Minutes, as amended.

**Vote: 4 in favor
0 opposed**

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

Ms. Christi Miller informed Committee members that the first meeting of various historic districts was held in March. Representatives were present from the Historic District Coalition of Phoenix. Concerns and resources were discussed.

Another meeting was held in May, during which it was decided to hold a monthly meeting. Meeting locations are being rotated among homes within the various historic districts.

Mr. Tony Felice stated that a possibility exists to have a web page for a historic district coalition, hosted by the City of Mesa.

Chair Victor Linoff acknowledged the importance of communication between members of the different historic districts.

Ms. Tracy Wright Wagner announced that the next Historic Home Tour will be on January 19, 2002, from 10:30 a.m. through 3 p.m. Homes from the Wilbur Historic District and West 2nd Street Historic District will be featured.

Mr. Greg Marek noted that the Historic Preservation Office would help with the program and brochures as it did last year.

Ms. Wagner told Committee members that a logo has been approved for the Mesa Historical Museum, and passed around business cards displaying the new logo.

4. Update on Historic Preservation Plan

Ms. Debbie Abele discussed the Historic Preservation focus group meetings, handing out summaries of suggestions received. Ms. Abele noted that the main topic of concern for both the citizen and City Staff focus groups was limited community awareness/appreciation of historic and archeological resources.

City Employee Focus Group held on 5/14/01

At its focus group meeting, City Staff discussed possible types of City assistance that could be provided in planning and undertaking historic property rehabilitation projects. Also discussed was how coordination could be improved between City departments to support public and private efforts within the community.

Priorities established by this focus group include:

- Add a staff person or a full-time Historic Preservation Planner.
- Better coordinate/promote Historic Preservation within the City.
- Provide Historic Preservation training for staff and elected officials.
- Organize opportunities to learn more about historic resources.

Citizen Focus Group held on 5/14/01

According to this community focus group, for the City to better support private preservation, priorities should include:

- Build upon existing community events to include historic districts.

- Change regulations related to salvage of City-owned properties that are demolished.
- Recognize (celebrate) the unique setting of the historic districts.
- Give historic district residents first chance to salvage historic properties; organize efforts to stockpile.

If more money were available, the following should be undertaken:

- Funding source (bond) for beautification of historic district and rehabilitation of historic buildings.
- Publish publications about historic neighborhoods, geared to tourist – tours/hotels; maps of tour to make historic properties more visible.
- Better organize the historic neighborhood constituency.

If additional Staff time were available, the following could be implemented:

- Study historic neighborhoods and identify uses/factors that affect viability of preservation.
- Ombudsman for historic neighborhood – advocate.
- Staff input into City decision making related to historic districts.
- Historic walking tour brochure.
- Facilitate coordinated historic events and festivals.
- Maintain settings – tree lawns.
- Minimum maintenance standards for housing (enforcement).

Citizen Focus Group held on 5/19/01

The most popular suggestions from this focus group include:

- City should more actively promote Mesa's historic resources (#1 priority)
- Produce a video about Mesa's historic properties; run on City channel and distribute to schools, churches and community groups.
- Articles in national magazines (Sunset) about Mesa's historic properties
- Start studying properties before they become historic to decide what is significant.
- Explore with banks innovative sources of funding for Historic Preservation work (i.e., develop programs to help entire historic areas, not just address individual needs).

Ms. Abele explained various resources being used to write the Historic Preservation Plan, and summarized its progress. She noted that the first chapter will talk about why the Plan was written, why cities undertake historic preservation, how this helps cities meet some of its mandates for planning and respond to the community. The second chapter will discuss the historic resources of Mesa (current & potential, and threats that may need to be dealt with). The third chapter will give an overview of the City's program. The next

chapter will give recommendations for work to do, and from there will be refined into a work program.

Ms. Abele stated that the draft of the Historic Preservation Plan should be available to Staff by the end of June 2001.

Mr. Marek noted that the ultimate goal is to have the City Council approve the Historic Preservation Plan as a stand-alone plan. The final draft information will be given to the Planning Department so it can be added as part of the 2025 plan update in the Conservation component of the General Plan Update (that "Growing Smarter" requires).

Chair Linoff asked if the issue of post-war construction would be discussed in the Plan.

Ms. Abele confirmed that it would be addressed.

Historic Preservation Committee members discussed results of the focus groups.

On behalf of the Scottsdale Commission, Ms. Abele invited Committee members to the City of Scottsdale's 50th Anniversary on June 25, 2001. A walking tour of historic downtown Scottsdale and anniversary program will be held.

5. Discuss and Consider Case No. HP01-001TC, Historic District Overlay for the Proposed Robson Historic District

Ms. Amy Morales acknowledged that Barbara Atkinson, representative of the proposed Robson Historic District, was present.

Ms. Morales presented Case No. HP01-001TC, an application for a Historic Preservation Overlay District to be applied to the proposed Robson Historic District.

The Robson District is generally bounded on the south by West Second Street; on the north by University Drive; on the west by Country Club Drive, and on the east by Robson Street. The district comprises 44 contributing properties and 11 non-contributing properties. Staff received an application and petition containing 27 valid signatures, which represents 59% of the properties, and 53% of the area within the boundaries of the proposed district.

Ms. Morales stated Staff's recommendation is that the Historic Preservation Committee forward a recommendation of approval to the Downtown Development Committee (DDC), where a public hearing will be conducted.

Upon approval of the zoning overlay by the DDC, it will be introduced at a City Council regular meeting, and a public hearing will be conducted by the City Council at the next available meeting to consider designating a historic district overlay for the Robson Historic District.

Ms. Morales gave an overview on how we reached this point in the process. In September of 1999, the Historic Preservation Committee was requested by the residents that live along 3rd Place and University to consider the expansion of the West Second Street Historic District. They wanted to include properties into the district that they felt should have been previously added. In response to this request, the Historic Preservation Committee directed staff to issue a Request for Qualifications to identify a consultant to conduct a comprehensive windshield survey on the area. Ryden Architects was selected, and staff directed Ryden to determine whether it made sense to include the properties into the existing West Second Street District or whether the creation of a new district was warranted. The field survey identified all properties in the area that were considered to be contributing or non-contributing to a potential historic district.

Ryden then conducted a Reconnaissance Survey of the properties bounded on the south by West Second Street; on the north by University; on the east by Center; and on the west by Country Club. Upon completion of the field survey, it was determined that the area west of Robson Street contained an entirely different architectural character than the area east of Robson Street. The architectural character along 3rd Place more closely resembled that of the West Second Street Historic District.

Ms. Morales referred to a map and noted the area of homes on the west side of Robson Street that are currently in the West 2nd Street Historic District that would be moved into the boundaries of the proposed Robson Historic District.

Ms. Morales noted that properties located along University Drive and Country Club Drive were not included in the proposed historic district because they are not eligible due to age.

In order to designate a historic district, its significance must be established by using the National Register Criteria.

The proposed Robson Historic District is significant under the National Register Criterion A, in the area of Community Planning and Development, for its relationship to broad patterns of community development in Mesa, and Criterion C for the architectural styles. The proposed Robson Historic District illustrates important examples of architectural styles common in Arizona during the first half of the twentieth century, including National Folk or Vernacular, Classical Bungalow, California Bungalow, Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, Ranch, and Transitional/Early Ranch.

The proposed Robson Historic District consists of portions of the original townsite of Mesa that were later divided into smaller parcels and smaller subdivisions. The period of significance for the district starts in 1911 with the platting of the Pomeroy Place subdivision in the area, and continued until the 1950s. This process of subdivision within the original townsite was an important factor in the change of Mesa from a Mormon community consisting of large garden lots to a modern residential community of small lots. This was a significant change in the community development of Mesa and the proposed Robson Historic District is importantly associated with this process.

Ms. Morales stated it is important to note that this application is neighborhood driven. It represents the cumulated efforts of the neighborhood to take a proactive approach in stabilizing and preserving their neighborhood and fostering civic pride.

Staff conducted a public meeting on April 18, 2000, to discuss whether or not the residents were interested in creating a historic district for their neighborhood, and how they felt about dividing into two historic districts. Everyone expressed interest in being included in a historic district; some preferred the proposed Robson historic district, others preferred the proposed West 2nd Street historic district.

A second neighborhood meeting was held on June 6, 2001. Seven residents from the proposed West 2nd Street historic district and three residents from the proposed Robson historic district were in attendance. The three in attendance from the proposed Robson historic district (plus another resident who sent an e-mail) were in favor of that district. Everyone was in favor of both districts. No opposition was received.

Within the boundaries of the proposed Robson district there are a total of 55 properties. The submitted petition contains 27 verified signatures of property owners, which represents 59% of the properties, and 53% of the area within the boundaries of the proposed district. The ordinance requires 50 percent plus one of the property owners. It is important to note that all property owners have been notified by four separate mailings, and the absence of signatures does not mean property owners are not in favor of the designation. In most cases, they represent absent property owners who have not responded to the written notifications. To date, we have received no opposition to the proposed designation.

Ms. Morales stated that this historic district overlay is compatible with the Downtown Concept Plan, and the Historic Preservation Plan, and recommended that the Historic Preservation Committee forward its recommendation for approval of Case No. HP01-001TC to the Downtown Development Committee and the City Council.

Ms. Barbara Atkinson noted that one property owner who owns four properties within the proposed Robson Historic District did not sign the petition, but mentioned the proposed historic district as a selling point on the listing for one of the properties which is up for sale.

Mr. David Dean inquired about the TCB-1 zoning, asking how it affects a residential district, and if it is compatible with the proposed historic district overlay.

Mr. Greg Marek indicated that the zoning has been that way for quite some time. It is the lowest level commercial zoning and is more neighborhood-oriented. The idea is to allow specialty type or low-level retail activities. The Downtown Concept Plan was formulated to allow this type of retail conversion. The zoning is compatible with proposed historic district overlay.

Mr. Tony Felice added that without a historic district overlay, the TCB-1 zoning would allow for construction of buildings that may be incompatible in their adjacency to the West 2nd Street Historic District. The overlay would provide a level of planning for the future that isn't currently in place.

Mr. Dean asked about the impact on the houses being placed in the Robson Historic District from the West 2nd Street Historic District since West 2nd Street is an already established National Register district.

Mr. Marek explained that from a local district standpoint, they are not a part of the West 2nd Street Historic District, but from the National Register perspective, they are still within the West 2nd Street Historic District. On the local district, these properties would not be a part of West 2nd Street, but until revisions are made to the National Register designation, they are still in West 2nd Street. They will need to be transferred out of West 2nd Street when the Robson District is nominated to the National Register.

Mr. Dean suggested submitting the properties in question with both districts, and then later taking them out of the one district.

Chair Linoff confirmed that the ultimate content is to add the local districts consistent with the National Register.

Chair Linoff asked about the approval needed when changing properties from one district to another, and if West 2nd Street had to approve.

Mr. Felice answered that they had to sign a petition to create a new historic district for that reason.

Chair Linoff requested clarification on why the petition only had 59% of property owner signatures, taking into consideration there were no objections.

Ms. Atkinson replied that one of the owners holds title to four properties, and as mentioned earlier, did not sign the petition, but did use the potential historic district as a selling point on a sales listing. Also, several out of state owners that did sign were disqualified due to technicalities of the owner's signed name not matching with the corporation name legally listed on the title.

Ms. Morales clarified that in validating the signatures, information provided by the County Assessor's Office was used. Several signatures had to be deemed invalid because they weren't the same as what is listed by the County.

Mr. Marek emphasized that four separate mailings were done to every property owner in the district, and not one person objected. The reason many City Ordinances require the 50% plus one is because of technicalities frequently encountered. It would be an issue if 40% showed opposition, but in this case there was no opposition.

Ms. Atkinson noted that in addition to talking to everyone and going door-to-door, she sent out at least four letters on her own to the residents, and has kept documentation.

It was moved by David Dean, seconded by Pat Mendivil, to forward a recommendation of approval to the Downtown Development Committee and the City Council that the proposed Robson Historic District (Case No. HP01-001TC) be designated a Historic Preservation Overlay District.

**Vote: 4 in favor
0 opposed**

6. Discuss and Consider an Amendment to the City of Mesa's Zoning Ordinance Pertaining to Office Uses in TCR-2 and TCR-3 Zoning Districts

Mr. Patrick Murphy addressed Committee members, stating they would be considering an Amendment to the City of Mesa's Zoning Ordinance pertaining to office uses in TCR-2 and TCR-3 Zoning Districts.

Mr. Murphy explained that the Zoning Ordinance would need to be amended in order to be compatible with the updated Sign Code. The following is a list of the proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance:

1. Definitions of "contributing property" and "non-contributing property," and "historic district" have been added to the list of definitions in the Zoning Ordinance.

2. The obsolete reference to “level one historic structures” has been removed and replaced with “contributing property to a historic district”.
3. Guidelines have been included for office uses in designated contributing properties. (These guidelines were adopted by the City Council on July 31, 1995 as guidelines for office uses in the designated level 1 historic structures. Staff believes these guidelines should be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance to assist staff and future applicants when processing an application for a special use permit to allow an office use in a TCR-2 or TCR-3 District.)

At a public meeting, Staff pointed out that changes would need to be made to the Zoning Ordinance to prevent any discrepancies between the Sign and Zoning Ordinance. No objections were noted regarding the proposed modifications to the Zoning Ordinance.

Staff consulted with the City Attorney and Zoning Administrator, and also reviewed related documents (Town Center Concept Plan, Mesa General Plan, Mesa Redevelopment Plan, and historic preservation documents) to finalize the proposed ordinance.

Mr. Murphy stated Staff’s recommendation is that the Historic Preservation Committee recommend that the City Council approve the amendment to the Zoning Ordinance.

Chair Linoff clarified that the criteria of a contributing property should be worded consistently in the definitions of “Contributing Property to a Historic District,” “Historic District,” and “Non-contributing Property to a Historic District.”

It was moved by David Dean, seconded by Pat Mendivil, to forward a recommendation to the City Council for approval of the proposed amendment to the City of Mesa’s Zoning Ordinance pertaining to office uses in TCR-2 and TCR-3 Zoning Districts, with minor modifications to the definitions of a “contributing property to a historic district” and “historic district.”

**Vote: 4 in favor
0 opposed**

7. Discuss and Consider the Relocation of the Mitten House and the Pomeroy House

Mr. Marek noted that representatives from Real Estate were not able to attend.

Mr. Marek updated the Historic Preservation Committee on the status of the relocation of the Mitten House and Pomeroy House. The earliest that the contractor would be available to move the houses would be in September. Don Ryden agreed to be the Historic Architect. Mr. Ryden's contract will be with the contractor, and will serve as project manager.

Mr. Marek said that as part of the process, Staff met with the Building Department. It is required that when moved, the houses be placed on foundations and hooked up for electrical service. Staff's recommendation is that the houses be set up with the larger electrical service so they could be potentially utilized for commercial use.

Mr. Marek noted some issues exist with the contractor regarding structural stability of the Pomeroy House.

Another issue may exist with the lot that the Pomeroy House is to be moved to. The zoning setbacks may be unattainable, so a variance may be needed. Ms. Atkinson, current owner of the lot, wants to guarantee that it will be used for a commercial type use before she sells it. Mr. Marek discussed a few possibilities in addressing this issue, such as restricting the house to commercial use in the Request for Proposals.

The lot where the Mitten House is to be moved is still occupied by a dilapidated house. Real Estate is encountering difficulty in purchasing the property, and may have to acquire it by eminent domain.

Mr. Marek informed Committee members that according to the City's Real Estate Division, demolition of the Pomeroy House is possible if they are unable to move it by the end of the year.

Chair Linoff asked why time would be an issue if contractors were willing to move the houses by around September.

The possibility of "parking" the houses was discussed in the case that the lots weren't ready for them to be moved to.

Mr. Dean questioned if the houses would be subject to current City Code once moved to their new locations.

Mr. Marek stated that the houses would need to be compliant with current code requirements when they are renovated. For example, if they were to be used for commercial use, the wiring would have to be upgraded, and the houses would have to be ADA compliant (the ramps could be in the back to preserve the historic appearance).

Chair Linoff expressed his concern that the houses be moved as previously decided.

Mr. Dan Eccles noted the main points are that the contract hasn't been received from the contractor, and a time issue exists in moving the houses.

Mr. Marek added that another issue is securing the land for the houses.

The Committee discussed the importance of moving the houses as promised to the community, and possibilities of storing them or "parking" them until the land is available for them to be moved onto.

Committee members also conversed about the benefits and limitations of the houses being utilized for commercial use.

Mr. Marek stated that this item would remain on the agenda for next month so Real Estate will be able to update Committee members on the progress.

It was moved by David Dean, seconded by Pat Mendivil, to recommend that both the Mitten House and the Pomeroy House be moved under any circumstances, and not demolished.

**Vote: 4 in favor
0 opposed**

It was also moved by David Dean, seconded by Pat Mendivil, to recommend that both the Mitten House and the Pomeroy House be designated for commercial use in accordance with the existing zoning.

**Vote: 4 in favor
0 opposed**

8. Election of Historic Preservation Committee Chair and Vice Chair

It was moved by Pat Mendivil, seconded by David Dean, to re-elect Victor Linoff as Chairperson of the Historic Preservation Committee.

**Vote: 4 in favor
0 opposed**

Election of the Vice Chair has been deferred to the July 12, 2001 Historic Preservation Committee Meeting.

9. Discuss Historic Preservation Committee monthly meeting time

Members present discussed changing the Historic Preservation Committee meeting time to 6 p.m. to better accommodate the general public's schedule.

10. Director's Report

a.) Update on Historic Preservation Program Issues

Mr. Marek briefed Committee Members on the completion of the Historic District sign installation.

Mr. Marek also talked about the Rehab Code for historic buildings, and how the New Jersey Code affects it. Staff has met with the Building Department and is working with the Mesa Town Center Corporation on this issue. Mr. Marek noted that the Historic Preservation Committee would be updated on this item.

11. Committee Member Comments and Questions and Future Agenda Items

Chair Linoff expressed appreciation for Staff's work on the unveiling ceremony for the Historic District street signs, and was pleased to have Mayor Hawker perform the unveiling. Councilmembers Pomeroy and Walters also joined in celebrating this event. Several representatives of the media were present, including the City's Channel 11, which produced a video (including this event) that highlights the City of Mesa's Historic Preservation Program.

Mr. Marek stated that interest has been generated in other neighborhoods to look into establishing historic districts. It would be difficult for Staff to find adequate resources to provide additional services. According to Ms. Debbie Abele, the City of Phoenix set up a training program that requires the neighborhood residents to do the necessary research and work.

Ms. Pat Mendivil noted that the City of Phoenix places newspaper advertisements that provide a phone number to direct persons interested in forming historic preservation districts.

Mr. Marek noted that in order for Staff to allocate any more time or resources to these types of issues, a full time person would need to be hired to focus solely on Historic Preservation. Staff is currently keeping track of time appropriated to historic preservation efforts. Once the work program of the Historic Preservation Plan is completed, Staff will be able to present to Committee members a more accurate picture of what is possible.

It was suggested by Chair Linoff to also try to keep track of the number of calls/customer service requests received in relation to historic preservation.

Chair Linoff emphasized the importance of the Historic Preservation Office and how its success extends beyond preservation.

Chair Linoff thanked Mr. Dan Eccles and Mr. Boyd Thacker for their service and participation in the Historic Preservation Committee.

Ms. Morales informed Committee members on behalf of Ms. Virginia Aguero (representative of the proposed expanded West 2nd Street Historic District) about a district sale to be held to raise funds for the National Register nomination for their district.

12. Adjournment

6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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