CITY OF MESA

MINUTES OF THE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

DATE: October 11, 2001 **TIME**: 6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT	STAFF PRESENT	OTHERS PRESENT
Chair Victor Linoff	Kathy Guthmiller	Erika Finbraaten
David Dean	Greg Marek	Bob Frankeberger
Vince Anderson	Amy Morales	James Garrison
Pat Mendivil		Christine Wahlstrom
Christi Miller		
Lori Osiecki		
Tracy Wright Wagner		

1. Call to Order

The October 11, 2001 Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Committee was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

Chair Victor Linoff noted that it was the one-month anniversary of the tragic events that took place in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C.

A moment of silence was observed to pay respect to the victims and reflect on the personal impact to our lives and to our Country.

2. Consider Minutes of August 9, 2001 Regular Meeting

It was moved by Vince Anderson, seconded by Tracy Wright Wagner, to RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE August 9, 2001 Minutes, as amended.

Vote: 7 in favor
0 opposed

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

No items from citizens present.

4. Discuss Comments on Historic Preservation Plan

Mr. Greg Marek referred to the final draft of the Historic Preservation Plan, noting that comments from HPC members have been incorporated, along with photographs and graphics.

The final Plan will be printed with darker ink, and the cover is in the process of being designed.

Mr. Marek asked Committee members for any final comments or suggestions.

Chair Linoff mentioned he did not see the names of focus group participants in the Historic Preservation Plan, as was discussed at a prior meeting. Chair Linoff also brought up that an index had been suggested, to make referencing sources easier.

Mr. Marek noted that Ms. Debbie Abele did try to include a referencing system that wouldn't disrupt the flow of the document.

Mr. Vince Anderson pointed out a typographical error on page 18 of the Plan, ". . . and to encourage their adaptation **to** current use." Also, on page 26, Mr. Anderson noted a section where the wording should read, "Mesa Historical Society **and Museum**, and Mesa Room of the **Public** Library . . ." (bolded and underlined words signify needed additions).

Mr. Anderson questioned whether or not the pictures (page 29) of the old library should be included. He suggested the possibility of using photographs of the Dobson Library, which is a unique building and has a better chance of being preserved.

Chair Linoff noted that the former Bank One building (pictured on page 31) is not an example of adaptive reuse since it is currently empty.

Mr. Marek offered that a better example of adaptive reuse would be the Arizona Museum for Youth.

Ms. Lori Osiecki requested that Committee members look at the final copy of the Historic Preservation Plan before it is approved.

Mr. Marek stated that the final Plan would be brought before the Historic Preservation Committee for review and approval.

Ms. Christi Miller asked if any recommendations had been made for the cover of the Plan.

Chair Linoff suggested a collage of photographs, reflecting the diversity of the City (contrasting between commercial and residential).

Mr. Marek noted that Mr.Tony Felice is working on design possibilities for the cover with Ms. Debbie Abele.

Ms. Miller suggested adding a picture of the Lehi School.

Ms. Osiecki recommended using a picture of the E.V.I.T. Barn for the adaptive reuse section.

Mr. David Dean observed that he did not find a notation that it is a five-year plan.

Mr. Marek noted that it would not be designated a five-year plan, in order to allow for more flexibility with budgetary issues and time frames.

Committee members agreed to review the final Historic Preservation Plan before voting on it.

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

Mr. Marek reminded Committee members that they previously discussed adaptive reuse possibilities of the current Mesa Arts Center building (Irving School, which is now on the National Register of Historic Places). Around Fall 2004, the current Mesa Arts Center will be moving to the new Mesa Arts Center (at Center and Main Street).

Working with the Arts & Cultural Division, Staff is looking at the adaptive reuse possibility of incubator space for arts groups. Staff has talked about having a non-profit organization be the property manager and apply for grant funding (to handle renovations), with the City maintaining ownership or some sort of control of the building. One non-profit group, Housing for Mesa (HFM), has expressed interest in being the property manager.

Once the Requests for Proposals have been received, they would be reviewed to determine eligibility. Eligible applicants would then need to submit proposals in response to a more official Request for Proposals.

Mr. Marek stated that there should be a joint meeting with the Historic Preservation Committee and the Museum & Cultural Advisory Board to make sure everyone is on the same page and to discuss various issues. Once the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) has been agreed upon, it would be presented to the City Council for approval to proceed.

Mr. Marek asked for any comments that HPC members might have to be forwarded to the Museum & Cultural Advisory Board.

Ms. Osiecki brought back brochures from the Pittsburgh IDA Conference offering an example of incubator space use.

Ms. Miller said she liked the idea of incubator space, but wants to ensure that no possibility is ruled out by having overly restrictive options.

Mr. Marek noted that the Museum & Cultural Advisory Board prefers to limit the adaptive reuse to something related to the Arts.

Chair Linoff stated that the building should be for public use and enjoyment; keeping it oriented towards the Arts is a good idea.

Mr. David Dean asked if the ability of an organization to demonstrate economic feasibility was taken into consideration when evaluating criteria for the Request for Qualifications. Mr. Dean also asked how the criteria would be weighted during evaluation.

Mr. Marek stated that economic feasibility would be addressed in the Request for Proposals; the Request for Qualifications would show an organization's ability and expertise to undertake a project like this. A scoring system will be set up with the team reviewing the applications.

Mr. Dean suggested that applicants could include their experience putting together grants (from both Federal and City levels) under the "technical approach" section of Evaluation Criteria.

Mr. Marek noted that Ms. Gerry Gerber observed the same point. Staff is considering adding another explanation under Evaluation Criteria to clarify that issue.

Chair Linoff pointed out that on page 3 of the RFQ, the wording should be, "Originally **designed** by the architectural firm . . ." instead of "Originally **built** by the architectural firm . . ."

Ms. Wright Wagner inquired about the renovations that would need to be completed.

Mr. Marek explained a number of items that would need to be taken care of in order to comply to the Building Code, including: air conditioning (none of the hallways have air conditioning), ductwork, and wiring. Mr. Marek said that Staff recommends that a structural consultant actually go through the building to evaluate it.

Mr. Dean asked if there was an existing building assessment report.

Mr. Marek responded that there was very little information available; in order to find the plans, Staff may have to go to the State Archives.

Mr. Dean inquired as to when more information would be obtained, in order to provide it for those interested in submitting a RFP.

Mr. Marek noted that City Council would need to be made aware of all the issues and potential costs involved with undertaking this project.

Chair Linoff suggested the possibility of applying for Heritage Funds for building assistance.

Mr. Dean stated that the drawings for the building are probably at the Arizona Historical Society.

Mr. Marek reminded HPC members that a joint meeting would be set up with the Historic Preservation Committee and the Museum & Cultural Advisory Board.

6. Discuss Guidelines for Office Uses in Historic Districts

Mr. Marek explained that this proposed ordinance was intended to be a housekeeping measure for City Council to amend the Zoning Ordinance where it referred to a “level one historic structure” (which allows office uses in the TCR-2 and TCR-3 with a Special Use Permit). It was proposed that the wording be replaced with “contributing property to a historic district.”

Staff did recall that a reference to “level one historic structures” appeared in the 1984 Linda Laird survey of historic resources but originally thought the reference was meant to define what is now referred to as a contributing property. Originally, the thought was that Level One referred to the level of integrity the property retained.

City Council expressed concern over: (1) allowing office uses in residential districts and, (2) the guidelines/enforceability. The item was tabled.

Staff has since learned that Linda Laird identified “level one historic structures” as those that are “individually eligible” for listing to the National Register. She identified 44 Level One properties in her study area (11 of which are in TCR-2 & TCR-3 zoning districts). It was determined that this list was specifically generated to identify those buildings within the historic districts that may be eligible for a special use permit to allow an office use.

Staff contacted several Valley Cities to determine if they allow office uses in a residential district.

1. Currently, the City of Mesa allows office uses in the TCR-2 and TCR-3 Zoning Districts subject to a special use permit (if it's located within a level one historic structure).
2. Phoenix, Gilbert, and Tempe do not allow offices in a residential district.
3. Chandler allows offices in a residential district by a special use permit if it is a reasonable location and on an arterial street.
4. Glendale allows offices if they have a planned area development (PAD) zoning district. For example, Catlin Court has a PAD.

Mr. Marek asked HPC members for their input, noting that Staff's recommendation is to not make any changes to the Zoning Ordinance.

Chair Linoff noted his original understanding was that the proposed ordinance was just to change the semantics; the intent was not to change the Zoning Ordinance.

Ms. Osiecki commented that the terminology used in the 1984 Survey was not used anywhere else, so it was very confusing. She brought it up to the Redevelopment Office and City Council at that time, asking for the "level one" terminology to be eliminated from the Zoning Ordinance. The "level one" wording really only pertains to the 1984 survey.

Chair Linoff expressed concern over the terminology and what would be easier for the public to understand.

Mr. Marek stated that the public has not even raised this as an issue. If for example, someone has a home in a historic district and asks if it can be turned into an office, the answer would be "no" unless it is a level one historic structure as identified by Linda Laird and it is zoned TCR-2 or TCR-3 (only eleven properties meet this criteria).

Ms. Miller stated the need to encourage people to move into the downtown area not only for historic preservation, but also to fulfill goals of the Downtown Development Plan.

Mr. Marek noted that a Special Use Permit is not automatically approved; it could be turned down based upon findings that it would be detrimental to the further development of the historic district as a residential district.

Mr. Dean asked how the Mayor's concerns would be addressed and how the Design Guidelines would be enforced if no changes were made to the Ordinance.

Ms. Osiecki stated that the Guidelines are neighborhood-enforced; a total of only three Special Use Permits have been issued, and all are in the West Second Street Historic District.

Mr. Marek added that the Guidelines are restrictive, designed primarily for people who want to have an office in their home. If the Guidelines were violated, the Special Use Permit could be revoked, and the residents would no longer be able to operate the office from their home. Mr. Marek noted he does not foresee having more than a couple, if any, more such cases of Special Use Permits in the future.

Mr. Anderson asked if the Mitten House and the Pomeroy House would be affected once they are moved.

Mr. Dean reminded the Committee that since the houses were not identified in the 1984 Linda Laird survey as level one historic structures, they would be unable to obtain a Special Use Permit.

Historic Preservation Committee members agreed to recommend that City Council not make any amendments to the Zoning Ordinance at this time.

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

Mr. Marek updated Committee members on the relocation status of the Mitten House and the Pomeroy House. The plans for the necessary permits are currently at the Building Department. Saemisch DiBella, Inc. did an architectural documentation of the adobe house (that was on the lot where the Mitten House will be placed) before it was demolished.

The tentative schedule is to have the houses moved by November 30, 2001.

Chair Linoff noted the importance of publicizing the date of this event so the public can celebrate it.

8. Discuss Meeting Date and Time for Retreat

Mr. Marek noted the main points to be discussed at the Historic Preservation Committee Retreat:

- Historic Preservation Plan: discuss implementation section
- Tasks/Implementation for Upcoming Year: discuss and review suggestions from Don Ryden and Debbie Abele
- Staff Overload/Prioritizing tasks

HPC members decided to have their Retreat on Monday, December 10th, from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m., location to be determined.

9. Director's Report

Mr. Marek informed the Committee that the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was conducting their annual site visit. Introductions were made of SHPO staff and the Historic Preservation Committee and City staff.

Mr. Bob Frankeberger, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), addressed the Committee, referring to the SHPO Annual Report, which Committee members already received for review. Mr. Frankeberger noted the good publicity being received by the City of Mesa's Historic Preservation efforts, and acknowledged that this draws attention to the positive aspects of establishing historic districts.

Ms. Erika Finbraaten, Ms. Christine Wahlstrom, and Mr. James Garrison (all of SHPO) introduced themselves and explained what is involved with their jobs.

Ms. Finbraaten discussed upcoming funding opportunities and other programs, noting the importance of working together as a team to encourage and educate communities, promoting Historic Preservation.

Chair Linoff brought up the subject of tax credits which historic properties are eligible for, and how taxing of school districts may be affected.

Ms. Finbraaten addressed the issue, stating that values go up because of the increased attention the historic properties are receiving and the pride of the homeowners. This program helps to bolster the entire property tax program.

Mr. Garrison expounded on how the State classification system works in setting the rates.

Ms. Wahlstrom, National Register Coordinator, reminded Committee members to consider nominating projects or people for this year's Heritage Preservation Honor Awards.

Mr. Garrison stated that the City of Mesa Historic Preservation Office and HPC members should be commended on their achievements and on being recognized for establishing historic districts.

Chair Linoff thanked the SHPO members for attending the meeting.

10. Committee Member Comments and Questions and Future Agenda Items

Mr. Marek acknowledged that Jerry Howard's job has been restored to a full-time position. The Historic Preservation Office had given input on the need for Mr. Howard's services as an archeologist, especially in completing the Section 106 reviews.

Mr. Marek will be meeting with Mr. Howard in the future to discuss archeological issues on private property, and how the Planning and Building departments can keep the Historic Preservation Office better informed of such issues.

Mr. Marek reported to Committee members that Mr. Don Ryden determined that the two World War II hangars at Falcon Field Airport have retained sufficient architectural integrity to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Mr. Marek recognized that Chair Linoff was at the focus group that met with the Building Department to work on rehabilitation code for existing buildings. This would be a stand-alone code, addressing historic buildings as well as existing buildings. A preliminary draft should be available by the end of November.

Mr. Marek acknowledged that he, along with Mr. David Dean, Mr. Vince Anderson, and Mr. Tony Felice would be attending the National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference in Providence, Rhode Island next week.

Mr. Donovan Rypkema has been hired to do an assessment of downtown Mesa, and will be in town October 23rd – 25th.

11. Adjournment

8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

_____

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

K:\Historic Preservation\HPC 2001\minoctober.doc