

Museum and Cultural Advisory Board – Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular hybrid meeting via Zoom and at the Mesa Arts Center on Thursday January 22, 2026.

Members Present:

Angela Buer
Colleen Byron
Greg DeSimone
Brad Peterson
Karen Rolston
Melvin Van Vorst

Members Absent:

Jania Davis
Katelyn Armbruster
Annalisa Alvrus
Todd Hanle

Staff Present:

Luis Ruiz
Sarah Goedicke
Simon Tipene Adlam
Jarrad Bittner
Alison Stoltman

Greg DeSimone called the meeting to order at 4:03pm.

Items from citizens present: There were no citizens present.

Approval of Minutes from the Regular January 22, 2026 meeting:

Melvin Van Vorst moved to approve the minutes as written, and Colleen Byron seconded. Board members voted unanimously to approve the minutes from January 22, and they will be posted on the city's website.

Arizona Museum of Natural History Economic Redevelopment Update – Simon Tipene Adlam, Museum Administrator, Arizona Museum of Natural History:

Simon Tipene Adlam, Museum Administrator of Arizona Museum of Natural History (AZMNH), gave a verbal report on the current status of the economic redevelopment of AZMNH. This project is in the early concept design phase and will be groundbreaking and innovative. The City hopes to make this a national a global destination with expanded amenities. This project is informed by substantive community feedback including stakeholder interviews, a large onsite community engagement event, and over 500 online responses. Funding would be through a public/private partnership.

At the May 7, 2026 Council Study Session, staff and consultants will present this to council. Staff asked the Board to attend the Study Session in person to show the community support behind a project like this. The presentation that Council will see will be available the Monday before the Study Session. This project would create another groundbreaking destination anchor that would drive visitation to Mesa. People will spend more time Downtown and in Mesa at large. This plan is future forward, thinking about 25-50 years ahead. As this project moves forward, staff will continue to include the Board.

Greg DeSimone, Board Chair, asked if any of the community feedback surprised staff. Alison Stoltman, Deputy Director of Arizona Museum of Natural History, shared that Saavi Services for the Blind suggested adding color into image descriptions.

Upcoming Events, Volunteer, or Participation Opportunities:

Sarah Goedicke shared that Mesa Historical Museum has an exhibition opening on Saturday March 28 at 10am.

Discuss projects or presenters of interest and report on events attended:

Greg DeSimone attended ALT Fest at Mesa Arts Center Friday March 13 and thought it was great. MAC's Gala was also a lovely event. Melvin Van Vorst stated that a lot of people came on Saturday March 14 asking where ALT Fest was, so there was some miscommunication about the length and days of the festival.

Future Agenda Items:

Sarah Goedicke confirmed Susan Ricci of Mesa Historical Museum will be at the May meeting. She had intended to join the March meeting but had a scheduling conflict.

Luis Ruiz, Director of Arts & Culture, stated that he would give a KPI (key performance indicators) update at a near future meeting. Jarrad Bittner, Museum Administrator of idea Museum, stated he would give idea Museum renovation updates over the summer.

The next scheduled meeting date is May 28, 2026, and will be a hybrid meeting on Zoom and at Mesa Arts Center, 1 E Main St., Mesa, AZ 85201.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 4:49pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg DeSimone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Greg" and last name "DeSimone" clearly distinguishable.

Greg DeSimone
Chair, Museum & Cultural Advisory Board