

MINUTES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

JUNE 9, 2021

Minutes of the regular hearing of the Historic Preservation Commission, of the City of Tempe, which was held virtually.

Regular Meeting 6:00 PM

Present:	Staff:
Chuck Buss, Chair	Steve Abrahamson, Principal Planner
Martin Ball, Vice-Chair	Brittainy Nelson, Administrative Assistant
Chris Garraty	Alex Smith, Deputy Dir. Special Projects
Laurence Montero	Jared Smith, Senior Curator
Joe Nucci	John Southard, Historic Preservation Officer
	Ambika Adhikari, Principal Planner
	Robbie Aaron, Planner II

1) Voting of the Meeting Minutes

Chair Buss asked how to handle the meeting minutes for the Subcommittee.

Mr. Southard informed the Commissioners that the full commission can approve subcommittee minutes.

Vice Chair Ball stated that since he was not present at the last meeting, he will need to abstain on the meeting minutes.

Mr. Southard informed the Commissioners that according to the Historic Preservation Office ordinance; that the concurring vote of five members shall be necessary for interaction of the commission of any matter. The exceptions being that the Historic Preservation Office or Tempe History Museum can enact on consent agenda items only. And only to the extent that the presence constitutes a quorum. Since this is not a consent item the meeting minutes would need to be pushed back to the next meeting.

2) Presentation on Potential Ash Avenue Bridge Rehabilitation

Presentation by Staff, John Southard, Historic Preservation Officer

Mr. Southard informed the Commissioners that the Ash Avenue Bridge approach and abutment is listed in the Tempe Historic Property Register. As part of the Tempe Beach Park Stadium and rock wall listing. The designated area was shown to the Commissioners. The Ash Avenue Bridge was completed in 1913 and was only in use for a short period of time. The completion of Mill Avenue Bridge illuminated the need for the Ash Avenue Bridge. The Ash Avenue Bridge sat in disrepair for many years till 1991. In 1991 a mass majority of the bridge was demolished. What remains was the approach from North Rio Salado Parkway. The embankments on the East side includes the bleachers for the baseball field. And the abutment which is on the Northern end. The parcels to the West is the

Penny savers building. There is a development that is contemplating redevelopment of the property and the area to the North as well. As part of that there is rehabilitation to the Ash Avenue approach.

Presentation from Applicant: Manjula Vaz & Mike Duffy

Ms. Vaz informed the commissioners that they have a very brief presentation. This is an introduction to the high-level concept. As they develop the concept, they will be back to seek the Commissioners input over the next 6 months or so. They are looking at the penny saver building and the area that is designated as historical property.

Mr. Duffy informed the commissioners that the site is full of historical resources. The Ash Avenue Bridge abutment was developed into a monument. The project sits immediately to the West when looking at the site for the project the development team was aware of the things that are unique to the area. The Development team guiding conceptual principles is to celebrate historic Ash Avenue bridge, activate historic Ash Avenue, manage views to park lake & mountains, connect to the Beach Park and Downtown Tempe, as well as create shade. The development team is aware of the work that Mark Vincent did to provide an assessment of the resource. The design plan shows some cut a way to highlighting some of the existing roadway elements. Provided drawings showing the update version of the roadway elements to make the area code compliant for pedestrian access. There is preservation of the curbs and other features that are in good shape and can be preserved. The goal is to maintain the burn and add a new topping and stabilization of the roadway as well as providing landscape. Provided the commissioners with an enlarged site plan of the area that shows the ideas in 3D view.

Mr. Smith informed the commissioners that there is a dash line that will be the new property line and the western most column line. There is an 18-foot strip that City of Tempe is exchanging with the developer for the parking lot property that is currently there. Ms. Vaz is going to take title of the property knowing that the property is listed as historic. There are two main reasons that the project has been brought to the commissioners which is the treatment of the approach and the interaction with the slope that is associated with the approach.

Mr. Duffy also informed the Commissioners that there is an element of the building that hangs out over the burn.

Mr. Smith stated that the City has been working on this for a while and that there was a previous plan that was circulated within the City that was related to the Veterans Memorial. The plan showed a bunch of trees in the approach which could be problematic. So, the overhang of the building is to provide some shade outside of planting trees.

Commission Discussion

Chair Buss asked if the roadway in the drawing is off to the right and with the walkway will one be able to distinguish the older road.

Mr. Duffy explained that the roadway is off to the right on the drawing and that there is new paving. They will have to be paved over to be rehabilitated for use. The elements of the historic road are in the cut out to reveal elements. That state that the road it is in is not readily available in place.

Vice Chair Ball stated that the critical thing in order to the roadbed is the section that is being maintained . While he does understand the Chair Buss concern about the loss of the historical elements that is something that could be explored more in the paving pattern and the exact amount of the original surface. The challenge will be maintaining the character and the publicness of the original historic element with the private structure. The shading of the area does not bring in cause for concern. In developing the design concept further there should be some type of distinction between the public and private areas. What are the purposed uses adjacent to the walkway?

Mr. Duffy answered that one of the things central to the concept is the ideal that Ash Avenue is the Front door rather than Rio Salado. Being so close to the resources that will be addressed as the main focal point. There is a double height lobby that goes along with the site as Ash Avenue ramps up. The ground floor lobby is at a lower level and then the second-floor double height lobby enters at the North end of Ash Avenue.

Vice Chair Ball stated that there is a great opportunity to have an urban approach on the roundabout. Should consider exploring what potential there is to create a shaded urban character frontage along the roundabout side of the structure.

Chair Buss asked if the western embankment is disappearing.

Mr. Duffy stated that it is a little difficult to read from the elevation that is shown to the commissioners because the burring is falling away from the landing. He showed the commissioners several elevations to help explain the drop off.

Commissioner Montero stated that she would like to see some photographs of the area and how it will tie into the plans next time they present to the Commission.

Mr. Smith asked for Mr. Duffy to talk about the ADA ramps that will be installed on the property as well.

Mr. Duffy stated that one of the things that will be seen at the North end is the reconfiguration of the existing switchback ADA ramp to bring access from the parking lot to the top of the abutment. The reason is to improve the area and provide better access to Ash Avenue also working with some site constraints with maintaining everything that is on the property to date.

Commissioner Garraty stated that the roadway and the abutment are an Historic Preservation Commission concern but there are archaeological concerns as well. On the western edge there was some Hohokam prehistoric settlement. That area goes East from 100 Mill and could also be in this area.

Ms. Vaz stated that she does have that on her raider and figuring out what to do.

Mr. Smith stated that the art of the process will be how the approach and the embankment interact with the building and still drive the pedestrian access from Rio Salado into Tempe Beach Park. One of the benefits from this deal is that the rehabilitation of the roadbed is going to be used from ingress and egress to and from Tempe Beach Park by the Public

3) Presentation on Character Area 1 (Papago / North Tempe) Planning

Presentation by Staff, John Southard, Historic Preservation Officer

Mr. Southard informed the Commissioners that Character Area 1 includes a vast majority of land in Tempe North of the Salt River. The Planning department is going to speak to the process and progress so far and what the next steps are.

Presentation from Applicant: Ambika Adhikari, Principle Planner

Mr. Adhikari informed the commissioners that the website characterareas.tempe.gov has a lot of helpful information as well. At the web address there is also a survey of the plan which is open till June 30. Tempe is divided into eight-character areas the department has already done number 3 and 4. The department is now working on area 1. Area 1 geographical is 3.35 sq miles which is about 8.4% of Tempe. The Commissioners were given information on the 2019 census information. With the 2020 census there are updated numbers that have been calculated which were also showed to the Commission. The official start of the planning process was March 15, 2021. The second two public meetings are held on May 11, 2021. There are two pop up meetings coming in June. One on June 14 and June 26. Both meetings will be on site at Papago park. The scope of the character area is high level vision and policy level plan non regulatory. The vision is still evolving as the department meets with different commissions overtime. As well listening to people and what they feel give the area character. The most important area of the plan will be the design guidelines/principles that the staff and any applicants can refer to when they propose a design or redevelopment. At the meetings that were held so far the people have been discussing what they like

would like to see enhanced. To name a few are outside trailers, street paths, and open spaces. Citizens believe that there should be an increase in open spaces, single-family, and multifamily, drug stores, and groceries. The initial improvements of the areas would be shaded walkways, environmentally friendly design, affordable housing. At the march 15 meeting there were about 45 people that attended, and they had a few comments that the team captured and shared with the commissioners. The staff has been using dotmocracy if they were to go the survey the citizen would get ten dots. There are 15 principles that are listed people can vote on the draft principles. The principles are from the information taken from the first survey. Which is landscape, mobility, connectivity, streetscape, open space, shade and Public/private art, housing, aging in place, sustainability, canal-oriented development, quality design, balanced land use, historic preservation. City staff asked what the priority is and were told shade, climate change, green infrastructure, housing, streetscape, balanced land use, and canal-oriented design. There has been about 50 people that have participated in the survey. There is still outreach to the commissions and board through August 18, 2021. On June 14, 2021 there is going to be a meeting for stakeholders about priorities. In the winter City staff is hoping to go to Council. And then at the beginning of 2022 plan to have a draft that has been reviewed by public and stakeholders.

Commission Discussion

Vice Chair Ball stated that he agrees to improve the connectivity to some of the infrastructure that a foundation to the Valley. Agrees with the information that the citizens have expressed. There are simple ways to encourage and improve the sustainability of the historic infrastructure.

Mr. Aaron stated that Vice chair Ball is correct, and they not only take pride in the Canal path there were a lot of people using it.

4) Tempe National Bank Alterations Completed Outside of Process Specified in TCC § 14A-6

Presentation by Staff, John Southard, Historic Preservation Officer

Mr. Southard informed the commissioners that at the last meeting there was a request for a certificate of appropriateness for repainting the National Bank. During the discussing of the repaint the alterations where stated in the staff report. Alterations that did not receive a certificate of no effect or certificate of appropriateness. There was a request of a presentation to the alterations that have been made. The Tempe National Bank is at the NW corner of 6th Street and Mill Avenue built in 1912. The Egyptian revival style the architect was Leighton G. Knipe. He also designed Tempe City Hall before the current City Hall. The Bank was treated as sensitively as one would have hope. There was a rehabilitation effort in 2005 the property was listed in the Historic Property register where the City received a conservation easement to protect the South and East Elevations. The previous Certificate of Approval was in November of 2018 to install a fold down deck and remove some unused conduit, cap off former coolant lines, and a few other minor things. In early of 2018 there was meeting with the lease and he out lined some plans for alterations to discuss appropriateness or lack thereof. The Historic Preservation office received a letter stating that they decided to leave the exterior façade of the building as is. There was a submittal of plans after the applicant stated that they were not going to change anything. Some of the changes that were done were to add a new ADA ramp and relocating a door, installing an outside bar, raising the front patio, adding concert steps, new railing. There was a demolishing plan of stairs, as well as adding new windows. Which does require a certificate of appropriateness which was not received. Provided photos of the new alterations that were made that were not approved via certificate of no effect or certificate of appropriateness. However, the work was approved by other offices within the City but not through Historic Preservation Office.

Commission Discussion

Chair Buss stated that since other parties in the City did give their approval there is nothing that the Historic Preservation office can do now. However how does the commission make sure that something like this does not happen again in the future.

Mr. Southard stated that there are properties that are related to easements that need to be developed and it would be beneficial to look into and locking certain address and parcel numbers in the system until the needed approvals are received.

Mr. Smith stated that City Staff has worked with the IT team and there are notifications that are being received. That was not happening at the time that the modifications occurred.

Vice Chair Ball stated that the buildings that have easement placed on the façade should be able to place a red flag. However one of the things that could be done with the Historic Preservation Ordinance is to identify that it is permit by inspection is allowed within City of Tempe but those buildings that have a Historic Preservation Office overlay need to have a permit by inspection with someone who is trained to deal with Historic Preservations issues or Historic Preservations overlay structures are not allowed to run through the PDI. Which would allow things that seem very normal would preclude those that fly under the radar. Having a flag in the database is a great ideal.

Mr. Smith stated that there is a member of City Staff that is assigned to all the Historic Preservation projects that was an outcome of the situation.

Mr. Southard stated that the individual is well known to the commission. It is Hansen he served as interim Historic Preservation Officer and has great experience. Has been involved in many Tempe projects over the years and is a very strong supporter of preservation.

5) Chair/Staff Updates

Mr. Southard informed the commissioners that there has been 150 tons of soil just South of the Gonzales-Martinez property on site for the emergency stabilization of the Gonzales-Martinez house the project is officially under way.

6) Current events/ Announcements/ future agenda items

The Annual Tempe Time Machine at the Tempe Public Library will be held every Wednesday till the end of July. It was online only last year, and this year people can come pick up a kit and take them home and do a different craft every week.

The Tempe Public Library will have the Juneteenth celebration on June 18,2021 from 7 pm to 9pm.

Hearing adjourned at 7:30pm

Prepared by: Brittainy Nelson, Administrative Assistant
Reviewed by:

Steve Abrahamson, Principal Planner

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