

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FLORENCE HISTORIC DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2019, AT 6:00 PM, AT THE FLORENCE TOWN HALL, 775 N. MAIN STREET, FLORENCE, ARIZONA.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wheeler called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

ROLL CALL

Present: Wheeler, Adam, Smith, Reid, Knight, Novotny, Michael and Council Liaison Cordes.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Reid led the Pledge of Allegiance

DISCUSSION/APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL of the meeting minutes for the regular meeting conducted on December 26, 2018

On a motion by Commissioner Novotny, seconded by Commissioner Smith, and carried 7-0 to approve the regular meeting minutes of the December 26, 2018.

PRESENTATIONS

A. Main Street Mural Project at 364 N. Main St. Presentation by Community Services Department.

Community Services Director, Bryan Hughes, discussed the mural update on Main street. He mentioned the current mural's paint is peeling and some of the wood is rotting. The Arts and Culture Commission saw this as an opportunity for public art and Community Services wanted to update the wood due to safety concerns.

Mr. Hughes and the Building Official looked over the top of the frame to see the shape of the mural in the back, and it looked good. The panels in the front and a few rotted panels in the back are the main concerns.

Mr. Hughes said Community Services submitted a grant application from Lifelong Learning to the Arizona Commission on the Arts. The grant was approved for twenty-five hundred dollars with the Town matching the grant, bringing the budget to a total of five thousand dollars. He said the goal of the grant is to engage students, members of the public, and the arts community.

Mr. Hughes stated the goal of this project is like the original mural project: a temporary screen for the vacant lot until it gets redeveloped and bring some public art to the Downtown. He introduced Ann Rankin, the Chair of the Arts and Culture Commission, and he asked her to discuss some of the concepts the Arts and Culture Commission has for the mural.

Ann Rankin said she was excited about updating the mural, and they had a lot of ideas to incorporate into the mural. She stated the new mural would not only show buildings, like the current mural, but show the people and culture of Florence. She described Florence's history in farming and ranching, with the Junior Parada, and other things people come to see and do like F Mountain, the Buttes, and the Jeep trails. She stated this mural will be an awesome thing, and she heard about some local artists and wants to bring them together to create something special.

Commissioner Reid asked if there was any chance to make the mural taller. Mr. Hughes said they will look into raising the mural a couple of feet. He stated that they need see what the frame and budget will allow. They do not want something that will buckle at the top. He said they discussed swaying the mural a little in the middle.

Vice-Chair Adam asked if there was a sketch of what they envisioned on the mural. Ann Rankin said they had a tentative sketch, but it is a work in progress, and nothing has been finalized. Next week, they will have their first mural meeting with some of the people who are interested in helping. Mr. Hughes stated community input is part of the Grant requirements and some of the basic concepts were people, culture, and history to guide the artists working on the project.

Vice-Chair Adam wished them luck on the mural. Commissioner Novotny asked what they plan to do with the old panels. Mr. Hughes said most of the panels are starting to rot and fall apart, so they will end up in the trash. He noted the mural was meant to be temporary until the lot was redeveloped. He said the new mural will be temporary.

Chairman Wheeler asked for any more questions. Chairman Wheeler said that members of the Commission identify with the current mural because they went out and met the artist, so they have some nostalgia. Commissioner Reid mentioned how the current mural was a symbol of how the Town and the Prisoners worked together in the past. Mr. Hughes said he heard some great stories about the artist and unfortunately what he did was with temporary materials. He said this is a good opportunity to see something fresh in the downtown area and he hopes to have some good stories from what some of the volunteers do as well. The Commission wanted Mr. Hughes to keep them posted on how the mural project is evolving. Mr. Hughes said he will keep them informed and gave an overview of the timeline. He said they will start meeting with the artists and interested volunteers within this next month and start painting in March. The goal is to dedicate this at the Road to Country Thunder on April 6th.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Absentee Owner Program** Staff will introduce steps that are being initiated to address the absentee owner situation and the vacant buildings on Main Street.

Community Development Director Larry Harmer said Staff was meeting internally to decide the best way to deal with absentee owners of vacant land in Downtown. Community Development has been working with the Fire Department to identify properties in the Downtown. He stated that they identified two or three structures by peeking through the windows. Mr. Harmer explained that this will be a beta test, and Staff is looking at 220 and 230 N. Main. Both are vacant and have the ceiling falling down. They are held in Trust and the thought process is if Staff starts with a hard one, then the rest should fall in line a bit easier. Staff will be working with the Building Official, the Fire Marshall, the Town Attorney, and the Code Compliance Officer to put together a process that gives the owners legal notification and steps to start addressing these properties.

Mr. Harmer wanted the Commission to know that action items may come out of the program. Staff had two meetings and will be moving forward with the program. A Fire Department employee on limited duty is helping in the process and will conduct annual visits for buildings that are occupied to make sure they stay in compliance. Staff will go through the addresses and keep the Commission informed.

Vice-Chair Adam asked if there was a rationale for the building owner to rehabilitate the building or is it a way of saying this is a serious life safety issue and take buildings down. He replied that the Town cannot ignore the problem and this why staff is going after these two properties, but that we prefer they be rehabilitated. Vice-Chair Adam said because buildings are attached, they are a concern to buildings on either side. Mr. Harmer agreed and stated this may not be easy, but the Town needs to be proactive about the issue.

Commissioner Michael asked if property owners have been notified of the International Property Maintenance Code. It requires buildings to be maintained and there are provisions that require a notice and charges fines if there is legal and code enforcement action. Mr. Harmer said this notice does exactly that and that provision is what Staff will be using to go forward.

Vice Chair Adam said she understood that Staff wants to tackle the worst ones first to prove a point but asked about the maintained buildings. She explained that it would be better for an owner to start complying with the code before it becomes cost prohibitive to repair. Mr. Harmer said that is phase two after they get the first initial notices moving, then Staff wanted to step up with the annual routine inspections. This includes vacant buildings that have an easy adaptive reuse.

Commissioner Smith stated that the buildings at 315 N. Main and to the North has an owner living in Tucson. She said the water from the roof is leaking onto the adobe wall. She thought the problem was patched a couple of years ago, but the issue has

resurfaced. She said this is an issue for the adobe wall because you cannot have water constantly coming down every time it rains.

Council Liaison Michelle Cordes stated that the Commission needs a goal. Do they want the owners to rehabilitate their buildings, list them for sale, demolish them, find new owners or something else? She wants to make sure there is no confusion among the residents, Commissions, or Council about the main goal.

Vice-Chair Adam agreed and stated that they should focus on the savable buildings. She stated she did not understand the phase two part because there are maintained buildings on Main Street that are going through cost prohibitive processes to gain Certificates of Occupancies. She said the buildings that can be saved should be focused on first before repairs become cost prohibitive.

Mr. Harmer said the conversation will continue and the Fire Marshall is looking at this issue from a safety standpoint. He is looking at what they can possibly save. When details are better hashed out a presentation can be put together to present to HDAC and the Council.

Chairman Wheeler said the Town has to start somewhere and the details are up to Staff to make a determination. Commissioner Michael said that the goal should be that the buildings follow the maintenance code. The code does not require extensive repairs or someone to be in the building, but it enforces basic maintenance on exterior surfaces.

Chairman Wheeler said it is fine to start with those two buildings, but this going to be a long process. Once the process on those buildings is started, then Staff can start hitting other properties.

Commissioner Novotny said there are health issues in those buildings due to mold and wondered if the Town could at least go in and clean up the buildings and put them on lien. Mr. Harmer stated that health issues are one of the reasons why those buildings were chosen first. However, the legal process keeps this task from being an easy undertaking.

Commissioner Novotny agreed the health and welfare of the Town of Florence comes first and the legal issues can come second. She is concerned mold spores from those buildings could be breathed in by residents on a regular basis. She said she did not understand why the Town cannot go in and clean the building, and then deal with legal issues.

A Commissioner said this is a matter of judgment on the Town's part because they cannot go through and clean up all the buildings. Commissioner Novotny clarified she only meant those two buildings. She believed the objective of the Historic Commission is to preserve the buildings.

Commissioner Knight said these buildings have only gotten worse over time and the same discussion has happened, but nothing is done. She hopes not to make another decision

to take down a building and hates to see three to four generation old buildings deteriorate to the point of demolition. She truly hopes this program accomplishes what it sets out to do.

Vice-Chair Adam noted that the Staff's department has been undermanned and underfunded. She said they are seeing the result of that and it is up to the Council to make sure the district stays relevant and not rely on a one or two-person team.

B. Redevelopment Plan Update 2019 Staff will provide an update regarding new legislation for Redevelopment Plans and the steps underway to comply with the statute.

Mr. Harmer explained that with the new State Statute, the Town must update their Redevelopment Plan every ten years. He said unlike the General Plan, the Redevelopment Plan must be renewed or else it will become null and void. The Request for Qualifications is due this Friday and interviews for consultant teams will soon follow. Staff hopes to start the process in April. The Commission will be part of the process because the Historic District covers approximately twenty-five percent of the redevelopment area. The plan will also be seen by the Planning Commission and the Town Council. Mr. Harmer said Staff has already held a mandatory pre-submittal meeting with applicants, so everybody gets the same information.

Vice-Chair Adam asked what the Redevelopment Plan is and how it is put into effect in the district. The main purpose of the Redevelopment Plan is to provide different levels of incentives to rehabilitate and redevelop their property. This plan extends down Main Street. The point of the Consultant is to update the information. One of the main goals is to make the plan succinct and not have extraneous data. Any extra data will be in the appendix and the main body will have goals, objectives, incentives, and meaningful implementation strategies. The Commission can challenge the consultant to make sure what they propose is feasible.

The Commission asked which part of this district is in the redevelopment area. Mr. Harmer said most, if not all, of the Historic District is within the redevelopment area. Vice-Chair Adam said this sounds like a good tool for the district and asked if Staff had any examples.

Mr. Harmer said there are few examples because the current plan lacks incentives and verbal clarity and has not been used by new projects. He asked the consultants in this meeting to make the plan simplistic and easy to read so everyone can understand the goals and objectives.

A Commissioner noted that the goal of the new plan should be clear, short, and easy to read. Mr. Harmer replied that those qualities were specifically laid out in the Request for Qualifications.

Vice-Chair Adam was concerned that this was the first times the Commission heard about the Redevelopment Plan. Mr. Harmer said he does not know what kind of promotion

previous Staff completed. Commissioner Michael asked if he could get a copy of the current plan. Mr. Harmer directed him to the Community Development page where a copy is available.

OLD BUSINESS

A brief presentation will be made at the meeting regarding each item prior to discussion and possible action.

A. 2019 Historic Preservation Conference Prescott, June 12-14, 2019

- a. HDAC Attendees** Early Registration ends February 28.
- b. Session Assistance**

Mr. Harmer stated the Town budgeted for two full conference packages for the Commission, and Vice-Chair Adam has her own reservation. The host hotel is already full, so Staff is working on reserving rooms for Commissioners. Commissioners Knight, Reid, and Novotny expressed interest. Vice-Chair Adam stated she has an extra full conference pass, and Mr. Harmer said they can get lodgings for the three Commissioners. Mr. Harmer stated that a session was submitted and accepted by the Conference. He said he will present a draft to the Commission for comment. The presentation informs more rural communities what tools and opportunities are available for historic preservation and rehabilitation.

B. Home Tour Update

Maricella Benitez, Planner, said the Home Tour is ten days away, and the booklet is finalized and will be printed by Home Tour. The volunteers have a meeting set up next week to find out their responsibilities and schedules. She said she went to the Superior Home Tour, and their turn out was good. She hoped for a similar turn out for Florence.

C. Kokopelli and Cuen Building Updates

New estimates have been made for updating the architectural plan for the Cuen building. Mr. Harmer said the Cuen building plans and the Kokopelli building will both be taken to Council for action. He explained that the Town has access to the Kokopelli building, and the Environmental review stated there is only limited asbestos and no lead paint. A bid is out for the clean-up, and fee proposals should be submitted by the end of February.

Commissioner Reid explained that at a book signing, some members of the McFarland family expressed some interest in saving the Cuen building. They talked about contacting staff to see if they could help. Mr. Harmer said he would welcome their help but has not heard from them.

Vice-Chair Adam asked if the cost estimate went down from the lack of asbestos and lead paint. Mr. Harmer said the estimate may be in the high five figures. Vice-Chair Adam asked if they could see the report on the Cuen building. Mr. Harmer said the staff report

for the Cuen building has been prepared and we are waiting for the report on the Kokopelli building. These will be available for the Commission when cost is finalized and placed on the Town Council agenda.

D. Future Agendas

Mr. Harmer said several historical properties are actively being marketed. He explained the building on 130 N. Main may have potential reuse as an office building. The property at 110 Willow has had four potential buyers and one that is more serious. The property at 361 N. Quartz is multiple buildings spread out on two lots. A possible purchaser is looking into creating an Airbnb. Staff is letting potential property owners know ahead of time that they may go through a design review with the Commission before investing money into the project.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC/COMMISSION RESPONSE:

Call to the Public for public comment on issues within the jurisdiction of the Historic District Advisory Commission. Individual Commission members may respond to criticisms made, may ask staff to review a matter raised or may ask that a matter be put on a future agenda. However, members of the Commission shall not discuss or take action on any matter during an open call to the public unless the matters are properly noticed for discussion and legal action.

Bonnie Barriola discussed how her friend asked her to help save the buildings within the Downtown. She was pleased to hear that the Absentee Owner program was being put into place and thought it was a great opportunity for the Town to work with the owners. She suggested a joint work session with Council, HDAC, and other historical architects and representatives to discuss how other cities and towns have accomplished a vibrant downtown area. She encouraged all the commissioners to go to the conference because the information would be beneficial for future development in the downtown. She said she talked with some proprietors in the downtown and wondered why the Town was razing the Kokopelli building. People told her they had seen buildings in worse condition restored such as the Silver King, Courthouse, and Chapel of the Gila. She said similar efforts to the Silver King project could help restore this building as there was much cooperation between the Town, volunteers, and other entities. She said staff cannot do the work alone and requires a lot of different people to help in the process.

Ruth Harrison from Florence, Arizona agreed with Bonnie Barriola and mentioned the Town is working on a new sign code. She said the sign code should come before the Commission before going to Council. She mentioned some sign issues within the Town and hoped the new sign code addresses these problems. She also believed that the Town should pay for everyone on the Commission to go to the Conference. She asked if anyone had talked to the National Trust for Historic Preservation about the Kokopelli building to see if they could help in any way.

had talked to the National Trust for Historic Preservation about the Kokopelli building to see if they could help in any way.

Commissioner Reid stated that the Commission had a work session with the Council to discuss the future of Kokopelli. She said the Commission recommended the northeast corner building be saved to Council and Staff.

CALL TO THE COMMISSION-CURRENT EVENTS ONLY


Chairman Wheeler welcomed Commissioner Michael to the Commission.

Vice-Chair Adam welcomed the new Council Liaison Michelle Cordes to the Commission. She remarked that there are a lot of turn-over with Staff and this halts progress. She explained that she wants the Town to cement a direction for the district as the need for staff is a chronic problem. She understood that the code is a requirement but hoped the Town could find a way to figure out when code compliance is mandatory and when there is some leeway to help property owners with things such as ADA requirements. Vice-Chair Adam asked for Council to give some direction on how to develop downtown. She discussed that the Commission wants to do more for these buildings, but they are mostly limited to design review. They are being brought information but nothing to really act on. The Commission does not want to be seen as an obstacle to property owners. They want to build trust in communication between the community and the Town.

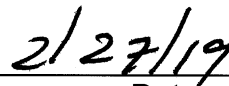
Commissioner Novotny stated that interest is picking up in the downtown and hopefully people will want to invest. She said a whole concoction of things led to the downtown's deterioration, but she is happy to see growth pick back up.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Chairman Wheeler, seconded by Commissioner Novotny, and carried 7-0 to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:11 pm.



Betty Wheeler



Date