

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF FLORENCE WAS HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2024, AT 6:00 PM, IN THE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, LOCATED AT 775 N. MAIN STREET, FLORENCE, ARIZONA.

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL:

Present: West, Reid, Florea, Knight

Absent: Deutmeyer

Staff Present: Maricella Benitez and Andrew Birkelbach

Council Liaison Maldonado Present

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CALL TO THE PUBLIC/COMMISSION RESPONSE

No members of the public spoke during the call to the public.

DISCUSSION/APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL of the minutes for the regular meeting conducted on March 27, 2024.

On motion by Commissioner West, seconded by Commissioner Reid, and carried 4-0, to approve the regular meeting minutes of March 27, 2023.

NEW BUSINESS

DISCUSSION/APPROVAL to accept Betty Wheeler's resignation from the Town of Florence Historic District Advisory Commission.

The Commission thanked Ms. Wheeler for her service to the Town of Florence.

On motion by Commissioner Florea, seconded by Commissioner Reid, and carried 4-0, to approve the resignation of Commissioner Betty Wheeler.

OLD BUSINESS

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION for historic plaques on 133 North Main Street and 390 North Main Street.

The Commissioners discussed the text for the historical plaques on 133 North Main Street and 390 North Main Street. The conversation revolved around updating the plaque's information to accurately reflect the history and current state of the location. The plaque

for 133 North Main Street mentioned various businesses and uses over time, including a hair salon. The owner of the building requested staff remove the hair salon reference and replace it with a mention of the leather shop that currently occupies the space.

The group discussed the fairness of singling out the leather shop when other businesses have not received the same treatment in past plaques. There is consideration for the longevity of the businesses mentioned and the need to ensure consistency in how current businesses are represented. Concerns were raised about whether the current name of the fitness center accurately reflects its historical significance compared to other businesses mentioned on the plaque.

Suggestions are made to amend the plaque to include the historical name of the building, such as the Surety Title and Trust Company building, while also acknowledging its current use as a fitness center. The Commissioners deliberated on how to balance the historical accuracy of the plaque with the inclusion of current businesses, ultimately deciding to mention both the historical and current uses of the building.

The conversation aims to ensure the historical plaque accurately reflects the site's evolution over time while also considering the perspectives of both the building owner and the historical significance of the businesses. The group reached a consensus on how to proceed with the plaque, with minor adjustments suggested for clarity and accuracy.

PRESENTATION for Ordinance No. 739-24: AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF FLORENCE, PINAL COUNTY, ARIZONA, AMENDING CHAPTER 32 OF THE FLORENCE TOWN CODE BY MODIFYING SECTION § 32.070 (A) DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMISSION (A) COMPOSITION.

Senior Planner Maricella Benitez presented the proposed changes to Ordinance #739-24, which aims to amend Chapter 32 of the Florence Town Code concerning the Historic District Advisory Commission. The conversation centered around concerns regarding the restrictive nature of the current rules for commission membership, particularly regarding residency and property ownership within the historic district.

The Commissioners acknowledged that the current rules limit the pool of eligible candidates and may hinder its effectiveness. There is a consensus to broaden the eligibility criteria while still ensuring that members possess relevant professional qualifications or historical connections to the area.

Commissioner Reid and Commissioner West expressed concern about the wording of a sentence in the ordinance, which suggests flexibility in the requirement for property ownership within the historic district. They assert that this wording might undermine the intention to prioritize members with a direct connection to a historic home.

The Commission discussed the importance of balancing the need for historical knowledge and expertise with inclusivity in membership. There was recognition that as the Town

evolves and attracts new residents, it is essential to adapt the Commission's rules to reflect these changes while still preserving its historical focus.

Concerns were raised about the declining number of eligible property owners within the historic district and the need to attract new members with relevant qualifications or connections to historical properties.

The group agreed to amend the wording of the ordinance to require at least two commissioners to own historic buildings. This provided the potential for including members who own or have a connection to historically significant commercial properties, broadening the Commission's scope beyond residential properties.

DISCUSSION/WORK SESSION on the Historic District Guidelines update.

Staff brought the updated historic district guidelines to review the proposed changes. The Commission agreed with some of the changes and approved of the reduction of repetitive content and the overall simplification of the guidelines. The Commission also acknowledged the importance of the consultant's efforts in refining the document, noting the valuable insights and information provided.

A significant point of discussion was signage regulations, particularly considering technological advancements. Concerns were raised about the potential need to update regulations to accommodate digital signs, such as those featuring dynamic graphics or changing content. The Commission highlighted the importance of planning ahead to address emerging trends in signage. Suggestions were made to explore options like running marquees or QR codes for historical interpretation.

Another topic of discussion was the inclusion of architectural styles in the guidelines, with a specific emphasis on incorporating mid-century modern designs and considerations for solar panel installations. Participants noted the growing relevance of mid-century modern architecture in the community and advocated for its inclusion alongside other historical styles. Additionally, concerns were raised about the placement and regulations surrounding solar panels on historic buildings, prompting discussions about appropriate guidelines for their installation.

The conversation also touched on the plant list within the guidelines. Commissioner West asked how the list came to be and if there was historical relevance for certain plant species. The consultant, Mr. Robert Graham, stated the plant list was probably based on the Town Code and native plant lists at the time, and the plants themselves did not have historical significance. Commissioner West requested the plant list show the correct scientific format for plant names.

Several more reviews will be planned for the future to further refine the draft guidelines before finalization. Participants discussed scheduling considerations and the need for a comprehensive review process to address remaining concerns and incorporate additional

feedback. Commissioners were assigned to provide availability for upcoming staff meetings.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a) Historic Preservation Conference 2024

Staff reported that registrations for three attendees had been completed, and hotel accommodation was secured for the duration of the event. Staff mentioned flexibility in check-in dates for the hotel rooms and noted that travel forms required signing off. Attendees expressed interest in the conference sessions shown online. They remarked positively on the variety of sessions available compared to previous years.

There was mention of freeing up the schedule of the Town's Building Official to attend the conference, with plans to bring them along unless an emergency arose. The dates of the conference were clarified as spanning from the 26th to the 28th of June, with attendees confirming their availability for those days. The possibility of a new appointment to the Historic Commission raised concerns about the potential need to add attendees.

Staff would work to accommodate a new commission member if they would like to attend the conference and if appointed before it. Staff also agreed to inquire about the feasibility of switching attendee names with the conference organizers. The discussion concluded with staff indicating that there were no further updates or matters to discuss regarding the conference preparations.

b) Canal Recognition

Town Planner Andrew Birkelbach shared preliminary research on historical markers, emphasizing that further investigation into the canals themselves would be needed. He mentioned finding a map online showing existing historical markers in Arizona, with approximately 55 markers identified in the Town of Florence Historic District, including two recently approved ones. Examples of markers from other locations were provided, showcasing varying styles and levels of detail, from simple plaques to more elaborate installations with maps and additional information.

Commissioners discussed the potential significance of marking historical sites beyond just buildings. The idea of designating history not only to structures but also to landscapes and infrastructure like canals was well-received. There was mention of utilizing historical resources, which contain drawings of the canal locations in Town, to aid in research and planning for the markers. The discussion highlighted the importance of preserving and recognizing elements of history that predate the existing buildings, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the area's heritage.

CALL TO COMMISSIONERS CURRENT EVENTS ONLY

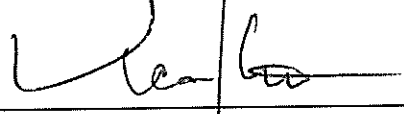
Commissioner Reid asked about stink net, a rapidly spreading invasive species, being in town. Although not directly related to buildings, it was noted that addressing this invasive species is essential for maintaining the overall well-being of the district. Commissioners shared observations of stink net growth in various locations, including tall specimens near a building north of the Station and in alleyways. Concerns were raised about its aggressive growth.

Commissioners discussed the characteristics of stink net, describing its distinct yellow round flowers and its strong, unpleasant odor, which gives the plant its name. They highlighted the need for caution when handling stink net due to their noxious properties and emphasized the importance of proper disposal to prevent further spread. Reference was made to the Parks and Trails department's process for removing stink net, which involved covering up and carefully removing the plant to prevent the dispersal of its seeds.

The conversation concluded with a call for continued vigilance and cooperation in tackling the stink net problem within the district.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Commissioner West, seconded by Commissioner Florea, and carried 4-0, to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:58 PM.



Victoria Knight, Chairman

7-17-24

Date