

Armory Park Historic Zone Advisory Board
LEGAL ACTION REPORT/ Minutes DRAFT
Tuesday, September 19, 2023

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm when a quorum was established with four members present: Mr. John Burr, Ms. Helen Erickson, Mr. Pat O'Brien, and Mr. Maurice Roberts. Members absent: Ms. Sara Bachman-Williams (excused), Mr. Tom Beal, and Mr. Stan Schuman (excused).

COT staff: Mr. Michael Taku, HP Office. Mr. Taku recorded the meeting. Guests: Mr. Donny Russell, COT Parks & Recreation Dept., formerly with General Services Dept.; Mr. Kevin Perko, Civil Design Group, Architecture and Engineering Div., for COT.

2. Approval of Minutes— June 20, 2023 and August 29, 2023 The LAR/ Minutes of both meetings were provided prior to the meeting. Mr. Roberts made a motion to approve both of the LAR/ Minutes as presented, seconded by Mr. O'Brien. Per Mr. Taku's request, separate votes for each date were made. Each motion was approved by a roll-call vote: 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

3. Call to the Audience None. No written comments were received prior to the meeting.

4. Reviews

a. SD- 00923-00098, 220 S 5th Avenue *Construct a 8' wrought iron fence (with 3 gates) at the south side of the building. Full Review/ Non-Contributing Resource.*

For the meeting, 6 links were provided on the COT website for the project. The inventory form, photo log, scope of work and site plans (April 21, 2023 version) were available prior to the meeting. The Development Zone map and Area Photo log maps were not available as functional links.

Mr. Russel provided a brief overview of the project. Due to ongoing security issues at Armory Park Center, including vandalism, it was decided to erect

a new 8' high wrought iron fence on the south side of the building enclosing most of the area up to the sidewalks. The currently installed 6' high chain link fence will be removed. The masonry walls will be retained. The new configuration will have two larger access gates on the west and a "man-gate" on the north-east corner. The increased height of the fence will require additional metal fencing on top the trash enclosure walls. The design will match the fence around the perimeter of Safford School. Mr. Russel noted that the current storage use, now behind the opaque chain-link fence area will be abandoned and only Armory Park Center vans will use the new enclosed area for parking.

Mr. Burr noted that a different, apparently revised set of plans was being shown during the meeting than those provided to the board. The previous version showed metal mesh screening applied to the east and north areas of the proposed fence as "note 6". Both versions of the site maps show the new south fence line abutting the sidewalk, instead of at the current fence location, approximately 2 feet north of the sidewalk. A similar concern was raised for the east side location of the fence, which was described as "six inches from the sidewalk", although the plans show it sited, in alignment with the building's colonnade, about 2 feet from the sidewalk.

Mr. Russell responded that the east side fence will indeed be in alignment with the columns as shown on the current plan, which is about 2 feet away from the sidewalk, and that the southern alignment could easily be adjusted to the location of the current fence line. Mr. Perko confirmed that the shown plans have been updated and do not now include any mesh screening applied to the new fencing.

Mr. Burr welcomed the potential site adjustment to the south-side fence line, noting that all fence lines in the HPZ are setback at least a foot from the property line, and that the fence-line of the current chain-link fence appears to be the development zone standard. He was concerned that the fence posts and their concrete bases would impact the enhanced sidewalks that the neighborhood had received as a Mayor's office GBDG grant, if placed too close to them. He also noted that the 2009 mural on the masonry wall, featuring noted long-time resident Adele Gribbell's portrait, was a treasured neighborhood resource and should remain visible to the public.

Ms. Erickson asked for further clarity about visibility on the north east corner where the fence/gate will be adjacent to the colonnade. She showed a google view of the area in question, including the public mural. She also asked for clarity of the parking design in the newly enclosed area, and whether the proposal includes any paving.

Mr. Russel and Mr. Perko confirmed that the visibility of the structure, the colonnade, and mural (wall) will be retained by the open wrought iron fence design, that the “overnight” parking is anticipated to be parallel to the mural wall, because of the west-side access gate, and that no paving of the area is planned nor included in the proposal.

The Board and applicants were generally in agreement about the need for clarification about siting of the fence lines and visibility, due to the discrepancies between iterations of the design plans.

Action Taken: Mr. Roberts made a motion for the Board to recommend approval of the project as presented with the following conditions: 1. The new south setback from the sidewalk will retain the same 2’ setback as the existing chainlink fence; 2. The east setback of the new fence will be in alignment with the columns, approximately two feet from the sidewalk; and 3. no metal mesh screening will be applied to the open wrought iron fencing. The motion was seconded by Ms. Erickson. Motion approved by roll-call vote: 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

Mr. Russel and Mr. Perko thanked the board for their thoughtful recommendations and looked forward to the next stages of review, as then outlined by Mr. Taku.

5. Design Guidelines Project

a. *Update on the design guidelines*

No new update was made. The last approved version is now in a working document format.

6. Tucson Pima County Historical Commission Separation Update

Mr. Burr and Ms. Erickson provided the update: The process of splitting the historic commission is officially over!

On September 5, the Pima County Board of Supervisors voted to not split the Historic Commission. During the discussion before the vote, guidance was given that the historic commission should vet any staff recommended changes before coming back to the Board for consideration.

On September 13, The TPCHC voted in favor of two motions: the first was a recommendation to not split the commission, and the second was to adopt the report on the history of the commission, its recommendations, and to use it as the basis going forward, requiring any future recommended changes to be done in consultation and with direction from the commission.

Earlier today, at 3:37pm, Mayor and Council voted to not split the commission, with guidance that any changes be done in collaboration with the commission.

Mr. Taku added that staff is ready to work with everyone going forward.

7. Minor Reviews

Mr. Taku noted that two reviews will be coming soon: 345 E 13th Street for a shingle replacement; and 218 E 17th Street for a potential zoning violation of a non-reviewed shed. Both reviews will be on site. There may be a solar project for review later this month, and the long, ongoing zoning violation for a wall on E 14th St may also be coming soon.

8. Call to the Board

Specific Updates:

- Mr. Roberts requested information on the upcoming Historic Preservation Conference and if advisory board members can attend. Mr. Taku noted that scholarships are available, and that members should email the chair to be added to the list. Mr. Burr commented that he understood there to be about 10 scholarships available, some are reserved for

commissioners and that the rest would be on a first-come, first-served basis. Currently he and Ms Erickson are scheduled. Mr. Roberts will be added to the list. Mr. O'Brien declined. Mr. Burr will check in with Ms. Bachman-Williams, Mr. Beal and Mr. Schuman. Mr. Taku noted that the Wednesday afternoon CLG training may be open for anyone. Ms. Erickson noted that she had discussed the topic with SHPO Director Katherine Leonard, who had revised the guidance to now include advisory board members, since they were similarly "appointed".

- Ms. Erickson noted that a case from Ft. Lowell had been sent back by PRS for additional review by the advisory board because of process issues and problems with imprecise language in the area's design guidelines. The term "may" had been apparently reinterpreted from past customary use. Mr. Taku noted that any revised design guidelines should be much more precise in language, and clear in intent. He also noted that "landscape" has always been a "gray area" and should be addressed.
- Mr. Burr noted that an appeal had been filed on a separate case in Ft. Lowell which will eventually go to Mayor and Council. It possibly should be noted as it brings up some of the ongoing process issues that should be addressed, although commenting that Ft. Lowell is a "unique case".
- Mr. Burr also requested that board members reach out to potential new board members, as Mr. Beal plans to retire at the end of the year.

9. Future Agenda Items - Information Only

Mr. Taku noted that nothing is yet specifically scheduled for October.

10. Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 pm. The next regularly scheduled meeting is October 17, 2023.