

Meeting Minutes

Historic Preservation Commission

Regular Meeting

May 24, 2023 | 5:00 p.m.
Chandler City Council Chambers
88 E. Chicago St., Chandler, AZ



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Velasquez at 5:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Commission Attendance

Chairman Jeff Velasquez
Vice Chairman Kevin Weight
Commissioner Cheryl Bell
Commissioner Erika Finbraaten
Commissioner Bryan Saba
Commissioner Devan Wastchak
Commissioner Mark Yost

Staff Attendance

Derek Horn, Director of Development Services
David de la Torre, Planning Manager
Harley Mehlhorn, City Planner
Thomas Allen, Assistant City Attorney
Julie San Miguel, Clerk

Absent

Ex Officio Jody Crago

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Chairman Weight.

Scheduled and Unscheduled Public Appearances

Members of the audience may address any item not on the agenda. State Statute prohibits the Board or Commission from discussing an item that is not on the agenda, but the Board or Commission does listen to your concerns and has staff follow up on questions you raise.

Action Agenda Item No. 1 and Discussion

1. Meeting Minutes of the May 4, 2023, Historic Preservation Commission

Move Historic Preservation Commission approve Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes of May 4, 2023.

CHAIRMAN VELASQUEZ asked if there were any comments, questions, or corrections to the Meeting Minutes of May 4, 2023.

VICE CHAIRMAN WEIGHT advised of the following corrections to the Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes of May 4, 2023:

Page 11, Paragraph 5, Correction to reflect the speaker as VICE CHAIRMAN WEIGHT:
VICE CHAIRMAN WEIGHT advised he is supportive of the stipulation and wanted to verify to make sure that this is something that can reasonably be enforced.

Page 12, Paragraph 6, Correction to reflect the speaker as VICE CHAIRMAN WEIGHT:
VICE CHAIRMAN WEIGHT stated he is thrilled that the City acquired this property in 2001 and even more thrilled now that it is going to be the first landmark nominated to the Chandler Historic Register. He thanked Derek and staff for making this happen and mentioned this is the closest thing we have to the founder's house. He stated this is truly a Chandler landmark and one of the best examples in the valley of Pueblo Revival style architecture.

COMMISSIONER SABA advised of the following correction to the Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes of May 4, 2023:

Page 7, Paragraph 2, Correction to replace Challenger Center for the Performing Arts with Chandler Center for the Performing Arts:
COMMISSIONER SABA stated that will work and further stated that he recognizes the needs of the business and does not wish to minimize that because there are a lot of great interesting signs in downtown Chandler. He explained the Commission has been very supportive of that because of how it supports businesses. He agreed that this is an entertainment venue, and it draws a parallel to the *Chandler Center for the Performing Arts*, as a performing venue.

CHAIRMAN VELASQUEZ advised of the following correction to the Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes of May 4, 2023:

Page 4, Paragraph 10, Correction to add "are":
CHAIRMAN VELASQUEZ asked Commissioner Bell if there *are* other signs that are not on the image presented by staff.

CHAIRMAN VELASQUEZ confirmed there were no further comments, questions, or corrections from the Commission Members.

Action Agenda Item No. 1 Motion and Vote

VICE CHAIRMAN WEIGHT moved to approve Action Agenda Item No. 1 of the May 24, 2023, Historic Preservation Commission Meeting with corrections noted on record; Seconded by COMMISSION YOST.

Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Action Agenda Item No. 2 and Discussion

2. PLH23-0034 GOODYEAR CANAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DISTRICT

HARLEY MEHLHORN, CITY PLANNER presented details regarding the request for Historic Landmark Designation for the Goodyear Canal, located on the west side of Basha Road south of Ocotillo Road, roughly ¼ mile east of Alma School Road.

CHAIRMAN VELASQUEZ thanked staff for the presentation and stated the history was incredible, well written, and well presented. He asked if there was any way to trace who wrote the postcards contained in the presentation.

HARLEY MEHLHORN, CITY PLANNER could not recall the names of the sender or recipient of the postcards and mentioned the images were provided by the Chandler Museum Manager.

COMMISSIONER FINBRAATEN commented the history of Chandler's Goodyear area is very different from the Goodyear area on the other side of the valley and asked if there was a relationship or a rivalry between the two.

HARLEY MEHLHORN, CITY PLANNER replied the Goodyear Company actually founded both sides simultaneously as they had interests in both the West and East Valley. He explained their operations consolidated in the Litchfield area in the 1920s and he believed there was not much of a rivalry. He stated various economic and circumstantial reasons influenced Goodyear to centralize their operations in the West Valley.

COMMISSIONER SABA sought clarification regarding a particular slide and asked if the historic designation is only the canal and not the entire district.

HARLEY MEHLHORN CITY PLANNER clarified that the image in question was a remnant from a previous presentation. He confirmed that the focus of this discussion is only the canal and pointed out the area could be a potential conservation district due to its retained context.

COMMISSIONER SABA inquired the neighborhood meeting, asking if there was any opposition and pointed out the presentation mentioned there were concerns regarding the maintenance of the canal.

HARLEY MEHLHORN, CITY PLANNER clarified that no opposition was received; however, there was dialogue that focused on concerns about maintenance of the canal.

COMMISSIONER SABA questioned how the landmark designation could affect improvements, he asked if designation would allow for control improvements without necessarily preserving the concrete in its current state.

HARLEY MEHLHORN, CITY PLANNER confirmed landmark designation permits maintenance and restoration to its original condition. He mentioned the designation would prohibit certain types of improvements that could alter the historical look and feel. He envisioned the possibility of adding features like a pedestrian pathway alongside the canal, suggesting collaboration with future developers and the Community Services Department.

VICE CHAIRMAN WEIGHT mentioned the existence of a Goodyear cemetery or its remnants near Fulton Ranch and the discussed area. He asked if staff had any information about it or its connection to the community of Goodyear.

HARLEY MEHLHORN, CITY PLANNER acknowledged the site's historic significance, believing it to be in the county.

VICE CHAIRMAN WEIGHT complimented the presentation and suggested considering listing the site on the National Register of Historic Places in the future.

HARLEY MEHLHORN, CITY PLANNER thanked the Vice Chairman and asked to discuss the process of listing on the National Register of Historic Places after the meeting.

COMMISSIONER VELASQUEZ inquired about the ongoing improvements and cleanup in the canal zone and asked what is currently being done.

HARLEY MEHLHORN, CITY PLANNER stated the scope of work being done in the canal primarily involves removing debris/vegetation and repairing critical areas. He mentioned future plans to resurface and repair where necessary, referring to a historic template by Derek Horn that depicted the canal's appearance in the 1920s.

COMMISSIONER WASTCHAK expressed gratitude to staff for the presentation and recommended they make their research and historical findings available to the residents of Chandler. He stressed the significance of public publication when approved by Council, so the community can appreciate staff's efforts and the historical value of familiar places like the canal. He mentioned parking alongside the canal to take his children to Senator Park and how he will view it differently to identify older elements after reading the article and learning about its history. He acknowledged the benefits of a plaque and encouraged publicly publicizing staff's research.

HARLEY MEHLHORN, CITY PLANNER mentioned efforts to create a webpage where research and historic images could be shared with residents interested in learning about the city's history.

COMMISSIONER FINBRAATEN stated she graduated from the DSU Public History Program 20 years ago and recalled completing major projects with limited capabilities due to the early stages of the internet. She commented on opportunities in presenting and gathering historical information due to advancements in technology and the internet. She pointed out how people can easily access detailed information. She commended staff for assembling comprehensive resources, acknowledging how sharing this information educates the community and preserves the visual history of area.

CHAIRMAN VELASQUEZ thanked staff and the Commission for their contributions and confirmed there were no further comments or questions.

Action Agenda Item No. 2 Motion and Vote

Move Commission recommend City Council approve Ordinance 5058, PLH23-0034, Goodyear Canal Historic Preservation District Landmark zoning overlay.

COMMISSIONER SABA moved to approve Action Agenda Item No. 2 of the May 24, 2023, Historic Preservation Commission Meeting; Seconded by COMMISSIONER FINBRAATEN.

Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Member Comments/Announcements

DAVID DE LA TORRE, PLANNING MANAGER stated staff will maintain contact with the Commission regarding the next meeting.

DEREK HORN, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES asked the Commission to reserve the fourth Wednesday of the month for potential Historic Preservation Commission meetings.

COMMISSIONER SABA requested staff notify the Commission in advance about whether meetings will be held each month. He stated notification would enable the Commission to adjust their schedules accordingly and free up the dates meetings are not held.

DAVID DE LA TORRE, PLANNING MANAGER thanked the Commissioner and confirmed that staff will email the commission early in the month to confirm meeting dates.

HARLEY MEHLHORN, CITY PLANNER announced this is the last Historic Preservation Commission meeting for Derek Horn, Director of Development Services and acknowledged his significant contributions to historic preservation. He expressed gratitude for Derek and his efforts creating the program.

DEREK HORN, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES thanked the Commission Members and expressed optimism about the future growth of historic preservation established by the Commission and staff.

CHAIRMAN VELASQUEZ wished everyone a happy and safe Memorial Day.

Calendar

The next Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission will be scheduled as needed.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

Jeff Velasquez, Chairman



David de la Torre, Staff Liaison for City Center District
Matters and Reviews