

Meeting Minutes

Historic Preservation Commission

Regular Meeting

September 4, 2024 | 5:30 p.m.
Chandler City Council Chambers
88 E. Chicago Street, Chandler, AZ



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Bell at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Commission Attendance

Vice Chair Bell
Commissioner Finbraaten
Commissioner Saba
Commissioner Yost

Staff Attendance

David de la Torre, Planning Manager
Lauren Koll, Downtown Redevelopment Program Manager
Mika Liburd, Associate Planner
Thomas Allen, Assistant City Attorney
Julie San Miguel, Clerk

Absent

Chair Weight
Commissioner Wastchak
Commissioner Barichello
Ex Officio Member Crago

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Saba.

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.

Briefing

1. Arianna Urban, Certified Local Government Coordinator, State Historic Preservation Office.

ARIANA URBAN, CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT COORDINATOR introduced herself as a planner with the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). She explained her current role positioned which allows her to travel across the state assisting local governments with their preservation programs, historic preservation, and providing training to historic preservation commissions. She provided an overview of historic preservation, describing it as operating at three levels: the federal, state, and local levels. She stated at the federal level, the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service oversaw and adjudicated historic preservation; at the state level, SHPO acted as the intermediary, implementing federal guidelines and compliance standards through Arizona State Parks and the Department of Natural Resources; and at the local level, municipalities played the most crucial role in preservation efforts, as they were responsible for directly maintaining and integrating historic resources into their communities. She highlighted that preservation intersected with many branches of government, including planning, transportation, archaeology, education, and economic development and emphasized the collaborative nature of historic preservation between state and local governments. She presented statements regarding the Certified Local Government (CLG) program. She explained that it is a certification process conducted in partnership with the National Park Service to formalize local preservation programs at a local level. She further explained to qualify as a CLG, municipalities needed to demonstrate a civic commitment to preserving historic resources. She pointed out that Chandler has done this by establishing the Historic Preservation Commission. She stated the CLG program establishes an administrative relationship between SHPO, the local government, and the National Park Service, fostering collaboration and support for historic preservation. She explained the benefits of becoming a CLG, the most significant being grant funding. She mentioned that SHPO provided annual grants to CLGs for preservation projects and offers training for commissioners, neighborhoods, and planning and zoning boards. She further mentioned that CLG status allows the municipality to enter a statewide network of preservation professionals, allowing participation in conferences and workshops. She noted that Chandler is not currently a CLG but is on the verge of becoming one. She stated that Derek Horn and Harley Mehlhorn previously worked on the CLG application and that Mika Liburd submitted the final attachments this date. She stated once reviewed she will be before forwarding them to the National Park Service for signatures. She remarked that the last CLG certification in Arizona was Cottonwood in 2014, therefore it has been a decade since the last addition to the program. She mentioned that there are a few municipalities in various stages of the application processes including Douglas and Paradise Valley. She reiterated that grant funding was a major benefit of CLG status and asked Commissioner Finbraaten what her position was at SHPO.

COMMISSIONER FINBRAATEN advised she was previously involved in administering grants and created the application that is still used online.

ARIANA URBAN, CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT COORDINATOR stated as a federally designated agency, SHPO does not receive state funding and instead relied entirely on congressional allocations from the Federal Historic Preservation Fund. She further stated a requirement of this funding is that 10% be redistributed to CLGs annually, which amounts

between \$80,000 to \$100,000 per year. She explained that individual grants could reach up to \$20,000 and required a matching contribution, which could be provided through cash, volunteer hours, or material donations. She stated the grant application process is simple and non-competitive, making it an excellent opportunity for municipalities to fund preservation projects. She clarified that these grants were intended for planning projects rather than brick or mortar projects; examples include historic district surveys, drafting design guidelines, or hosting preservation workshops. She explained the State Historic Tax Reclassification program, which provides tax relief for owner-occupied historic residential properties. She stated if a home is lived in by the owner and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the owner could apply for reclassification to reduce property taxes by the Maricopa County Assessor's Office; however, any exterior modifications to the property required review by SHPO to ensure historic integrity was maintained. She mentioned the Federal Historic Tax Credit program, a collaboration between the IRS, the National Park Service, and SHPO. She explained this program provides income tax credits for significant rehabilitation projects on income-producing historic buildings; the credit covers 20% of eligible expenses over five years, which could amount to millions of dollars for large-scale projects. She cited the San Carlos Hotel is undergoing a \$23 million rehabilitation funded in part by tax credits. She concluded by stating her role at SHPO is to assist municipalities with preservation efforts and encouraged the commission and staff to reach out with any questions.

COMMISSIONER FINBRAATEN asked about the Arizona Heritage Fund and the amount allocated for historic properties and the eligibility criteria.

ARIANA URBAN, CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT COORDINATOR stated the Arizona Heritage Fund was not funded this year and was removed from the state budget. She expressed disappointment, noting that the fund had taken 15 years to be reinstated only to be defunded again. She stated originally it was established in the 1990s and funded by the state lottery; however, it was eliminated in 2008 due to the recession, with only the Arizona Game and Fish portion remaining. She further stated while the fund was reinstated in 2019, but it did not receive funding until 2020, with year to year allocations with varying amounts between \$500,000 and \$1.2 million. She stated, unfortunately, the 2024 allocation was removed due to the state's \$2 million budget deficit. She presented statements regarding the importance of advocating for the Heritage Fund's reinstatement and urged commissioners and staff to contact legislators in support of its restoration.

COMMISSIONER FINBRAATEN mentioned several projects that had benefited from the fund, including the Warren Ball Field. She further mentioned how the fund had not only supported historic preservation, but also boosted local economies by attracting visitors and enhancing the community.

ARIANA URBAN, CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT COORDINATOR agreed with Commissioner Finbraaten highlighting the diverse range of projects that had been supported by the fund. She

reiterated the unfortunate reality that many important preservation projects could be delayed due to the funding cut. She concluded by thanking everyone for their time and encouraged them to reach out if they had any further questions.

Action Agenda Item No. 2 and Discussion

2. Meeting Minutes of May 22, 2024, Historic Preservation Commission

Move Historic Preservation Commission approve Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes of May 22, 2024.

VICE CHAIR BELL confirmed there were no questions, comments, or corrections on the Meeting Minutes of May 22, 2024.

Action Agenda Item No. 2 Motion and Vote

COMMISSIONER YOST moved to approve Item No 2. Meeting Minutes of May 22, 2024, Historic Preservation Commission; Seconded by COMMISSIONER SABA.

Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

Action Agenda Item No. 3 and Discussion

3. PLH24-0024 ACQUA DI MARE RESTAURANT - CANOPY

MIKA LIBURD, ASSOCIATE PLANNER presented details regarding the request for architectural plan review approval for a patio cover addition to a building located at 106 South Oregon Street, generally located ¼ mile south of the southwest corner of Arizona Avenue and Chandler Boulevard.

COMMISSIONER FINBRAATEN asked if the canopy was attached to the building or freestanding.

MIKA LIBURD, ASSOCIATE PLANNER clarified that the canopy is not attached to the building.

COMMISSIONER SABA sought clarification on the materials used, noting that most covers in downtown use wood, whereas this one is metal. He asked if there was a reason for the selection made and how it will integrate with the colonnade across Oregon Street.

MIKA LIBURD, ASSOCIATE PLANNER responded that alumawood was chosen for its durability against weather conditions. She stated the Applicant is present at the meeting this date and available to provide further details.

COMMISSIONER SABA presented statements regarding the precedent set by the approval. He pointed out that there are no other front-facing patios in downtown, except for the colonnade on Oregon Street, had similar canopies. He presented concerns that approving this material

could encourage similar requests along Boston Street and other locations and asked if staff was comfortable with the material change and its potential impact. He clarified that this question is for planning staff rather than the Applicant since its regarding integration of the materials into downtown and precedence.

DAVID DE LA TORRE, PLANNING MANAGER explained that the proposal is different from a walkable colonnade as the proposed canopy is designed to be removable rather than a permanent structure and to shade a serving area. He stated the material selection aligned with the existing patio cover and that city staff has discussed this with other businesses interested in architectural enhancements and staff is comfortable with the material selection.

COMMISSIONER SABA stated the intent of his question was to ensure that staff was comfortable with the material selection and thanked staff for confirming.

COMMISSIONER FINBRAATEN referenced similar approvals in Phoenix, emphasizing that alumawood's durability made it suitable for high-traffic areas. She noted that it would not deteriorate or snag clothing, making it a practical choice. She presented statements about a similar patio cover remaining in good condition for years and concluded that the material was a good fit for this project as it will not deteriorate and will be visually appealing from the street view.

COMMISSIONER SABA thanked Commissioner Finbraaten for the additional feedback.

VICE CHAIR BELL confirmed there were no further questions or comments from the Commission Members.

Action Agenda Item No. 3 Motion and Vote

Move Historic Preservation Commission approve Architectural Review Plan, PLH24-0028 Acqua Di Mare Restaurant-Canopy, allowing the addition of a canopy to the existing patio area, subject to the conditions recommended by Planning staff.

Although the Proposed Motion in the staff memo refers to conditions of approval, staff inadvertently did not include the conditions in the memo. Prior to the Historic Preservation Commission meeting, staff verbally discussed the conditions with the applicant who, in turn, provided a written statement agreeing to comply with the following conditions.

1. The Service Entry Section (SES) on the south side of the building shall be screened with two wing walls extending from the exterior wall of the building and doors, and shall be painted to match the exterior color of the building.

2. The existing parking spaces on the southeast corner of the site shall either be removed entirely and measures taken to prevent parking, or improved to comply with all city standards.
3. The aforementioned screening and parking improvements shall be submitted for review and approval as part of the patio roof submittal and shall be completed prior to final clearance for patio occupancy.
4. Outdoor storage shall be prohibited on the south side of the building, unless said storage is completely screened from view with materials and colors that match the building.

COMMISSIONER SABA moved to approve Item No 3. PLH24-0024 Acqua Di Mare Restaurant – Canopy, subject to stipulations recommended by staff; Seconded by COMMISSIONER YOST.

Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

Member Comments/Announcements


DAVID DE LA TORRE, PLANNING MANAGER expressed his gratitude to the Commission Members for being present for the meeting this date. He acknowledged that the meeting was not scheduled on the traditional fourth Wednesday of the month, but it was necessary due to the lack of a quorum on the previous meeting date. He appreciated everyone accommodating to the meeting this date despite short notice and the circumstances.

Calendar

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

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.


Kevin Weight, Chair

 1/30/2025
David de la Torre, Staff Liaison for City Center District
Matters and Reviews