

# CITY OF BENSON

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

### SATURDAY, March 15, 2014 – 9:00 A.M.

A meeting of the Benson Historic Preservation Commission was held on  
Saturday, March 15, 2014 at 9:00 A.M.  
at the Benson City Hall,  
120 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Benson, AZ 85602

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Vicki L. Vivian, CMC, City Clerk

### MINUTES

Chair Ruth Wilson opened the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Members present: Ruth Wilson, Joanne Sturgeon, Phyllis Little, Alwina Frega, Irma Bernal, and Gus Figueroa

#### **CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

Michelle Johnson from the City of Benson was present, as was Gerry Thompson from the Benson Museum, and Ana Lands.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA:**

The Minutes of the January 18, Meeting, as well as the Minutes of the respective Special Meetings on January 30, 2014 and February 13, 2014, were approved. Vote 6-0.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Ruth Wilson reported that she has sent a request for information to Mr. Vonde each week, and finally heard from him last week. Vonde advised the federal government has delayed disbursement of funds because they do not approve of the State's past use of part of it for scholarships to attend the annual meeting. Thus, we can't apply for grants.

2. Hotel Arnold Report: Update – Gus Figueroa advised that the Hotel is in the process of being painted in what appears to be a gray "wash". Upon being questioned, Irma Bernal advised that there has been no progress as to sale of the property.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

1. Apache Park Project: No grants available at this time. In addition, Michelle Johnson stated that there is no money available, and likely will be no money available this Fiscal Year. She further stated that the City has no reserve funds.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Review of potential historic properties for nominations and property survey bids.
2. Review and approve paint colors for Barrio properties owned by Gus Figueroa. Gus asked a decision on colors be placed on hold until he spoke further with his family, since the house(s) are intended for them. Ruth advised we could hold a Special Meeting if need be, so he wouldn't have to wait for the May 17, 2014, Meeting.
3. Review and approve paint colors for Benson Museum. Gerry Thompson stated that the Museum is not yet ready to choose colors or to paint. They are in the process of bringing in a couple of storage buildings, and possibly some free standing decorative metal to serve as awnings, so the painting

will be delayed.

4. Grant availability for State Conference in June for potential attendees. Ruth referred all to her conversation with Mr. Vonde (see Old Business, No. 1 above). We can't request grant money for the State Conference at this time, but it's possible things will work out. If anyone is interested in attending please let Ruth know.

5. Review of Hi-Wo Barrio property situation. Ruth stated that although prep work is in process, nothing has been done as far as tearing down the house. The contractors are working on the LDS Church in St. David, so presumably, the Hi-Wo house will follow.

6. Consideration and possible action for the demolition of 369 E Fifth. Ana Lands, who owns the property, was present. She stated that the property belonged to her deceased brother, and she is working on a contract with a party to deconstruct the house in exchange for all of the building material, which is redwood. Although she has an emotional attachment, the building is a liability. It was built as a Sears Kit House in the late 1800's. In fact, it, along with the house beside it, was used as part of the first Benson School, so it does have additional historic value. She does not want to sell it as she wants to keep the lot. Discussion ensued among the Members. It was agreed that we would like to keep the building, but the probability of no grants for a potentially long period, means it would sit empty and unimproved. Also, per Ms. Lands, the building is cabled together, and thus, cannot be moved. Joanne Sturgeon made a motion to allow dismantling of the building at 369 E. Fifth Street, Benson, Arizona, Irma Bernal seconded the motion, and the motion was approved. Vote 5 to 1, with Alwina Fraga dissenting. Alwina also then asked Ms. Lands if she would consider donating a window or windows to the Museum, particularly because the building was part of Benson's first school. Ms. Lands was agreeable to doing so.

7. Consideration of a possible new member. Ruth Wilson advised that Gerry Thompson was interested in becoming a member of the Historic Commission. She stated that although we are now limited to nine members, we have only eight, so Gerry would be welcome as our last member. She and Michelle Johnson agreed that he would need to apply to the City, but that we need to vote on our recommendation that he be approved. Irma Bernal made a motion to recommend Gerry Thompson for membership, and the motion was approved. Vote 6 to 0.

7. Meeting Scheduling. Ruth stated the next meeting would be scheduled for May 17, 2014, unless we have a need for a Special Meeting regarding the colors on Gus Figueroa's Barrio house.

8. As a final topic, Alwina Fraga advised she had visited with Liz Brenner, who would like to know the status of the plaque for the Cemetery. Ruth advised that if we would forgo bronzing the plaque, the cost would be less and possibly affordable. Ruth then asked about the plaque to be placed in the Apache Powder area, which she still has because we can't afford the boulder to place it on. Gus Figueroa responded that he has a large marble boulder that might work, but we'd need a forklift and a flatbed truck to do so. Ruth stated that we would need to be very careful to place it correctly, pursuant to plans already drawn. Gus asked if his marble boulder didn't work, could we then build a wall? It was agreed that we could.

**ADJOURNED:** Ruth Wilson called the meeting to a close at 10:02 a.m.