

**Final Report of the
Aspen Historic Preservation Task Force
October 2009**

**Members of the Task Force
appointed by City Council in February 2008:**

Michael Behrendt
Penney Evans Carruth
Marsha Cook
Pam Cunningham
Yasmine dePagter
LJ Erspamer
Michael Hoffman
Les Holst
John Kelly
Junee Kirk
Su Lum
Lisa Markalunas
Mike Maple
Ann Mullins
Joe Myers
Suzannah Reid
Gilbert Sanchez
Bill Stirling
Tom Todd
Bill Wiener
Jack Wilke

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At the final Task Force meeting on October 14, 2009, the following two votes were taken regarding the accuracy of the report and the final recommendation to City Council:

Motion by Mike Maple, second by Michael Behrendt:

I move that the Introduction, Summary of Task Force Recommendations Based on the Record of Votes, and Summaries of each vote/Discussion on each recommendation is an accurate accounting of the HPTF’s discussions and votes over the last 18 months and that the Final Report of the Aspen HPTF, including all documents referred to in the Table of Contents, be submitted to City Council for their consideration.

Passes by a vote of 19-1.

TASK FORCE MEMBER	
Michael Behrendt	y
Penney Evans Carruth	y
Marsha Cook	y
Pam Cunningham	y
Yasmine dePagter	y
LJ Erspamer	y
Michael Hoffman	y
Les Holst	y
John Kelly	y
June Kirk	y
Su Lum	y
Lisa Markalunas	y
Mike Maple	y
Ann Mullins	y
Joe Myers	y
Suzannah Reid	y
Gilbert Sanchez	y
Bill Stirling	y
Tom Todd	no proxy
Bill Wiener	n
Jack Wilke	y
RESULT	
YES	PASSES 19
NO	1
ABSTAIN	0

Motion by Mike Maple, seconded by Behrendt:

I move that the HPTF recommend by roll call vote the Introduction, Summary of Task Force Recommendations Based on the Record of Votes, and the Summaries of each vote/Discussion on each recommendation be the recommendation of the HPTF.

Failed by a vote: 1-8-4

TASK FORCE MEMBER	
Michael Behrendt	n
Penney Evans Carruth	n
Marsha Cook	n
Pam Cunningham	n
Yasmine dePagter	n
LJ Erspamer	y
Michael Hoffman	Left mtg.
Les Holst	Left mtg.
John Kelly	n
June Kirk	Left mtg.
Su Lum	Left mtg.
Lisa Markalunas	Left mtg.
Mike Maple	n
Ann Mullins	a
Joe Myers	Left mtg.
Suzannah Reid	a
Gilbert Sanchez	Left mtg.
Bill Stirling	a
Tom Todd	Absent with no proxy
Bill Wiener	n
Jack Wilke	a
RESULT	
YES	1
NO	8
ABSTAIN	4
LEFT MEETING	7

III. Introduction

Introduction

The City of Aspen has one of the oldest historic preservation programs in the state, initiated out of grass roots efforts beginning in the early 1970's. The Commercial Core Historic District was created in 1974, followed by the Main Street Historic District in 1976. Individual properties have also been declared historic landmarks over the years, to the current total of 279. All districts and landmarks are subject to protections overseen by the Historic Preservation Commission.

The primary focus has been on the community's Victorian heritage, however, identifying and protecting properties that illustrate the 20th century history of Aspen has been undertaken since designation of the original chair lift (Lift 1) in 1974. The 2000 Aspen Area Community Plan noted that "Aspen's distinctive history is irreplaceable, whether it be the late nineteenth-century miners' cottages, the Bauhaus buildings introduced by architect Herbert Bayer, or the faux-chalets built by ski instructors in the 1950's and 60's." Numerous potential historic resources were subsequently identified in a formal city-wide inventory. As modern Aspen's critical organizations, such as the Institute, Music Festival, and Skiing Company, reached their 50th anniversaries, the City more strongly promoted the idea that this era produced places worth saving.

Creating a review process for younger properties that is clear and acceptable in light of the seemingly more limited degree of public support has been challenging. The Historic Preservation Task Force was established as a result of debate ignited in the summer of 2007, when the City Council passed an emergency ordinance to protect properties at least 30 years old from demolition, unless they were determined to have no historic value. In December 2007, Council replaced that law with Ordinance #48, which reduced the affected properties to a list of 53. Ordinance #48 was anticipated to be in place temporarily, while the community re-examined preservation policies.

Approximately 40 citizens made application to City Council, expressing a strong interest to be a part of a designated Task Force's exploration of how and if post World War II structures should be historically designated. 21 members were selected to represent a cross section of the Aspen community with special expertise including real estate, law, architecture, home ownership, business ownership, and years of residency in Aspen. While the impetus for the Task Force was the possibility of new post-war landmark designations, City Council offered the group latitude to critique any historic preservation policies and practices.

The Task Force met 35 times between March 2008 and October 2009. The early meetings focused on developing a process for ground rules and decision making. A Chair, Bill Stirling, and Co-Chair, Tom Todd, were appointed. Then the group studied the existing preservation program, went on tours, and heard from nationally recognized guest speakers fluent in the historic preservation process.

In June 2008, the Task Force, and members of the public, participated in a brainstorming exercise with facilitators, which resulted in a long list of topics and ideas that became the Task Force's workprogram. The Task Force organized related ideas

and created six committees (Architecture, Criteria for Designation, Economics and Incentives, Historic Districts, Public Outreach, and Voluntary vs. Involuntary Designation.) The committees met approximately 75 times in total, and various subcommittees met even more often, to research specific ideas. Six worksessions were held to update City Council as work progressed.

Starting in November 2008, each committee submitted an interim report to their colleagues. Reports were revised and submitted as final proposals beginning in January 2009. Each committee received an immediate “straw vote” on any recommendations. The Task Force determined that these initial votes would be preliminary in order to digest all of the committee reports before making conclusions.

Votes were finalized in August 2009. The votes dealt with architectural styles, scoring systems to determine which properties have historic significance, whether the post World War II programs should be voluntary or involuntary, whether designation affects the economic value of a property, opinions of Aspen’s on-going 19th century preservation efforts, analysis of various incentives and their effectiveness for post World War II properties, the viability of existing historic districts, proposals to create new historic districts or conservation districts, and many other critical and provocative recommendations.

Following are the Historic Preservation Task Force’s 34 recommendations and 8 failed motions, including each member’s vote, and a brief summary of the discussion. Committee reports, minutes, and Grassroots video were used to document the entire Task Force process. All records can be accessed through the official website, www.aspenhistoricpreservation.com. Watching the videos is an excellent way to get a feel for the opinions expressed during the process.

Everyone’s voice was heard, but it is clear from the debates that some members feel the Task Force’s recommendations do not represent their views. Minority reports offered the chance to express opinions more clearly, and they are attached. In addition, the committee reports include ideas that, while not forwarded to the Task Force as recommendations, had importance to those who participated in this effort.

All meetings were open to the public, though participation was minimal. Near it’s completion, the Task Force held two public sessions to present their findings, garner reactions, and gather additional information that could be integrated into their work. Recommendations were delivered to City Council on October 26, 2009.

