



Arizona Mining, Mineral & Natural Resources Education Museum

Minutes of the Public Meeting of the Strategic Planning Subcommittee of the AMMNRE Museum Advisory Council October 9, 2025

A public meeting of the Strategic Planning Subcommittee of the AMMNRE Museum Advisory Council was convened on:

Date: **October 9, 2025**

Time: **11:00am**

Location: **In-person and virtual, via Zoom**

Members Present: Jim Ballinger, Phil Pearthree, Les Presmyk, Stefanie Smallhouse, Steve Trussell

Members Absent: None

U of A Staff Present: Marta Bones, Richard Cate, Catie Sandoval

A quorum was established.

I. Welcome

- Chairperson Stefanie Smallhouse greeted everyone and began the meeting.

II. AMMNRE Museum Project/Building Options Overview

- Chairperson Smallhouse initiated the discussion about a new, third location option: a former museum building in the nearby Heritage & Science Park.
 - Ballinger, who first identified this possibility, provided background information about the building (located near and leased by the Arizona Science Center) and the potential benefits of collaboration (which could have some similarities to the agreement between the Phoenix Art Museum and U of A's Center for Creative Photography (CCP)).
 - Bones expanded on the location of the building, the surrounding museums, other amenities, parking options, and building specifications.
 - She explained that to date, there have simply been informal, one-on-one discussions about possible collaboration.
 - Ballinger explained that the Arizona Science Center currently uses the building as a "Create Makerspace" and rents it out for various purposes.
 - Cate toured the building last month and shared ideas about complementary ways the new museum and the Science Center could work.

- Discussion about the new option continued, including:
 - Questions about how an arrangement to use the space could work and whether a sublease could limit the museum's operational freedom.
 - Ballinger shared more about the building's history and former museum's relationship with the City of Phoenix, which owns the building.
 - Cate confirmed that a long-term sublease could provide the necessary provisions and protections for the AMMNRE Museum and the U of A.
 - The Arizona Gift Clause and clarification that an arrangement would comply with the Gift Clause, since its goal is to ensure that any benefit provided is for a public purpose and the U of A is a public entity.
 - Ballinger described the Phoenix Art Museum's agreement with CCP and lease agreement with the City of Phoenix.
 - A question about the former museum's collection and whether it contains minerals or fossils.
 - Questions about square footage comparisons between the three options.
 - Cate clarified that the third option could offer around 9,000 square feet, with the possibility to negotiate for more space.
 - Cate added that there is an 8,000 square foot undeveloped area behind the museum which could be developed in the future.
 - Opportunities to collaborate with the Arizona Science Center including potential joint programming in their new, immersive LED dome.
 - The feasibility of completing modest renovations and the potential for future expansion through fundraising efforts.
 - Naming rights for the building itself and/or the museum.

III. Discussion and Comparison of the Three Options

- The subcommittee members reviewed a spreadsheet comparing information about the three location options, including square footage, special features, parking, projected revenue streams, organizational visibility, options for expansion, and nearby organizations and amenities.
- A discussion followed about the three options, including:
 - A suggestion to add the possibility for expansion to the third option on the spreadsheet.

- The amenities in Heritage & Science Park including outdoor spaces, restaurants, a parking garage, as well as additional parking options.
- Easy access for educators and school groups, which could result in increased visitation to the museum.
- A question about the number of annual visitors to the former Arizona Mining and Mineral Museum.
- A question about hosting events and fundraisers within a smaller footprint and the ability for organizations or businesses to rent museum spaces.
- **Action Item**: Bones will update the comparison sheet to include additional information such as potential expansion space, nearby Science Center amenities, and visitation numbers from the Mining and Mineral Museum, as well as additional cost estimates for renovation of the historic building.
- There was additional discussion about the value that the AMMNRE Museum could bring to the Arizona Science Center, including collaborating to leverage its mineral collection, focus on geology and mineralogy, as well as scientific expertise via the U of A. There was consensus that this would be a mutually beneficial relationship.

IV. Next Steps

- There was consensus that the third option is worthy of further exploration.
- The group acknowledged the need for consensus from the full Advisory Council and particularly buy-in from its legislative members.
 - There was discussion about what changes to the legislation would be needed for this option to be viable.
- Cate suggested briefing Rep. Griffin on the third option before the next meeting, and Trussell and Smallhouse volunteered to coordinate that.
- Pearthree moved to recommend that staff pursue more details about the third option; Presmyk seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved with no opposition.
- **Action Item**: Trussell will contact Rep. Griffin before the next meeting.

V. Future Meeting Dates and Items for Future Agendas.

- The next full Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for October 17 from 9:00-10:30am.