



Arizona Mining, Mineral & Natural Resources Education Museum

Minutes of the Public Meeting of the AMMNRE Museum Advisory Council October 29, 2025

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

Date: **October 29, 2025**

Time: **9:00am**

Location: **Virtual, via Zoom**

Members Present: Jim Ballinger, Sen. David Gowan, Rep. Gail Griffin, Nicole LaSlavic, Phil Pearthree, Les Presmyk, Stefanie Smallhouse, Steve Trussell

Members Absent: None

U of A Staff Present: Marta Bones, 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 began with an overview of previous discussions about the three building options from the October 9th Strategic Planning Subcommittee meeting. She noted all three have benefits and concerns, and there are many questions we don't have answers to yet.
 - The subcommittee focused mainly on Option 3, located at the nearby Heritage & Science Park.
 - Sen. Gowan, Rep. Griffin, Trussell, Bones, and Richard Cate, Senior Advisor to the University President for Operations, toured this building with Arizona Science Center staff on October 28th.
 - Discussions to date regarding this option have included historical background of the Phoenix Museum of History and current use of the building, benefits of working with the Arizona Science Center, experiential exhibit opportunities (such as within the Dorrance DOME), the potential lease or sublease agreement, amenities within the Heritage & Science Park, and access for visitors and schoolchildren.

- To provide context about inter-organizational partnerships, Ballinger shared information about the staffing and exhibition agreements between the Phoenix Art Museum and the Center for Creative Photography.
- There was discussion about leasing and autonomy, including:
 - Whether the U of A will retain administrative authority.
 - Questions about subleasing property owned by the City and about the Arizona Gift Clause.
- There was a question about the time remaining on the lease between the Arizona Science Center and the City of Phoenix, which is around 33 years.
- Chairperson Smallhouse and Bones presented a side-by-side comparison of the three location options.
 - Bones noted that there is the possibility to reconfigure the interior space of Option 3, but the square footage footprint may be less than initially desired.
 - There was a question about the size of the storage space, which may be around 4,000 to 5,000 square feet.
- The group discussed the history of the shared building arrangement between the Arizona Science Center and the Phoenix Museum of History.

III. Strategic Planning Subcommittee's Recommendation

- Chairperson Smallhouse shared the subcommittee's recommendation that staff pursue more details about the third option. Discussion followed including:
 - Concerns about shared spaces and the need for negotiations with both the Arizona Science Center and the City of Phoenix.
 - How to present this opportunity to the Arizona Science Center Board as a benefit to both parties, bringing the institution additional investment, visitors, and educational content.
- There was also discussion about identifying what funds are available to work with, including a request for an accounting of all State funds: \$12M, annual State appropriation, license plate funds. Also, a request to know the balance of gift shop money remaining from former museum.
- Presmyk moved to instruct staff to put together a preliminary facility layout and marketing plan/'selling points;' Pearthree seconded.
 - Discussion followed including:
 - This request includes a list of 'must haves.'

- That the selling points should outline what the Science Center would gain and demonstrate that that outweighs what they would give up.
- That Science Center staff are enthusiastic about the possibilities.
- Whether the Science Center Board has been brought into the conversation and when and how they should be.
- The desire to create a long-term, positive relationship.
- The benefits of working together to potentially develop a more efficient layout for the entire building.
- Whether the Council can enable capital expenditure, for example to help customize or improve the building, and if so, that this could be included as a 'selling point.'
- Discussion about whether to keep pursuing Option 2 or not; no decision was made at this time.
 - It was noted that it would be best to engage further with staff at the University about features that would be important for the museum in Option 2, such as basement level storage, dedicated entrance, and sufficiently sized elevator.
 - The vote was called and with no nays, the motion passed.

IV. Next Steps

- Discussion of next steps included:
 - Bones will meet with Science Center Interim President/CEO to continue exploring Option 3.
 - Smallhouse will update Richard Cate about this meeting and confirm the timeline for decisions about Option 2.
 - Scheduling a Strategic Planning Subcommittee work session before the next full Advisory Council meeting.
 - Moving forward related to Option 2 or 3 requires legislative approval.
 - During the next full Advisory Council meeting, the group will reevaluate how to move forward, recognizing there are still two other options on the table.

V. Future Meeting Dates and Items for Future Agendas

- The next full Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for November 21 at 9:00am.
- This will be confirmed or rescheduled once the Strategic Planning Subcommittee meeting is scheduled.