



CITY OF LAS CRUCES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

December 18, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

The following are minutes of the Historic Preservation Commission Meeting held December 18, 2024, in room 2007B, City Hall, 700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Judy A. Berryman, Chair
Ernie Campos
Dr. Paul John Deason
John Norman
Jeffrey Shepard
Dr. Jerry Wallace

MEMBERS ABSENT: Patricia Williams

STAFF PRESENT: Chris Faivre, Deputy Director Community Development
Steven Bingham, Director, Parks and Recreation
Robert Nunez, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation

OTHERS PRESENT: Jo Ruprecht
Deb Dennis
Dennis Flores
Corrina Miramontes

1. CALL TO ORDER (6:00)

The meeting was called to order.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES -

2.1 November 13, 2024 HPC Work Session Minutes

Paul Deason moved to approve the November 13, 2024 minutes; seconded by Ernie Campos. Motion passed unanimously.

2.2 November 20, 2024 HPC Minutes

Paul Deason moved to approve the November 20, 2024 minutes; seconded by Ernie Campos. Motion passed unanimously.

1
2 **3. DISCUSSION ITEMS**
3

4 **3.1 Discussion on possible reuse of Fielder house**
5

6 Robert Nunez has been the administrator/deputy director since 2016
7 overseeing Youth Services which includes the A. Fielder Memorial Safe
8 Haven. This is the Youth Service campus which also includes the Youth
9 Development and Divergent program. This once was the Community
10 College community education building. The A. Fielder includes the facility,
11 the playground, basketball court, and open space on the east side which is
12 behind the A. Fielder home currently being discussed, 643 E. Picacho.
13 When the Weed and Seed A. Fielder Memorial Safe Haven program came
14 to them in 2014 from the Las Cruces Polic Department, the Fielder house
15 had already had attempts to be renovated and defeated. That facility was
16 not at use at that time. In 2016 he took over as administrator. 2019 was
17 first discussions in regards to the renovations of the facility with the City
18 engineers. At that time 2019 until the pandemic the recommendations
19 received from staff, Community Development, and engineering department
20 was the cost and what was to be done with the building, was to renovate
21 the building as had been done previously. Due to cost and condition of the
22 building opted not to renovate. Recommendations were made of what could
23 take place. What they have looked for is programs for the participants that
24 are there on the campus both at Safe Haven, Weed and Seed program, as
25 well as Youth Development and Divergent program. The first idea was an
26 open space classroom pavilion type set up so the participants, staff would
27 be able to use, and put some garden, planting for youth. Another option is
28 office space. A majority of supervisors are at the A. Fielder Memorial Safe
29 Haven. They had to remove programming space to place the supervisors
30 and other staff.

31
32 Robert Nunez gave a little more history that the home was donated from
33 Salopeks, and an agreement was made. Some volunteers went in to
34 renovate it to use for teenagers in the Weed and Seed program and some
35 walls were knocked down that should not have been. City staff stopped
36 them and no other attempts at renovate or fix have been done since then.
37 There are a couple of pool tables in there, being used as storage. Using
38 the back end of the house as storing for clothing for families. It is starting
39 to deteriorate. The roof is compromised and leaking. It has been boarded
40 and not used for many years.

41
42 Paul Deason asked about what was being done for the gardening. Robert
43 Nunez stated when staff assessed the facility, the discussion was to
44 demolish the building and then create a new structure, pavilion, open space,
45 similar to Young Park, the larger pavilion that is there. Also asked about
46 using the space for office. And that would require upgrading restroom to

1 commercial grade, and approximately four to seven staff members. Judy
2 Berryman asked about opening up for more youth activities or for office.
3 Difficult as they do have from 60-80 kids on a daily basis but staff is in need
4 also. As a pavilion it could be utilized by the community. Chris Faivre
5 stated that at first budget behind renovation was not an option, but now that
6 discussion is happening and staff needs to work to see which option fits the
7 facility better, possibly keeping the integrity of the building with other
8 recommendations to be discussed. Question on timeline of the building
9 being boarded up and then assessed. The City is not pursuing demolition,
10 but looking at reuse. Once the best use has been decided then the city
11 would move forward. Ernie Campos mentioned vacant land across the
12 street and purchase and use as parking lot.

13
14 Jo Ruprecht said she has visited the property and spoke to residents in the
15 area, both elderly. And she stated staff should talk to these residents about
16 what should be done in the building. Martha Rodriguez stated she spoke
17 to state representative Angelica Rubio and she is willing to help with capital
18 outlay funding. She was also wondering if it could be used for office space
19 and maybe open classroom for the kids. Dennis Flores asked if the house
20 would be brought back to its original use for a family to live there. Chris
21 Faivre stated that would be problematic due to programming that happens
22 at that location, so City facility not housing. Corrina Miramontes agrees with
23 a community building facility.

24
25 The home was built in 1950. Lot is 3,920 square feet. Home is 896 square
26 feet. The home has been added on to.

27
28 Judy Berryman asked staff to look at the options of either office space or
29 space for teen programs, and any other options. Start the schedule in terms
30 of planning, options, engineering, and cost.

31
32 **3.2 2025 Chair Position**

33
34 In January they will elect a new Chair and Vice-Chair. Judy Berryman has
35 been chair for two years and thinks they need new blood, new direction.

36
37 **3.3 2025 Goals including community education and outreach planning**

38
39 Judy Berryman e-mailed a rough preservation plan to the board members.
40 She is hoping in 2025 to accomplish: education, training of City staff, and
41 City staff needs. Education she would like to see coherent and consistent
42 public policy regarding historic resources, guidelines and rules in terms of
43 procedure. Establish at least four meetings held in a community location
44 outside of the City. Establish a website for people to interact in terms of
45 knowing what buildings are being looked at, what is the process, and accept
46 comments from the public. Training of City staff, community coming to the

1 counter and maybe the staff at the counter is not familiar with architectural
2 guidelines or preservation. She thinks they should get together with City
3 staff and have group meetings to all be on the same page. Also the website
4 could provide information on tax and incentives for preservation. And
5 facilitate compliance with federal and state guidelines. City staff needs,
6 need to hire a historic preservation specialist. She sees the Commission is
7 in a stall until they get a specialist they can work with. Also discussion of
8 hiring an intern to go into records, set up GIS correctly, make listing of
9 historic properties. They need to know what is in the community, the
10 condition is. Coordination and identification of historic districts. Prepare a
11 bid to have an actual historic preservation plan, long-term goals. Hire
12 someone locally who is familiar with historic resources of New Mexico and
13 Las Cruces specifically.
14

15 Paul Deason stated meeting outside of City Hall that was addressed years
16 ago and they were told that they could not. Chris Faivre stated City Council
17 had an off-site work session so probably can have meetings off-site. He
18 asked them to come up with suggested locations. Judy Berryman asked to
19 have the City Clerk in January to go through the rules and regulations for
20 new members and refresh. Chris Faivre stated every January all City
21 meetings receive training related to meetings, IPRA, etc. Also asked about
22 SHPO coming down and giving instructions as part of CLG group. Chris
23 Faivre has spoken with them, but were holding for a specialist, but they may
24 look to do something with just HPC and then something with the specialist
25 later.
26

27 Jerry Wallace would like to have work session with all Commissioners input
28 on their visions of the first year, second year, third year, and fifth year. Year
29 one have all Commissioners come to work session with a list of five to 10
30 buildings that are in desperate need of protection in the community. The
31 old courthouse was mentioned. Also bring in community partners at three
32 years, Bellamah, old country club neighborhood. He is teaching
33 preservation for a year and hopes the students can get field/hand-on
34 experience. Page 31 of the CLG manual it says they can have one session
35 a year where they get training. They should brainstorm their needs in
36 training. They should travel to other community meetings and listen to what
37 they are saying and how they navigate preservation. Judy Berryman stated
38 they do have permission to take City owned historic properties already on
39 federal or state lists, and fill the forms and get them on the local list. Paul
40 Deason also wants commercial businesses. Judy Berryman suggested
41 having someone from the construction or development industry to be on the
42 board.
43

44 Jeff Shepard appreciated the plan. Community engagement is critical, and
45 having meetings outside at community spaces. Suggests having a
46 community advisory board. He has a concern about the tension between

1 affordable housing and historic preservation. More community involvement,
2 productive conversations, and transparency. Also nice to have community
3 input on the plan. He suggests for the specialist somebody that has skillsets
4 that span the technical, budgetary, and also "soft skills" of interacting with
5 community members.
6

7 Ernie Campos thanked the Chair for the information. He went to meetings
8 in El Paso and hopes that does not happen here.
9

10 Judy Berryman's vision of a consult hired to do the actual plan, a minimum
11 of two community meetings. Also believes the minutes and meetings
12 should be available in Spanish. Jerry Wallace also stated they need to get
13 the county involved and the City involved. And need to bring in SHPO to
14 and get feedback on how all it aligns outside of the community. Judy
15 Berryman stated the key point for next year is to be totally open and
16 inclusive. She feels they are constantly fighting with the City, City Council,
17 individuals, bring all into an open discussion which she feels they have not
18 been able to do.
19

20 Chris Faivre stated HPC can meet outside of City Hall. Travel, there is per
21 diem, so just need to budget for it, and they will look into that. Look into
22 subcommittees/advisory to see what is allowed. Affordable housing
23 conversations can be had. He is trying to get the position filled and will
24 make working easier with HPC and staff. Come back with a revised version
25 of this plan that was e-mailed to everyone, and that has specific goals for
26 this group that could function independent of what would happen without a
27 staff person. He has found money to move forward with a historic
28 preservation plan this fiscal year. He will bring a proposed scope of work
29 at January or February meeting. Procurement requires the City's Selection
30 Advisory Committee, then put RFP to the public and through the whole
31 public procurement process to bring someone onboard. This will be ramped
32 up in the spring. Similar to the metropolitan redevelopment process, tell
33 how many public meetings to have, what the community engagement to
34 look like. He suggested a lecture series of discussing specific things.
35

36 Jo Ruprecht thanked the City staff and the positive conversation. Martha
37 Rodriguez stated marrying affordable housing with preservation is a great
38 idea. She states that the affordable housing person stated if she sees a
39 historic house and she can demolish it and it will be less costly to demolish
40 and rebuild something, that that is what she is going to do. Corrina
41 Miramontes reminded everyone that Martha is experienced in redoing
42 housing for affordable housing in the neighborhood. She attended meetings
43 for El Paseo and noted there was not much community engagement. She
44 asked if people had been contacted in Spanish and that was a no. Chris
45 Faivre stated that everything that is put out by the City is bilingual. She
46 asked how the HPC can make decisions without bylaws. Judy Berryman

1 stated the City Clerk would give them examples of bylaws and using existing
2 City bylaws and do not need to invent any new bylaws. Chris Faivre stated
3 this board is meeting under the City Council bylaws. If they want separate
4 bylaws they can put them together but do have to be approved by City
5 Council. Judy Berryman would like to see the bylaws and look at them for
6 review. Chris Faivre stated the City is not doing external websites. All
7 content will have to be on the City's website. It can be accommodated under
8 the HPC section of the website.
9

10 **3.4 The process of developing and delivering Historic Preservation**
11 **presentations**
12

13 Judy Berryman stated this has been discussed. Jerry Wallace asked for
14 this on the agenda. He would like be more transparency and having open
15 dialogue about all of the Commissioners having opportunity to present in
16 front of City Council or everything and anything. Judy Berryman stated they
17 could discuss what they are going to say. Chris Faivre cautioned the group
18 to not have a lot of conversations via e-mail.
19

20 **4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
21

22 Dennis Flores asked what the mission of the HPC is. Judy Berryman stated in
23 Chapter 40 it lists a variety of things.
24

25 Jerry Wallace would like to see Las Cruces similar to Albuquerque in 10 years.
26 Wants to see Las Cruces contribute to unique and dynamic cultural identity when
27 thinking about buildings and spaces that is not part of New Mexico or borderland
28 identity. Judy Berryman mentioned travel magazines mention Santa Fe and
29 Albuquerque but never Las Cruces. She mentioned historic resources are not just
30 buildings but also activity areas, entire history is not taught in school and the body
31 of information needs to be put out. They make recommendations to City Council.
32 Ernie Campos suggested that if in 1960s there was a historic preservation then
33 urban renewal would not have happened. Paul Deason is interested in working
34 with the business community. Getting a grocery store in the Mesquite district.
35

36 Martha Rodriguez stated she never gets e-mails regarding the agenda, and wants
37 to be on that list, as her husband is on the list. She thinks it would be good for
38 everyone to get the notices the meeting is happening. She mentioned Las
39 Esperanzas and the Alameda Depot groups and to e-mail those groups also as
40 their emphasis is on historic.
41

42 Dennis Flores mentioned doing remodeling on a 100 year old building but stopped
43 for many years and then came back and found that many other remodels did not
44 adhere to the neighborhood; there were mobile homes in the neighborhood. He
45 feels remodeling should be part of the whole community. They worked with Las
46 Esperanzas and felt that helped. Martha Rodriguez stated it was not Las

1 Esperanzas, although some were people from Las Esperanzas, but that group was
2 before the Commission. It was the South Mesquite Overlay District.
3

4 Corrina Miramontes stated the Mesquite Historic District is the most impact historic
5 district from San Antonio to San Diego. Jerry Wallace stated it is called Hispanic
6 streetscape, Hispanic places, Hispanic spaces. There are over 700 adobes in the
7 neighborhood.
8

9 Jo Ruprecht stated she is aware of how much work neighborhood associations do
10 for Las Cruces. What could be included in the plan is different Commissioners
11 take on particular tasks. A continuing task would be to coordinate neighborhood
12 associations for the historic districts.
13

14 Jerry Wallace likes the idea of what is indigenous to the neighborhood. Judy
15 Berryman stated the Commission is lacking a sense of history itself. Education is
16 a two sided street, like what has happened over the last 10 years, education of the
17 Commission.
18

19 **5. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

20 **5.1 Current status of Historic Preservation Specialist position**

21 Chris Faivre stated this position was posted, and did have a qualified
22 candidate. Unfortunately that person took another position before Las
23 Cruces offered her the position. That position will be reposted. They are
24 switching the way they are doing it, so it can be reviewed frequently, do
25 interviews as soon as a promising candidate appears, rather than waiting
26 for the process to close and then do evaluations. Hope to have someone
27 toward the end of January.
28
29

30 **5.2 Realize City Council Work Session updates related to Chapter 2, 31 Historic Preservation**

32 Chris Faivre stated Realize went to the work session last Monday, and a
33 couple of points were brought up for clarification. One was definition of
34 Community Development Director and the recommendations were to
35 expand that to include consultants and make a mention that they align with
36 state and federal requirements. That will be done to all references to all
37 director level positions. There were some comments back from SHPO, a
38 few definitions to be clarified. First read will be on February 4th, voting
39 February 18th. Both first read and voting on Realize are Tuesdays, as one
40 is a holiday and one is during the legislature as the Council will not be
41 present. It then be the land development code of the municipal code and
42 no longer called Realize.
43
44
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46

1 CHAIR ASKED IF THERE WERE ANY FURTHER COMMENTS.
2

3 Jeff Shepard asked advertising process and posting of job description. Chris
4 Faivre stated he does not know where all it is posted. But if there are suggestions
5 please forward them. Jeff Shepard stated when his employer is hiring they have
6 community forums. Complained about HR and their metrics not working well.
7 Ernie Campos agreed. Chris Faivre stated it is not a power issue. The City does
8 have a process/requirement that only scoring members have to be City employees.
9 There could be an opportunity to have a larger process but would require going
10 back to the drawing board, rewriting the whole process. Now using what they have
11 for expediency.
12

13 Ernie Campos asked if it was possible to have the meetings in the chambers again
14 to have it televised. Judy Berryman stated she asked to meet in this room as it felt
15 like there was no connection to the community. Some community members have
16 a hard time talking at the podium. Also asked for return of the nameplates,
17 community knows who they are talking to.
18

19 Jo Ruprecht asked for agenda request for next meeting, given discussion this
20 evening about 643 Picacho, at other meetings the other property was 414 E. May
21 Avenue, unknown ownership and who has say so as it is private hands.
22

23 **5. ADJOURNMENT (7:48)**
24

25 Paul Deason moved for adjournment; seconded by Jeff Shepard. Motion passed
26 unanimously. Next meeting January 15th, 6:00 p.m.
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30

31 _____
32 Chairperson