



CITY OF LAS CRUCES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

March 18, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

The following are minutes of the Historic Preservation Committee Meeting held March 18, 2026, at Council Chambers, City Hall, 700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Jerry Wallace, Chair
Ernie Campos
Paul John Deason, PhD
Norma Chairez-Hartell
Fernando Baeza
Rosanna Torrez

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jeffrey Shepherd, PhD

STAFF PRESENT: Caitlin Beesley, Historic Preservation Specialist
Rome Valdez, Assistant City Attorney
Chris Faivre, Director Community Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Kenneth Podhajecki
Steve Green
Deb Dennis
George Pearson
Jovanny Hernandez
Trent Christopher
Greg Shervanick
Joseph Fuemmeler

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wallace called the meeting to order at 6:04.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES -

2.1 February 18, 2026 HPC Minutes

Page 1, line 3, change to February 18, 2026, instead of January 21, 2026.

Motion to approve as amended by Paul Deason; seconded by Ernie Campos. Motion passed unanimously.

1 Paul Deason moved to adjust the agenda to hear items #5 prior to items #4. It was
2 agreed.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

6 George Pearson stated the last legislative session successfully awarded \$900,000
7 to "plan, design, construct, improve, equip, and furnish the Women's Improvement
8 Association Building in Las Cruces in Doña Ana County." That is a great success.
9 The engineers estimate was \$700,000. He is wondering if this committee should
10 be involved in how the extra money. Maybe plan what to do with that building.

12 Greg Shervanick stated he wanted to make HPC aware that Realize Las Cruces
13 zoning is now in effect. He feels the board should ask many questions.

5. DESIGN REVIEW AND CASE RECOMMENDATIONS

17 Chris Faivre stated that one of the properties will not be heard tonight, but there
18 are two NAT properties that were on the agenda. He said it was evidence that the
19 NAT program is working, they are getting these NAT properties into new owners
20 hands and restoring them. There are a lot of public safety issues that have come
21 with these properties. He appreciates moving forward to help mitigate some of the
22 problems. In the event there is not enough information on these particular NAT
23 properties to try and mitigate some of the issues and delays related to public safety,
24 he would encourage the committee to do approvals with the condition that the
25 Historic Preservation Specialist could work to satisfy any outstanding questions.
26 This would keep these projects from having to return to HPC, delaying work.

5.1 Certificate of Appropriateness application for proposed construction of a community garden at 628 N. Mesquite Street

31 Caitlin Beesley stated this is being brought forward by Community Power
32 Doña Ana. The property is an empty lot. It is owned by Roberto and Sonya
33 Gomez, who also own the adjoining property. The west side of the property
34 is where the community garden is going to be located. Community
35 engagement activities and events have already been held at the site.
36 Community Power Doña Ana (CPDA) have permission from the property
37 owner in the form of a signed memorandum of understanding. Community
38 gardens are allowed in the South Mesquite legacy zone as long as they
39 are community based and have neighborhood support. They have support
40 from the neighborhood group, Las Esperanzas, Inc. There is residential on
41 one side of lot and commercial on the other. A landscape plan has been
42 submitted. Phase 2 will involve the construction of actual structures on site;
43 a greenhouse, an Arduino, outdoor kitchen, pergolas, all of which will return
44 to HPC to get approval later. Right now they are trying to get the garden
45 established.

1 Trent Christopher, President of CPDA, along with fellow board member
2 Jovanny Hernandez addressed the committee. They have approval from
3 Las Esperanzas with signature from Israel Chavez. He and a couple
4 colleagues did door-to-door asking about a community garden. They heard
5 that people are having a hard time affording food. The community wants
6 more things to do in their community; avenues in which to meet people and
7 work with them. The project is about 3,540 square feet.

8
9 Ernie Campos stated he works with Las Esperanzas. It was requested he
10 not vote on this due to conflict of interest. Ernie Campos agreed.

11
12 Paul Deason expressed thanks for what has been done for this application
13 as it is done right. He mentioned La Semilla in Anthony as a possible
14 partnership.

15
16 Chair Wallace asked about the water. Trent Christopher stated they have
17 received community grants. They have done other community gardens,
18 although this is the first one in Doña Ana. Chair Wallace also asked about
19 the second phase with the structures and if that would come back to the
20 HPC for approval. Caitlin Beesley stated it will. Trent Christopher stated
21 the first year CPDA will work on the garden. After a year they will check in
22 with the landowner and then with plans to expand the back half of the
23 property, take out the fence and then start drawing further designs for the
24 Arduino and the rest of the community kitchen. Approximately this time next
25 year, assuming approval today.

26
27 Motion to approve by Paul Deason; seconded by Norma Chairez-Hartell.
28 Motion passed unanimously.

29
30 **5.2 Certificate of Appropriateness application for rehabilitation of**
31 **contributing building at 440 E. May Avenue**

32
33 Property owner asked for more time to change the design.

34
35 Motion to table to HPC April meeting by Paul Deason; seconded by Ernie
36 Campos. Motion passed unanimously.

37
38 **5.3 Certificate of Appropriateness application for rehabilitation of**
39 **contributing buildings at 640 N. San Pedro Street**

40
41 Caitlin Beesley introduced the two properties at 640 N. San Pedro. One
42 has an address on Lucero Avenue, it is a duplex, and the other is a single-
43 family home on San Pedro. Both are contributing or were designated
44 originally contributing to the historic district in the state register. Both
45 buildings have undergone significant changes. The duplex is from 1905,
46 and the house is from 1917.

1 Owner wants to bring the buildings up to code and add living space to both
2 buildings. The duplex will have an added bedroom so each unit is three-
3 bedroom, and also enclose the hot water closet. The single-family will have
4 an added bathroom, also enclose the hot water heater as it is presently on
5 the outside of the house. All changes will be to the rear of both buildings.
6 Also there will be changes to the doors, something similar to what exists
7 there, which are not the original doors. The property wants to replace all but
8 one of the windows on both buildings. Do not know what the original
9 windows looked like as they were replaced many years ago. Wood windows
10 were probably original but that is not what the property owner wants. The
11 existing, replacement windows are aluminum sliders or single-hung. The
12 vinyl replacements will be a mix of sliders and single-hung, featuring fake
13 muntins to give the appearance of divided-lite windows.
14

15 Steve Green stated this property has been through a lot. People that were
16 living in it did a lot of damage and there have been a lot of homeless break-
17 ins at this property. They are trying to rehabilitate the property correctly, but
18 also as quickly as possible as every time they return, someone else has
19 broken in again. To rent or resale, the layouts inside were odd, so need to
20 convert some areas. He discussed replacing or installing water heaters for
21 both buildings, reroofing, fixing stucco.
22

23 Chair Wallace asked whether any of the changes would compromise the
24 contributing value to the historic district? Caitlin Beesley stated that the
25 changes already made previously probably compromised the building.
26 There are conflicting options here. If this building were to be nominated
27 individually to a historic register or go before the state committee for the tax
28 credit program, it would not be eligible or contributing because of the
29 changes that were already done, probably around the 1970s. When
30 buildings have been substantially altered there are two options (1) continue
31 to use them, or (2) try to undo some of the alternations that were done that
32 are no longer appropriate with the historic integrity of the original building.
33 The property owner is looking to maintain the use of the buildings.
34

35 Paul Deason stated he believes it is more important that the property be
36 used/rehabilitated/in a safe situation for the neighborhood. He asked if it
37 was possible for changes to be made now that made the property usable ,
38 for it to possibly be brought back to a sufficient standard for how it appeared
39 originally. Caitlin Beesley stated that re-achieving contributing status is
40 always a possibility for a building unless it is demolished. There is always
41 potential to undo some of the work in the future. Vinyl windows cannot be
42 restored or repaired so they have to be replaced in the future, maybe with
43 period-appropriate windows.
44

45 Chair Wallace stated he is conflicted. He does not want HPC to be accused
46 of lowering the bar on this, if they allow this to be the standard then it will be

1 the standard for the rest of the historic district, compromising not only the
2 process but the buildings. Also currently it is a contributing property. He
3 would like more time to think and process this. Steve Green stated he is
4 open to different colors for the windows, but windows that are energy
5 efficient are good, and cost is also a factor. He wanted HPC members to
6 remember that the owner needs to get something out of this. Chair Wallace
7 wants to agree on the period correctness of the windows. He also asked
8 what would it look like if they didn't vote on this to have to get it moving.
9 Caitlin Beesley stated they have been working with the contractor to make
10 it smoother. The permitting process has been split so the property owner
11 can work on the interior changes that HPC has no purview over. They are
12 replacing the roof, not making changes to the eave, slope, etc.

13
14 Chris Faivre stated he appreciates the concern, but advocating on behalf of
15 staff, Caitlin is a professional, she understands the expectation and the
16 standard to be achieved. And she is the best person to work with the
17 designer on the best solution. Paul Deason stated the committee has voted
18 to approve a COA that is conditional on the Historic Preservation Specialist
19 being involved in decisions and on the appropriateness of the changes to
20 be made to windows, to doors, to roofs, eaves. Ernie Campos asked Steve
21 Green to find windows that fit in that are affordable and compatible. Steve
22 Green stated if they could find one price-wise they would do it. Also special
23 made windows take months to complete which is problematic. They will
24 look at it though. Chair Wallace stated that staff did not seem to have
25 confidence in the process and it felt like skirting some of the procedural
26 requirements. Caitlin Beesley stated she included in the report that if the
27 missing information, specifically design of windows, which windows to be
28 replaced, the design of doors, that she would consider making a
29 recommendation. Deason recommended that instead of windows stark
30 white, look at alternative for now. It is appropriate to have original windows
31 replaced with vinyl as it has been done previously.

32
33 Motion to approve with the provision that the builder, owner, involved parties
34 in the rehabilitation get approval from the Historic Preservation Specialist
35 and her office so the properties conform to the standards for the district, by
36 Paul Deason; seconded by Ernie Campos. Motion passed unanimously.

37 38 **4. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

39 40 **4.1 Fire Station No. 3 Update**

41
42 Caitlin Beesley stated this project involves replacing the existing original
43 Fire Station #3 with MIH station and was started in 2020 prior to her
44 employment with the City of Las Cruces. Because this project is using
45 federal money, the project fell under Section 106 of the National Historic
46 Preservation Act, part of the environmental review process for projects

1 using federal money. Section 106 involves assessing a project's geographic
2 scope for any impact on designated or eligible historic properties. SHPO
3 provided a finding of eligibility for Fire Station No. 3 for the National Register
4 of Historic Places under Criterion A and C, with its demolition determined to
5 be an adverse effect. Section 106 requires that projects that involve an
6 adverse effect to eligible properties find alternatives to demolition or else
7 mitigate for what is happening to the building, i.e., demolition? After SHPO
8 produced their finding under Criterion A and C, Beesley discovered that the
9 building was designed by Larry Garcia of Garcia-Pogue and Associates of
10 Santa Fe. Garcia is a notable architect because he was the first licensed
11 architect of Hispanic descent in New Mexico. He also designed several
12 other buildings in Las Cruces, the former city hall on Church street and the
13 sister station of No. 3, Fire Station No. 2. Compared to No. 2, Fire Station
14 No. 3 was not constructed well and has been identified as substandard for
15 some time, which is why it was replaced with a new Fire Station No. 3 a few
16 years ago. The city wants to demo and build the MIH at that location, even
17 after the finding of adverse effect. A memorandum of agreement is required
18 in instances like this to establish stipulations or mitigation measures that the
19 city/user has to undergo to allow the demolition or adverse effect to
20 continue. The stipulations include the documentation report, included in the
21 agenda, which was signed by the City and SHPO. Other stipulation
22 measures include a celebration of service with appropriate elected officials
23 and staff to honor the history of this building prior to its demolition; a display
24 of Fire Station No. 3's history at the dedicated exhibit space that is included
25 in Fire Station No. 9; and elevation of the sister station, Fire Station No. 2,
26 to the City of Las Cruces Register of Cultural Properties.

27
28 Paul Deason mentioned previous discussions with previous Fire Chief
29 about alternative uses of the building. The building could be made
30 structurally sound and usable. Caitlin Beesley stated that conversations to
31 rehabilitate the building were dropped prior to Section 106 and have not
32 been picked up again. City officials feel that it is too late to convert the
33 existing building to the MIH station because of grant deadlines for the MIH
34 project. Chair Wallace stated it looks like the old building could be integrated
35 into the new building. He stated there should be every effort to protect the
36 last Garcia Fire Station in town and that conversation needs to start now.
37 Beesley stated that Fire Station No. 2 is in good shape structurally, but that
38 the City will likely look elsewhere to build a new Fire Station No. 2 because
39 the current lot is not big enough for additions – the building will likely be
40 used for something else. Norma Chairez-Hartell stated it is important to
41 protect Larry Garcia's buildings as much as possible. She asked where the
42 documentation report is going to be archived. Beesley answered that the city
43 will have a copy, SHPO will have a copy, and a copy will also be sent to the
44 Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in Washington, D.C., as part of
45 the Section 106 process. The future local register nomination for Fire

1 Station No. 2 will also include a detailed history of both buildings that will be
2 made available to the public.

3 4 **4.2 Amador Hotel Project, Phase 2**

5
6 Caitlin Beesley stated there is a potential start date for June 2026. There
7 is a lengthy process to get a contractor, put out RFP, RFQ. She sent the
8 phase 2 technical specs to the State Historic Preservation Office and they
9 concurred with the work. The Amador is listed on the state register so the
10 state has concurrent authority over what happens with the building. There
11 will be a restoration of the north and south exteriors of the building.
12 Removing the bank window on the north façade. The front reconstruction
13 territorial style portico. Replacement of the roof including reconstruction of
14 the historic roof monitor. Structural repairs to the ceilings on the first floor.
15 Reframing of the lobby, stairs, second floor balcony, and second floor
16 framing, as well as structural work to the roof in advance of a replication of
17 the Amador Hotel sign. The period of significance for this building is 1930s
18 and 1945.

19
20 Chair Wallace asked for quarterly updates.

21 22 **6. STAFF AND COMMITTEE INPUT**

23
24 Caitlin Beesley stated the Doña Ana County Historical Society's monthly lecture is
25 tomorrow at the WIA building. Tracie Amend will present on the theater scene in
26 Las Cruces. There are a few conferences, Society of Architectural Historians in
27 three or four weeks in Mexico City. Another conference is the Vernacular
28 Architecture Forum in Walla Walla, Washington, for the beginning of the summer.
29 The biannual National Alliance of Preservation Commissions forum will be in July
30 in Minneapolis. Beesley is applying for a funding grant to see if herself and a few
31 HPC members can attend.

32
33 There was a public feedback forum last month for the design guidelines content
34 draft. She is meeting with people at City to discuss next steps. A final public
35 comment period will be at the April meeting, where HPC members can discuss the
36 draft. Beesley reminded everyone that May is Historic Preservation Month.
37 Proclamations have been done for a couple of years. Chair Wallace was at last
38 years, but will not be there this year, so she asked if any board member would like
39 accept the proclamation from City Council. She has booked two Saturdays in May
40 at the Rio Grande Theater to show some movies for Historic Preservation Month.
41 She is hoping to do a documentary and then a feature film and asked for
42 recommendations from the committee.

43 44 **7. COMMITTEE MEMBER RECOGNITION**

45

1 Chair Wallace stated this is Paul Deason's last meeting and asked him to speak to
2 his time on the committee. Paul Deason thanked the HPC and stated that he was
3 invited to join the HPC six years ago when it was established because of unusual
4 experiences, career in military service, working in community economic
5 development, graduate training in anthropology, and years walking and Camino
6 Real de Tierra Adentro Trail Association. He believes that historic preservation is
7 not a sentimental exercise, it is a serious civic infrastructure. The Amador Hotel
8 must be finished and finished right. It is a narrative made of adobe and memory.
9 A place where the Camino Real, the stagecoach era, the territorial period, and the
10 modern Mesilla Valley all converge under one roof. The Amador is irreplaceable;
11 it must be a living anchor of the cultural life of the entire Mesilla Valley region. The
12 community should aim to build a workforce for work ahead. We cannot restore the
13 past if no one is trained to do the work. A formal career training and licensing
14 program in historic building disassembly and salvage is needed to create a training
15 pipeline for historic building trades. Urges the committee to work with Doña Ana
16 Community College, state workforce agencies, and with New Mexico Historic
17 Preservation Division to make this happen. Deason stated that historic
18 preservation is economic development, saying history pays.

19
20 Chair Wallace thanked Paul Deason.

21
22 **8. ADJOURNMENT**

23
24 Motion to adjourn by Paul Deason; seconded by Ernie Campos. Motion passed
25 unanimously.

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27
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30
31 _____
Chairperson