



CITY OF LAS CRUCES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

June 17, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

The following are minutes of the Historic Preservation Committee Meeting held June 17, 2026, at Council Chambers, City Hall, 700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Jerry Wallace, Chair
Norma Chairez-Hartell, Vice-Chair
Ernie Campos
Fernando Baeza
Rosanna Torrez

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jeffrey Shepherd, PhD

STAFF PRESENT: Caitlin Beesley, Historic Preservation Specialist
Romulo Valdez, Assistant City Attorney

OTHERS PRESENT: Tanner Gorskey
Lydia Gallegos
Deb Dennis

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wallace called the meeting to order at 6:03.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST INQUIRY

Board Member Ernie Campos stated the next case is in the vicinity where he resides, in the Mesquite Historic District. With him being the historian for Las Esperanzas, this was not brought up in any of their meetings. Otherwise, there were no conflicts of interest.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda by Board Member Fernando Baeza; seconded by Board Member Norma Chairez-Haretell. Motion passed unanimously.

1 **4.1 Approval of May 20, 2026 HPC Minutes**

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3 Motion to approve the minutes by Board Member Ernie Campos; seconded
4 by Board Member Rosanna Torrez. Motion passed unanimously.
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6 **5. DESIGN REVIEW AND CASE RECOMMENDATIONS**

7
8 **5.1 No. 26CB1002226 - Certificate of Appropriateness application for a**
9 **metal carport located at 442 E. Lohman Avenue, zoned C-2 (General**
10 **Commercial District)**

11
12 Caitlin Beesley stated this is a retroactive certificate of appropriateness
13 application for a carport that was constructed to the rear of Lujan Bakery at
14 442 E. Lohman Avenue. It was constructed last year between February and
15 September without a permit. If the owners had applied for a permit prior to
16 construction, the carport would have come to HPC prior to construction as
17 part of the permit process. Changes would have been required by staff and
18 potentially by HPC prior to a permit being issued. As it has been
19 constructed, the carport does not meet the requirements for a carport or
20 garage in the South Mesquite Overlay. Staff, through an effort to find a
21 reason/rationale to approve the project, decided it could be defined as new
22 construction, even though technically it is a carport, as that is how it will get
23 approved as built. New construction can be built at an average of what the
24 property setback on the surrounding street is. Most property owners in the
25 vicinity have zero setback, which means the carport as new construction is
26 appropriate when taken as new construction.
27

28 Beesley shared some history. Lujan Bakery is one of the oldest continuously
29 operating businesses in town and one of the oldest in the Mesquite
30 neighborhood. It originally opened in 1955, first located on Church Street.
31 The bakery had a bowling league team and did pretty well in the 1950s-70s.
32 In the 1960s the bakery expanded and started selling some of their baked
33 goods to local grocery stores. It was bought in the 1990s by the current
34 owners who were employees of the bakery. They have opened a secondary
35 shop.
36

37 The carport was brought to the city's attention recently. Beesley is
38 recommending approval with the carport considered as new construction.
39 While the materials are not found in the historic district, it represents the
40 historic district's vernacular-constructed origins. Furthermore, it is not
41 unsympathetic with the building and the surrounding neighborhood and
42 shares a roof plane with the bakery. Beesley met with the owners and the
43 contractor who applied for the permit last week, however they are not in
44 attendance for this meeting.
45

1 Board Member Ernie Campos asked who would discuss this case if it had
2 been originally brought in. A combination of Community Development staff
3 would have looked at it, a planner, building inspector, and Beesley before
4 bringing to HPC. Depending on the application, it may have been
5 administratively approved. If it had been brought before construction, there
6 would have some design suggestions made previously. Caitlin Beesley
7 stated that some form of a carport may have been approved, likely with
8 some changes. The South Mesquite Overlay states they want carports to
9 be 20 feet from the front property line. Board Member Norma Chairez-
10 Hartell asked about the space between the building and the structure and
11 whether that makes it more of an addition than new construction. Beesley
12 stated that as it is not attached, new construction is acceptable. Chair
13 Wallace stated he wishes the property owners were in attendance this
14 evening, particularly to answer questions. He questioned why there are so
15 many retroactive items being brought recently instead of prior permitting.
16 Mesquite has been designated outside of New Mexico as a Mexican
17 streetscape, and part of that streetscape characteristic is sheet metal, iron,
18 steel. He feels this fits very well into the landscape. His concern is the
19 number of retroactively approved items. Caitlin Beesley stated an option
20 would be to table this vote for another meeting in hopes that the property
21 owners could attend. She believes the retroactive is due to a lack of
22 understanding about what requires permitting. Chair Wallace asked if this
23 compromises the historical integrity of the building and would this make it
24 noncontributing in the future. Caitlin Beesley said no. Her concern is the
25 pattern of unpermitted work within the neighborhood. The property is
26 contributing to the National Register-listed historic district. The carport is
27 not connected to the building and could be removed without damage to the
28 building. Board Member Fernando Baeza asked about footings. The
29 building inspector for the city has already looked at it, and that there is
30 information on the concrete mat and that was adequate for the footing.
31 Chair Wallace would like to know if the permit would be approved by staff
32 before HPC approves. Right now, HPC is approving prior to the retroactive
33 permit. If not approved, the carport will have to be removed. Chair Wallace
34 is concerned about establishing a precedence with permitting after
35 construction is completed. He was also asking about the historical
36 construction of this, and feels that is also a compromise. Caitlin Beesley
37 stated her concern is not about the integrity of the property or the impact of
38 the carport on the historic district. Her concern is for other reasons related
39 to setting a precedence, people do work and then expect it to be approved.
40 Also some concerns about the carport. The carport is used by the bakery
41 to load their vans and prevent heat from compromising any baked goods.
42 The carport is a bit shallow and so the vans end up extending into the
43 sidewalk. This would have been addressed if brought in earlier.

44
45 Motion to approve 26CB100226 by Board Member Ernie Campos;
46 seconded by Board Member Rosanna Torrez. Motion denied, 2:3.

1 Board Member Ernie Campos voted yes.
2 Board Member Rosanna Torrez voted yes.
3 Board Member Fernando Baeza voted no.
4 Vice-Chair Norma Chairez-Hartell voted no.
5 Chair Wallace voted no.

6
7 DISCUSSION NOT ON THE MICROPHONE.
8

9 Chair Wallace asked for more information because they do not want to deny
10 the application. It would be good if the owners came in and were present to
11 answer questions about the case.

12
13 DISCUSSION NOT ON THE MICROPHONE.
14

15 Chair Wallace asked legal what would be the procedure. LEGAL STAFF
16 GAVE AN ANSWER BUT WAS NOT AT THE MICROPHONE. Norma
17 Chairez-Hartell stated if they do postpone a vote, then could the application
18 be brought forward with more information.

19
20 Romulo Valdez stated they could motion to reconsider and effectively bring
21 the vote back up but has to be done within the same meeting. Chair Wallace
22 asked if they move forward with the vote that they do not approve the
23 certificate, can staff bring it back for approval later. Caitlin Beesley stated
24 she believes so, however, changes would have to be made to the permit
25 application before they could bring it forward for another vote on a different
26 date. Romulo Valdez stated if they do a motion to reconsider, they do not
27 have to vote on it today, but the motion to reconsider the previous vote has
28 to be brought up today.

29
30 DISCUSSION NOT ON THE MICROPHONE.
31

32 Motion to reconsider the vote on 26CB100226 by Board Member Norma
33 Chairez-Hartell; seconded by Board Member Rosanna Torrez. Motion
34 passed unanimously.

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36 Motion to table 26CB100226 to the July 15th HPC meeting by Board
37 Member Ernie Campos; seconded by Board Member Rosanna Torrez.
38 Motion passed unanimously.
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40 **6. STAFF AND COMMITTEE INPUT**

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42 Caitlin Beesley gave a recap of Historic Preservation Month activities. She and
43 co-op Kenneth Podhajecki prepared for a lot of events and met with many people.
44 The biggest turnout was for the historic tours. One tour with Southwest
45 Expeditions was inside the old Doña Ana County Courthouse. This was a non-
46 ghost tour. Also went into the old jail. Other tour was for the Armijo House led by

1 Mesilla Valley Preservation's Eric Liefeld. The Historic Preservation Program
2 tabled at the Farmers Market in early May and made contact with over 100 people.
3 There were various movies shown through the month also. She hopes to publicize
4 better next year, including online as that was a frequent question, and to hosting
5 walking tours next year.

6
7 Beesley also attended the Preservation Symposium put on by Historic Santa Fe
8 Foundation, held at the New Mexico History Museum in Santa Fe. Discussion
9 included housing affordability and housing availability. The City of Las Cruces was
10 mentioned a couple of times. One was that 80% of Las Cruces households are
11 unable to afford mortgage based on the median priced home. Two presenters
12 from MASS architectural studio in Santa Fe gave good presentations on design
13 and shaping neighborhoods. They stated, "Displacement is shaped not only by
14 push factors like rising costs, but also by pull factors, the absence of infrastructure,
15 amenities, opportunity, and dignity that allow people to envision a long-term future
16 in their own neighborhoods." Another presentation discussed making preservation
17 accessible to modern day communities. View heritage as a verb instead of a noun.
18 Humorously, there was a presentation on work in Mesilla that included a
19 photograph of downtown Las Cruces.

20
21 Chair Wallace thanked Staff for all the hard work and community and activities
22 during Historic Preservation Month. Hopefully in the future see bigger crowds.
23 The Doña Ana County Historical Society has been writing a lot of articles that have
24 been published in the Bulletin that are focusing on a number of preservation
25 initiatives.

26 27 **7. ADJOURNMENT**

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29 Motion to adjourn by Board Member Norma Chairez-Hartell; seconded by Board
30 Member Fernando Baeza. Motion passed unanimously.

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Chairperson