



CITY OF LAS CRUCES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

June 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

The following are minutes of the Historic Preservation Committee Meeting held June 18, 2025, City Hall, 700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Jerry Wallace, Chair
Ernie Campos
Dr. Paul John Deason

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Jeffrey Shepherd

STAFF PRESENT: Caitlin Beesley, Historic Preservation Specialist
Chris Faivre, Director Community Development
Milo Molina, Building Official
Brad Douglas, City Attorney
Michael Landavazo, Fire Marshal
Michael Roach, Codes Field Supervisor
Kevin Doyal, Building Inspector

OTHERS PRESENT: Israel Chavez
Jim Knowler
Haley Munoz
Doris Buchmann
Valerie Villegas
Faith Hutson
Judy Berryman
George Pearson
Jo Ruprecht
Julie Tobin
Rosanna Torres
Fernando Baeza
Greg Shervanick
Brittany Nickerson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wallace called the meeting to order at 6:05.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. June 18, 2025 HPC Meeting Minutes

1
2 Motion to approve by Committee Member Deason; seconded by Committee
3 Member Campos. Motion passed unanimously.
4

5 **3. DESIGN REVIEW AND CASE RECOMMENDATIONS**
6

7 **a. Demolition of vacant residence at 414 E. May**
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9 Chris Faivre stated there is a recommendation for demolition of the property
10 at 414 E. May. Originally this was built in 1915, part of the original townsite.
11 It has been unoccupied since 1980. It was condemned by the City in
12 September 2024. Currently this structure is posing a significant safety
13 concern for the neighbor and neighborhood at large. From a public safety
14 standpoint there have been substantial issues with the unhoused population
15 accessing the building, illicit drug use. A deceased person was found at the
16 property last year. There have been 29 public safety calls for service within
17 the last few months. Numerous fires have happened there which does pose
18 a problem as it is attached to another occupied residence. All of these
19 issues are directly impacting the attached occupied residence.
20

21 Pictures shown depict the roof and part of the south wall have collapsed.
22 The adobe walls are exposed causing additional deterioration of the
23 structure. 414 is connected to 422 E. May and is having a negative affect
24 on that other residence. After HPC, it would then go to City Council for
25 resolution for demolition, hopefully in late August. They would work with a
26 contractor to demo the building. And find a way to repurpose and reuse as
27 much of the material as possible. There would be a lien placed on the
28 property for financial recovery purposes for the cost of the demolition.
29

30 Committee Member Deason complimented Caitlin Beesley on the
31 thoroughness of her report, which addressed several of the aspects that the
32 HPC had concern with. He talked with some of the neighbors who are
33 anticipating the removal of this problem property. Committee Member
34 Campos asked if the contractor was known. It will be out to bid. He also
35 thanked staff for addressing this serious issue. He wonders if the contractor
36 would be able to suggest how to save the building. Chair Wallace stated
37 he visited the property last week with City staff and he asked questions. He
38 thinks the challenge here is the property owner, in working with the property.
39 The 414 property is pulling on the 422 property and that is a problem. Some
40 of the adobe have been exposed to the elements and not sure if those are
41 salvageable.
42

43 Israel Chavez stated his concern is that when Realize Las Cruces was
44 passed that the City would use that power to tear down buildings. The
45 problem he sees is that the City just has become increasingly lazy as they
46 can take the building, resell the building, etc. The City is unwilling to do

1 what is necessary in the timeline required. The City has neglected this
2 property under codes for a decade. He believes the City could have turned
3 this property around. He thinks precedent is now being set for the City to
4 do nothing for years until a building is being destroyed, and claim it is
5 dangerous and then tear it down. He stated the City is going to get rid of
6 the adobes and not save them. He feels there are other options than
7 demolition.

8
9 Jo Ruprecht has worked on this since September when the first posting was
10 placed about the building and its issues. She agrees with a fair amount of
11 what Israel said. There are issues within the historic area that need
12 attention. She states if they tracked back over the last decade there would
13 be property titles that are clouded where family members had stepped
14 away. Here is a chance to make changes, recognize how we got here and
15 also saying this is not what we would prefer. In looking through the structural
16 report she saw that it is referred as a duplex. There has never been a formal
17 legal association between ownership of 414 and 422, and it has never been
18 a duplex. She thought it was three contiguous apartments, but no 414 is a
19 single-family home. She is bothered that the City is stating the owners are
20 not identifiable. She said the staff report had information about probate for
21 which she could not find that same information. She has genealogy that
22 points to two living people who live within a half mile of this property who
23 could be responsible for the property.

24
25 Caitlin Beesley thanked everyone for their comments. This is an
26 unfortunate case. Regarding the issue of probate, she has reached out to
27 two great-grandchildren of Maria Armijo, the last owner and occupant. One
28 shared the family's issues with probate court with her, specifically that
29 required documentation, death certificates, are missing which prohibits the
30 process from moving forward. Probate court is expensive and needs a lot
31 of documentation, birth and death certificates. She would love for this to be
32 an opportunity to provide some resources to the community, because others
33 may have the same issue. She has discussed with her counterpart in
34 Mesilla the possibility of salvage, and with a local designer who is interested
35 in documenting the building. If the family resolves the probate issue,
36 reconstruction is a possibility. There is a neighbor interested in adobe
37 material for future use, however this presents its own problems as salvaged
38 material needs to be stored somewhere. The contractor has first right of
39 refusal, i.e., they can claim any materials that are removed from the site.

40
41 Brad Douglas, City lawyer, stated he appreciated public comment. A
42 question out there is why hasn't the City taken possession of some of these
43 properties, and that is a discussion on the table. Also the question
44 becomes, if through the foreclosure process the City comes into possession
45 of badly dilapidated properties, what then? Funding becomes an issue.
46 The City is working on some plans. Demotion is not the first thing the City

1 wants to do. The goal for some of these properties is voluntary compliance
2 with the property owner.

3
4 Committee Member Campos asked if the property owners are responsible
5 for all violations have been attached to the property. Officer Roach stated
6 that in this precise scenario there is no responsible party to hold
7 accountable for the property due to the ownership issues. Committee
8 member Campos was hoping to salvage some of the walls, etc. and have
9 the contractor just clean up the debris. There is no salvageability left due
10 to its affect on the building attached at 422. He wants to clean up the debris
11 that is already damaged and unsalvageable and try to save some of the
12 building. Chris Faivre did ask, but leaving the front wall freestanding is also
13 an additional safety problem because it could collapse in the right-of-way
14 and cause issues. Salvage would have to be off-site. There is a nuisance
15 and abatement program at the City that is funded, and those funds are there
16 for demolition, abatement, etc. Chair Wallace stated that the properties
17 should remain part of Mesquite and the people of Mesquite should retain
18 the rights to these properties. Is there a mechanism that the City can
19 generate or create to start to sell the properties to become useful properties
20 and part of the historic district again?

21
22 Motion to approve demolition, with condition that any salvageable materials
23 be retained as long as the contracted vendor deems it viable to do so, by
24 Committee Member Campos; seconded by Committee Member Deason.
25 Motion passed unanimously.

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27 **4. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

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29 **a. Historic and Cultural Preservation webpage update**

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31 Caitlin Beesley stated that she has had several meetings with different
32 people with City, in particular the digital media coordinator, Jennifer
33 Martinez. The documents she can send via e-mail should anyone want.
34 She's hoping to streamline the homepage and give people a more concise
35 material and additional pages for information regarding the local register of
36 cultural properties, economic incentives, tax credit opportunities, and to the
37 committee. Each section will have their own page accessible from the main
38 preservation page. The committee page will have a photo of each
39 committee member photo and bio.

40
41 Chair Wallace asked how accessible will the webpage be. He would like
42 the webpage be more prominent and accessible. And work with IT so that
43 if you Google it you are not getting other places in the community's
44 webpages as well. The path to the HPC homepage right now is housed in
45 a strange place. She is hoping to solve that. It is in the dropdown menu
46 under Community Development. There are opportunities for articles to be

1 written about preservation in the community and posted on the city's main
2 page, that discusses the good things HPC is doing, etc. Committee
3 Member Deason also asked to have some of the stuff provided by HPC
4 regarding the ability to fund restoration and rehabilitation, state funds, City
5 funds, federal funds. There was a report on deconstruction rather than
6 demolition and have that readily available for anyone. Caitlin Beesley
7 suggested that other communities have a deconstruction ordinance that the
8 city and community can explore and discuss that in the future. There will
9 be a page dedicated to information about economic incentives related to tax
10 credits at the state level and tax credits at the federal level. The state tax
11 credits in New Mexico are robust and are available for non-income
12 producing properties with design review at the state level.

13
14 Committee Member Campos asked to have an FAQ area on the home
15 page. Beesley agreed. Chair Wallace mentioned the watchlist and that the
16 community should be included in the list. Beesley stated that the watchlist
17 will be included in the webpage.

18
19 **b. Las Cruces Register of Cultural Properties nominations slated for next**
20 **month**

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22 Caitlin Beesley stated she wants to provide a presentation next month that
23 discusses the process for nominating and listing a building. It is in the new
24 Realize code, Chapter 35. Also go over some basics what is a historic
25 register, what is the process of nominating, what is integrity.

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27 **5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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29 None.

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31 **6. STAFF AND COMMITTEE INPUT**

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33 Caitlin Beesley stated they are now members of the National Alliance of
34 Preservation Commissions. She attended the design guidelines workshop in June
35 and has slides and a recording for anyone interested. Also NAPC will be holding
36 a short course on August 20th and 21st. The cost is \$65 for committee members,
37 now that the city has membership. Topics include updating local preservation
38 ordinances, community outreach strategies, applying Secretary of the Interior
39 standards for rehabilitation projects, and different preservation tools available to
40 municipalities.

41
42 Caitlin Beesley stated the plan for the August meeting is to have new HPC
43 members seated to fill vacancies. She asked the committee to forward updates to
44 the watchlist to her, and to email personal bios for the webpage. She stated the
45 city's design guidelines will be made public soon, that they will focus on the content

1 of the guidelines, not the design. The design will be something that city staff will
2 be working on updating.

3
4 Committee Member Campos asked for an update on Church's Chicken. Chris
5 Faivre stated that he has been working with them for about a year and half trying
6 to get them to come back to us. The City sends e-mails every other week or so.
7 They are supposed to be providing calculations for on-site ponding for their design
8 and providing options for the design of the building. Committee Member Campos
9 asked Beesley to look at several properties. First, 931 N. Mesquite Street, old
10 Nevarez property. Used to be the meat market. It has been sitting idle. Maybe
11 reach to the property owner and see what they plan on doing. Also 805 S. Campo,
12 and Texas, rough house. He has some neighbors who want to build a two-story
13 home in the historic district, which is not allowed.

14
15 Chair Wallace asked for a quarterly update on the Historic Preservation Plan of
16 Las Cruces. Also provide a report of historic preservation work that is being done
17 in the community, specifically what is the City doing. Beesley stated there is an
18 annual report given to City Council that can be looked at. Maybe giving a larger
19 presentation, halfway through the year in May as it is preservation month.

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21 **7. ADJOURNMENT**

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23 Motion to adjourn by Committee Member Deason; seconded by Committee
24 Member Campos. Motion passed unanimously.

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Chairperson