



CITY OF LAS CRUCES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

November 19, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

The following are minutes of the Historic Preservation Committee Meeting held November 19, 2025, in Council Chambers, City Hall, 700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Jerry Wallace, Chair
Ernie Campos
Paul John Deason, PhD
Jeffrey Shepherd, PhD
Fernando Baeza
Rosanna Torrez

MEMBERS ABSENT: Norma Chairez-Hartell

STAFF PRESENT: Caitlin Beesley, Historic Preservation Specialist
Chris Faivre, Director Community Development
Kevin Doyal, City Building Inspector

OTHERS PRESENT:

Caroline Camfield	Steve Kobs	Ransom	William Smith
Tammy Smith	Faith Hutson	Bill Acosta	Alex Mares
David Chavez	Alma G.	C. Vasquez Bulto	Dawn Franco
Benjamin Corral	Emanuel Ortega	Edward Flores	Don Pepion
Joseph Melendrez	Wilma Hutson	Billie Hutson	Barbara Caldwell
Dale Caldwell	George Pearson	Jason Seewald	Everardo Carbajal
Alicia Jameson	Veronica Hardley	Jose Moreno	Crystal McCaslin
Eddie Torres	Mandarin Drummond		Thomas Valenzuela
Michael Coronado	Joe Coronado	Daniel Bark	Pat Taylor
Eva Nevarez St. John	Don Leslie	Greg Shervanick	Prasanna
Jaime Chony	Carlos Aguilar	John Verplough	Jordan Gladstone

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wallace called the meeting to order at 6:00.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES -

2.1 October 15, 2025 HPC Minutes

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

1
2 **3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
3

4 Alex Mares stated there was a building on the list that the board is going to discuss
5 this evening, but not on the agenda. He will wait and speak later.
6

7 **4. STAFF AND COMMITTEE INPUT**
8

9 Caitlin Beesley stated the content draft of the city's design guidelines is up online
10 on MuniDOCS. She will sent a link to anyone. She will seek input on when the
11 board wishes to discuss.
12

13 The Doña Ana County Historical Society lecture series. DeAngelo Nieves with the
14 Doña Ana Village Historic Preservation Committee gave a presentation in May,
15 and he will be giving that same presentation for the Doña Ana Historical Society.
16 That lecture is tomorrow, 20th, 7:00 p.m. at the auditorium of the Las Cruces
17 Village (formerly Good Samaritan).
18

19 Ernie Campos suggested a work session after the holidays, second week of
20 January.
21

22 Chair Wallace stated that last January they started the watch list for Las Cruces.
23 They thought they were going to identify 10 buildings that could be put on the list
24 that could be in potential jeopardy of losing the buildings. That list is right now over
25 20. They are going to update this list every year. He asked for suggestions from
26 the committee between now and the January meeting.
27

28 Chair Wallace stated in January they will consider new chair and vice-chair
29 positions. Let's have those discussions prior to January,
30

31 **5. PRESENTATION ON CITY'S NAT PROGRAM**
32

33 Chris Faivre stated NAT is short for nuisance and abatement. The city is trying to
34 deal with issues that may be impacting a neighborhood from a negative standpoint;
35 poor upkeep which is associated with accelerated decline within communities.
36 There are some policies within Elevate Las Cruces, 2.1 and 2.2. The program is
37 intended to encourage property owners to implement changes through
38 coordinating with staff.
39

40 The previous NAT structure was focusing on dealing with the owner. Some of the
41 situations this ended up being a dead-end street. They are taking a different
42 approach focusing on the structure from public health and safety standpoint and
43 use 2001 Property Maintenance Code adopted by Council to move some of the
44 properties to a place to remediate the issues. This will be a combination of
45 Community Development staff, codes, and the fire department. These are working
46 together to assess structures, determine conditions, and figure next steps.

1 Grading the properties, level one is known owner associated with the property,
2 occupied, no major structural issues and the owner is working towards compliance.
3 Level two are properties have no known legal owner, the property is not gaining
4 compliance on a variety of things. Level three are no known owner, vacant, visible
5 structural issues, pending public health or safety issue. A lot of properties do not
6 have a known legal owner. The city will remove the Certificate of Occupancy (CO),
7 condemn the structure, and hire someone to board and secure the property. If
8 deemed necessary, the property will be demolished. The city will go in, lien the
9 property for cost of abatement and then force foreclosure of the property with the
10 idea that someone can step in, purchase the property, remediate it, save, turn it
11 around and save the property and ultimately maybe provide some additional
12 housing. The plan is to use the leverage of the liens to force a positive resolution
13 long-term.
14

15 There is a boarding standard in the property maintenance code, it gets specific on
16 how and what the requirements are for that. The idea is to make sure the structure
17 is secure, remain safe, does not cause additional issues for the neighborhood,
18 weather resistant.
19

20 On the city website there is a map with level 2 and level 3 properties. There is a
21 link for people to add a property. Then staff would go out and evaluate. City staff
22 are looking to move forward with an ordinance that addresses vacant commercial
23 and residential structures citywide. There is an abundance of both. Hoping to
24 bring the ordinance to Council for adoption summer 2026, and hopefully
25 implementation fall 2026. The city is still working on identifying owners for
26 properties in the historic districts and they are working to find legal owners for
27 others. A list of the NAT properties in the Mesquite, Alameda-Depot, and Mesilla
28 Park Historic Districts is available on the back table. There is also a document for
29 economic incentives for tax credits for doing the rehabs.
30

31 Caitlin Beesley stated one of the handouts discusses the state and federal tax
32 credit program. They hope to have another presentation on the tax credit program.
33

34 Paul Deason asked if the program also includes the other areas of the city that are
35 not in the above listed three districts. The NAT program is citywide. Ernie Campos
36 thanked staff. Chair Wallace asked how often the city will update the NAT. Chris
37 Faivre stated the NAT will be updated regularly, even daily. Question of is there
38 an incentive to have people's properties identified on the NAT that this would help
39 the owner get assistance for tax for other abatement possibilities. Hopefully,
40 people with questions will just contact city staff. Chair Wallace feels this is more
41 proactive than a reactive approach.
42

43 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

44

45 Carlos Melendrez stated he is a great, great grandson of Pablo Melendrez who
46 founded the city in 1849. He is also indigenous. They have strong claims on the

1 historic preservation of the community. History is very important. There is the last
2 building belonging to the Piro-Manso-Tiwa tribe. It is important and necessary to
3 pay attention to the historical properties. The building is on page two of the
4 handout, 408 S. San Pedro.

5
6 Alex Mares introduced himself in his native language and continued in English to
7 explain that introducing himself this way is respectful and customary and sacred.
8 He is here for the property at 408 S. San Pedro Street. It is a contributing building.
9 And it is abandoned. He has old photographs, one from 1905. HPC member Ernie
10 Campos stated that this property has never really been forgotten.

11
12 Crystal McCaslin she is local realtor, estate developer, and a flipper. She
13 appreciates this program and the value it brings to the city. She is interested in
14 the lien and foreclosure process. And how all the information will be disseminated
15 to the public. Chris Faivre stated they are working with the city's legal department
16 on the process. As things are more solidified he will have more information, but
17 haven't reached that point with a property as of yet.

18
19 Bill Acosta stated he is a member of Tortugas Pueblo. He is wondering if the city
20 could purchase 408 S. San Pedro. He appreciates all that is being done. He feels
21 indigenous traditions are being expunged. They will always be here.

22
23 HPC member Jeff Shepherd thanked the previous speakers, and members from
24 Piro-Manso-Tiwa and Tortugas for attending. Buildings are windows into a specific
25 history of a home or land, but also help remember a larger history. The Branigan
26 Museum and Cultural Center has an exhibit currently, Land of the People, looking
27 at indigenous communities.

28
29 Donald Pepion stated he has been living here for over 20 years and a professor in
30 Native American studies at NMSU. They have to rewrite history as indigenous
31 people have been left out.

32
33 Chair Wallace stated what he finds encouraging about the conversation is that he
34 thought community members should own the properties in Las Cruces. He would
35 prefer the city not own any properties in the historic districts and prefer that
36 community members own them.

37
38 Eva Nevarez St. John stated she is speaking on the same property. She was on
39 the committee for the country club building.

40
41 Lori Meek has lived in the Mesquite Historic District for 20 years. She stated
42 originally NAT stood for Neighborhood Action Team. She acknowledged what the
43 Native Americans who have spoken up previously have said. They got money for
44 renovation for their home. She stated the neighborhood is 60-70% renters. The
45 marketing is critical and should be marketed out of state, out of country.

1 Caitlin Beesley stated that the list provided will say if the owner listed on each
2 individual address is seeking a buyer. And in the case of 408 S. San Pedro the
3 owner is looking for someone to buy this property. Mr. Melendrez stated this
4 property has been in question for several years. He would like the indigenous
5 people buy the property and have the city rehab that structure.
6

7 Pat Taylor stated he has worked with adobe over the years. He mentioned that
8 when talking about buildings it is important to recognize they are intertwined with
9 family histories and cultures. His concern is with the city's process of assessing
10 buildings and the criteria for that.
11

12 Carlos Melendrez heard all words. He has worked for state government in Texas
13 and New Mexico for 36 years. He thinks the city should acquire the property.
14 Dialogue with the citizens of the city, and using grants or taxpayer money. So the
15 short term the city would acquire it, city renovate it with input. And asks why this
16 may not be an option for the city to acquire. Chris Faivre stated decisions to
17 acquire property are made by City Council. Carlos Melendrez stated they had been
18 working with Councilor McClure for several years to acquire that property. He is
19 also working with Rose Garcia.
20

21 Chris Faivre encouraged anyone interested in the property to remain and do
22 networking.
23

24 **6. ADJOURNMENT**

25
26 Motion to adjourn by Paul Deason; seconded by Ernie Campos. Motion passed
27 unanimously.
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34 _____
Chairperson