



CITY OF LAS CRUCES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

January 21, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

The following are minutes of the Historic Preservation Committee Meeting held January 21, 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
Jeffrey Shepherd, PhD
Norma Chairez-Hartell
Fernando Baeza
Rosanna Torrez

MEMBERS ABSENT: NONE

STAFF PRESENT: Caitlin Beesley, Historic Preservation Specialist
Chris Faivre, Director Community Development
Christine Rivera, City Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT: Kenneth Podhajecki
Carlos Melendez
David Chavez
George Pearson
Derrick Pacheco
Cassie McClure, City Councilor

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

Motion to reorder the agenda so that item six would be after item two made by Paul Deason; seconded by Ernie Campos. Motion passed unanimously.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES -

2.1 December 17, 2025 HPC Minutes

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

6. ANNUAL COMMITTEE TRAINING 1

1
2 Christine Rivera stated this is the annual training she gives yearly for each board
3 and committee within the city. There are standard boards which are a member
4 from each individual district, appointed by their City Councilor, and the one at large
5 with the Mayor. There are also non-standard boards which are made up of
6 membership of all different types, not district specific but people's level of interest
7 and what the municipal code related to that committee. Also ad hoc committees
8 that are created for specific purpose and after the purpose is achieved, then the
9 committee dissipates. Also operation board, but only one at the city is the Utilities
10 Board, for which they have their own fund and own budget. HPC is a non-standard
11 board. All boards and committees advise and make recommendations to the City
12 Council. Code requires HPC to meet at least quarterly. A 75% attendance rule is
13 also in place; if members miss three or more meetings, they are then eligible for
14 removal by the City Council. Also follow Robert's Rules of Order and Open
15 Meetings Act.

16
17 Chapter 2 of the Municipal Code is where all the boards and committees are
18 located. Outlines everything, Code of Ethics, be respectful, never mislead or
19 obstruct, lead with integrity and competence, abstain from making offense
20 comments, and refrain from addressing Council for or against board decisions.
21 This means do not go to City Council meeting and state you are an HPC member
22 and this is how you voted at your meeting. You can go as a member of public and
23 be against an agenda item.

24
25 The Open Meetings Act (OMA), also called Sunshine Law, promotes transparency
26 of all the boards and committees, including Council. This says you will conduct
27 public business in full view so the public can attend. Anyone can come and record
28 any meeting. Although public participation is not mentioned in the OMA, all boards
29 and committees are suggested to put public participation on the agenda as a
30 courtesy to the public. Open Meetings Act requires the agenda to have specific
31 items on there. Agendas should be posted within 72 hours of a meeting on the
32 city website. After 72 hours changes cannot be made to the agenda. You can
33 make changes to the agenda at the meeting, which is only to remove items, nothing
34 can be added. Agendas should include date, time, location. Minutes are required,
35 with a minimum of date, time, location, members present, members absent, and
36 then a brief summary of any action taken. Also rolling quorums, do not do them.
37 This happens most frequently within e-mails, so put everybody on BCC, blind copy
38 and then when they respond, it is only to one person. Exception to OMA are closed
39 meetings for legal issues, personnel issues, union contracts, purchase or sale of
40 real estate.

41
42 Rules of Procedure is a condensed version of Robert's Rules of Order that the City
43 Council passed. Most pertinent are the motions made at meetings. Amendments
44 for changing something, add or subtract from a specific item brought before the
45 board. Tabling versus postponing, tabling is date specific, postponing is indefinite
46 and kills the item. She recommends voting it down instead of postponing, which

1 also kills the item. Point of Order can be used when discussions get off-track.
2 Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA) gives everyone the right to inspect certain
3 records, not all records. Includes e-mails that have gone to the city, Teams
4 messages. They do not release attorney/client privilege, dates of birth, social
5 security numbers, account numbers, credit card numbers, employee addresses,
6 although elected official addresses are public.
7

8 **3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

9

10 Derrick Pacheco wanted to add to the IPRA presentation. Says it seems outdated.
11 AI issues were not covered. He stated every time someone uses Copilot as part
12 of the MS Suite that is also public information. Troublesome if doing something
13 legal because that is not accepted use of AI. All Meta data can be made public.
14 He appreciates the new faces on the board. He wants to speak to the travesty that
15 happened on October 3rd at May and San Pedro where another historic adobe
16 structure was lost. He thinks demolition should be the absolute last resort. He
17 believes demolition is being used instead of, and as a replacement to, hiring the
18 needed bodies to do the work needed to be done and handled. He believes the
19 police are also responsible. He brought up the Country Club building. He
20 mentioned a variety of building lost. He does not want any other buildings in the
21 Mesquite Historic District demoed.
22

23 **4. STAFF AND COMMITTEE INPUT**

24

25 Caitlin Beesley stated the Doña Ana County Historical Society's award banquet
26 happens the last Saturday of the month. They are asking people to register early.
27 There will be two work sessions next month for the design guidelines content draft,
28 these will be outside of the monthly HPC meeting. Works sessions will be fourth
29 Wednesday and last Saturday of the month.
30

31 Chair Wallace mentioned his also on the Doña Ana County Historical Society
32 board and they are recognizing the Historic Preservation Committee of Doña Ana
33 Village with an award. The society is also giving an award to the Doña Ana County
34 Clerk's Office for their podcast on preserving democracy.
35

36 Ernie Campos updated the Hispanic Cultural Center. He has coordinated with the
37 Coronado brothers regarding the use of a building at the corner of Mesquite and
38 Las Cruces Street as a temporary historical cultural center. They are trying to
39 come up with a group, board members, and money to be a nonprofit 501(c).
40

41 Paul Deason stated that last week the Department of War has decided to defund
42 military museums. White Sands, Ft. Bliss, and the Holoman Air Force Base
43 museums and culture centers will be closing in the near future. There are efforts
44 to try and rescue these at a community level.
45

46 **5. VOTE ON COMMITTEE CABINET POSITIONS**

1
2 Paul Deason nominated Jerry Wallace for the position of chair. Jeff Shepherd
3 seconded. Motion to approve Jerry Wallace as chair by Paul Deason; seconded
4 by Ernie Campos. Motion passed unanimously.
5

6 Rosanna Torres nominated Norma Chairez-Hartell for the position of vice-chair.
7 Paul Deason seconded. Motion to approve Norma Chairez-Hartell as vice-chair
8 by Paul Deason. Motion passed unanimously.
9

10 **6. ANNUAL COMMITTEE TRAINING 2**
11

12 Caitlin Beesley stated she would use this presentation when new HPC members
13 do orientation before joining the committee. Design review is one of the primary
14 responsibilities of the HPC. Design review is a dialogue between various people
15 or groups invested in the quality of, or preservation of a specific resource.
16 Designating a building as historic is establishing it as worthy of being protected.
17 Protective efforts are twofold: protections against the hands of humans or physical
18 changes and alterations, or protection against the hands of time. Design review is
19 protective, and supports the preservation of historic character, the stories that
20 buildings convey, and historic resources. Historic integrity is maintained better in
21 historic districts and historic buildings that undergo design review. Design review
22 helps improved livability and increased property value. Design review is
23 established by a city's ordinance, and each city or municipality's preservation
24 ordinance is different. For example, design review in Las Cruces' ordinance is
25 referred to as plan review. Plan review in Las Cruces refers to new construction,
26 secondary or accessory dwellings on the lot of an existing building, alterations and
27 additions to the exterior of an existing building, and demolition. The process starts
28 with an application which includes the Certificate of Appropriateness, and staff
29 review. Staff will make recommended changes. And eventually the case moves
30 to HPC for approval, denial, changes. A Certificate of Appropriateness is good for
31 a year, with a possible six-month extension.
32

33 The HPC's decisions have to be grounded in several things: the city's ordinance;
34 the city's design guidelines, which are currently unpublished but are the purpose
35 of the work sessions next month; the Secretary of the Interior Standards for
36 Rehabilitation; and finally New Mexico Historic Cultural Properties Inventory
37 Manual published in 2001. Design principles for plan review, what is the
38 relationship of the changes of the new building to what already exists there.
39 Preserve what is there and be sure new buildings are compatible. You do not want
40 a building to reproduce what is historically there. All construction should be of its
41 time and not manufacture a fake sense of history. Questions to answer are, how
42 they relate to what is already existing, how does it compare, the scale of the
43 structure, compare to how tall the buildings are that are already there, does it mimic
44 or play off of architectural details, and have similar forms. The Mesquite District is
45 the only historic district the HPC currently has design review authority over. She
46 went over some examples of design review cases that happened in other

1 municipalities, and stated that there are difficult cases everywhere. Ft. Missoula
2 Hospital was one. Jefferson Substation in Portland, Oregon, is the second.
3 Beesley stressed several rules for design review: that if members don't like a
4 proposal, they can always ask for modifications; members should not discuss
5 cases outside of any HPC meeting, with each other or members of the public; if
6 applicants applying for demolition do not meet all the requirements set forth, the
7 HPC has the ability to deny the permit.

8
9 Derrick Pacheco stated that this topic is exciting because the previous iteration of
10 the HPC threw the recommendations out the window when they heard his case.
11 He complained that his case was not approved due to wanting to use corrugated
12 steel (a shipping container). He feels he is being discriminated against via the
13 older HPC members, City Council, and from former members sitting in the
14 audience.

15 16 **7. DISCUSSION ON COMMUNITY WATCH LIST**

17
18 Chair Wallace stated it is time to reevaluate the watch list. How do we the utilize
19 the watch list? What should be the criteria? What is the way they are going to
20 justify having a building on the watch list? He stated that Tommy's Roller Rink
21 should be on the city register as opposed to on the watch list, as it is not threatened
22 to be demolished or rehabilitated in any non-historic way. The Club, on Foster
23 Street, across from Fire Station No. 2 – he feels this building would qualify for being
24 on the watch list because it could be demolished and it has served some interesting
25 moments. He would like some suggestions to go on the city register versus
26 buildings that would go on the watch list.

27
28 Caitlin Beesley stated the board will receive a draft of the watch list. The plan is
29 to put it online when they finalize it. They have had two interns working on the
30 watch list. One intern has left but the other is still working on the watch list. Before
31 finalizing it some things need to be ironed out. For future nominations she will
32 need what is up on the board, which will help staff research the buildings. Chair
33 Wallace also mentioned the 10-story bank building. Norma Chairez-Hartell asked
34 when this gets published online will there be community input. There will ability to
35 e-mail suggestions to city staff via the website. Chair Wallace stated the Roybal
36 property in Mesquite should be added to the watch list. The cluster of buildings on
37 University, five to six houses, need to be protected. He also believes there are
38 some on the watch list that should be more on the city register. What would qualify
39 being on the watch list as an endangered building in the community to bring
40 attention to versus what is a building that is of historic value that would be on the
41 city register. Beesley said there could be buildings on both. One difference to
42 keep in mind is that we need consent from owners to be on the local register. And
43 being on a register or the watch list is no guarantee of preservation. Right now
44 there are no buildings on the local register. Paul Deason asked a question
45 regarding religious buildings on the watch list versus the local register. Beesley
46 said it was okay for the watch list. For the national register you have to have a

1 criteria consideration for a religious building. When the register was created, they
2 did not want to ascribe value to certain churches or religious organizations over
3 others.
4

5 The watch list to be reevaluated every January. Caitlin Beesley stated there were
6 two on the list that were the same building, what was cleaned up. Paul Deason
7 mentioned the former Jewish temple on Parker Road (now the Holy Family
8 Catholic Church), and Universalist Unitarian church on Solano and Wofford.
9 Rosanna Torrez mentioned the women's club by Pioneer Women's Park. The WIA
10 building is city owned and is being worked for the local register; the city is asking
11 for \$700,000 in capital outlay funds from the state to work on the exterior of the
12 building.
13

14 Derrick Pacheco asked everyone to step back in their mind. He demanded that
15 Paul Deason quit looking at his phone. He stated this list and the concept of having
16 a list is absolute bogus because Las Cruces in his opinion is divided into two, the
17 original town of Las Cruces and up the hill. He assumes that most of the board
18 lives up the hill. He lives in the original townsite. He stated that all of the original
19 Las Cruces townsite should be considered historic. He says they are picking and
20 choosing favorite pet projects in town and thinking that putting them on a list is
21 going to do anything, which is discriminatory. Need to think about why they're
22 protecting certain buildings. He asked Chair Wallace to stop shaking his head and
23 looking and giving weird responses; says that, as a leader, Wallace should not be
24 doing that. He states the greatest threat to historical preservation is actually
25 private equity. He demanded that Paul Deason stop and listen to him.
26

27 Chair Wallace stated the watch list is meant to focus attention on buildings that do
28 not get recognition in the community because they are outside historic districts or
29 lack designation.
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31 **8. ADJOURNMENT**
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33 Motion to adjourn by Paul Deason; seconded by Jeff Shepherd. Motion passed
34 unanimously.
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41 _____
Chairperson