

# City of Fresno

*City Hall  
2600 Fresno Street  
Fresno, CA 93721*



## Meeting Minutes - Final

**Monday, October 24, 2022**

**6:00 PM**

**Regular Meeting**

**Fresno City Hall, Second Floor  
Room 2165N (Conference Room A)**

## **Historic Preservation Commission**

***Chair - Jason Hatwig, LEED, AP, BD C***

***Vice Chair - James Sponsler***

***Commissioners:***

***Christopher Rocha, Paul Halajian, AIA; Don Simmons, PhD; M.A.;***

***Staff:***

***Jennifer Clark, Director; Mary Raterman-Doidge, Senior Deputy City Attorney; Janice Monroe, M.A. II; Myrna Rivas, Administrative Clerk***

**PUBLIC ADVISORY**

**THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND CITY HALL WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT A LIMITED CAPACITY.**

**THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION WELCOMES YOU TO ROOM 2165A, LOCATED IN CITY HALL, 2ND FLOOR, 2600 FRESNO STREET, FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93721.**

**The meeting can also be viewed live at 6:00 P.M. on Comcast Channel 96 and AT&T channel 99.**

**Chambers, located in City Hall Room 2165A, are open for public participation.**

**Members of the public are encouraged to participate electronically because of reduced capacity of seating in the Chambers to allow for social distancing. Masks will be required for the vaccinated and unvaccinated.**

**Pursuant to the Executive Order, and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in the Commission meeting, please contact the City Clerk's Office, 559-621-7650 within 48 hours of the meeting.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**The following options are available for members of the public who want to attend and /or address the Historic Preservation Commission:**

**1. eComment at <https://fresno.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.**

**a) eComments is a tool for citizens to use to make comments on agenda items. It will be closed at the start of the meeting and will be a part of the official record. The User Agreement and Procedures document for eComment can be accessed by the URL <https://www.fresno.gov/cityclerk/>**

**b) eComments will be a maximum of 450 words.**

**OR**

**2. You are invited to a Zoom webinar.**

**a) If you would like to speak on an agenda item, you can access the meeting remotely from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone, or Android device.**

Please use URL: <https://zoom.us/j/95457849931>

b) Those addressing the Commission must state their name and address for the record.

OR

### 3. Join by Phone

a) Dial:

US: 1 669 900 9128

Enter Webinar ID: 954 5784 9931

b) Those addressing the Commission must state their name and address for the record.

OR

### 4. Email

a) Attendees may also email comments to [Historic.Preservation@fresno.gov](mailto:Historic.Preservation@fresno.gov) to be read during the meeting. Please include the agenda date and item number you wish to speak on in the subject line of your email (e.g., January 25, 2021 - Item A). And, please include your name and address for the record at the top of the body of your email.

b) Emails are not to exceed 150 words.

c) All comments received will be distributed to the Commission prior and during the meeting and will be a part of the official record.

Any interested person may appear at the public hearing and present written testimony, or speak in favor or against the matters scheduled on the agenda.

If you challenge these matters in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised in oral or written testimony at or before the close of the hearing.

The City of Fresno thanks you in advance for taking all precautions to prevent spreading COVID-19 virus.

## **I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

6:00 P.M.

**Present** 5 - Chair Jason Hatwig, Vice Chair James W Sponsler, Commissioner Christopher Rocha, Commissioner Paul Halajian, and Commissioner Don Simmons

## **II. PROCEDURES - PROCEDIMIENTOS - KEV SAB LAJ**

6:04 P.M.

*Chair Hatwig read the procedures out loud*

## **III. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES**

III-A [ID 22-1661](#) September 26, 2022 Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes.

6:06 P.M.

**On motion of Vice Chair Sponsler, seconded by Commissioner Rocha, the above MINUTES were APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 4 - Chair Hatwig, Vice Chair Sponsler, Commissioner Rocha and Commissioner Simmons

**Abstain:** 1 - Commissioner Halajian

## **IV. APPROVE AGENDA**

6:06 P.M.

*Chair Hatwig approved request to hear Item VII-D first, as requested by applicant Sal Gonzalez, due to time constraints. No additional changes were recommended.*

**On motion of Commissioner Simmons, seconded by Commissioner Rocha, the AGENDA was APPROVED AS AMENDED. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 5 - Chair Hatwig, Vice Chair Sponsler, Commissioner Rocha, Commissioner Halajian and Commissioner Simmons

## **V. CONSENT CALENDAR**

6:09 P.M.

**On motion of Vice Chair Sponsler, seconded by Commissioner Halajian, that the above be ADOPTED. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 5 - Chair Hatwig, Vice Chair Sponsler, Commissioner Rocha, Commissioner Halajian and Commissioner Simmons

**V-A**     [ID 22-1645](#)     Consideration of the Fresno City Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Schedule for Calendar Year 2023 and rescheduling of December 2022 Meeting

**On motion of Vice Chair Sponsler, seconded by Commissioner Halajian, that the above Action Item be ADOPTED. The motion carried by the following vote:**

## **VI. CONTINUED MATTERS**

N/A

## **VII. COMMISSION ITEMS**

**VII-A**     [ID 22-1639](#)     HEARING TO CONSIDER Development Permit P22-01922 for the adaptive reuse and interior renovations of the Helm Building (HP#168) located at 1097-1123 Fulton Street (APN 46621204).

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) take the following actions:

1. **ADOPT** a finding of Categorical Exemption pursuant to Sections 15331/Class 31 of the California Environmental Quality Act guidelines
2. **APPROVE:** Application P22-01922 for the conversion of uses at HP#168 Helm Building located at 1101 Fulton St. (APN 46621204).

7:03 P.M.

*Sevak Khatchadourian (applicant) attended and presented the plans for proposed adaptive reuse and interior renovations of the Helm Building.*

*Applicant discussed interest in keeping the integrity of the building.*

*Commissioners reported looking forward to seeing the progress and praised Khatchadourian for the quality and integrity of his work.*

*A member of the public commended in favor of the proposal*

**On motion of Commissioner Rocha, seconded by Vice Chair Sponsler, that the above Action Item be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 5 - Chair Hatwig, Vice Chair Sponsler, Commissioner Rocha, Commissioner Halajian and Commissioner Simmons

**VII-B**    [ID 22-1638](#)    HEARING TO CONSIDER AND MAKE FINDINGS on application B22-04282 for construction of new accessible ramps at east entries at the old US Post Office (HP#50) located at 2309 Tulare (APN 46612208T).

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) take the following actions:

1. **ADOPT** a finding of Categorical Exemption pursuant to Sections 15331/Class 31 of the California Environmental Quality Act guidelines
2. **APPROVE:** Application B22-04282 for the construction of new accessible ramps at east entries at the old US Post Office (HP#50).

7:18 P.M.

*Director Clark gave a brief overview of pending permits for 2309 Fulton St. by Fresno Unified School District.*

*Andrew Corral (applicant) was present and available for questions.*

*The Commission & Staff acknowledged the M St ramp was not originally in the scope of work but was added at the request of the Architectural Review Subcommittee.*

*Clark clarified that since M St. wasn't part of the original permit, it would need to be added to the motion.*

*Halajian motioned to approve the original request with the addition of the ramp on M St.*

*No Public Comment.*

**On motion of Commissioner Halajian, seconded by Commissioner Simmons, that the above Action Item be APPROVED AS AMENDED.**

**The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 5 - Chair Hatwig, Vice Chair Sponsler, Commissioner Rocha, Commissioner Halajian and Commissioner Simmons

**VII-C**    [ID 22-1643](#)    HEARING TO CONSIDER Building permits B21-07055, B22-04077, B22-04090 for the adaptive reuse, exterior and interior renovations, and proposed conditional use permit of the Elia Home (HP#311), located at 634-640 N Van Ness Ave.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) take the following actions:

1. **ADOPT** a finding of Categorical Exemption pursuant to Sections 15331/Class 31 of the California Environmental Quality Act guidelines
2. **APPROVE:** B21-07055 for the adaptive reuse, exterior and interior renovations, and proposed conditional use permit at the Elia Home (HP#311).

7:28 P.M

*Applicant, Phillip Cleaver, gave a brief presentation on the timeline and proposed future use of the Elia Home. He added that the railings in the home will be retrofitted to ADA height and they will be installing outdoor bathrooms. Timeline to complete project is approximately 2-6 months.*

**On motion of Vice Chair Sponsler, seconded by Commissioner Halajian, that the above Action Item be . The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 5 - Chair Hatwig, Vice Chair Sponsler, Commissioner Rocha, Commissioner Halajian and Commissioner Simmons

**VII-D** [ID 22-1637](#) HEARING TO CONSIDER demolition application B22-12250 for the property located at 925-935 Van Ness Ave (APN 46825403).

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) consider one of the following actions:

**DENY:** B21-07055 for the B22-12250 for the demolition of the property located at 925-935 Van Ness Av (APN46825403).

Or

**APPROVE:** B21-07055 for the B22-12250 for the demolition of the property located at 925-935 Van Ness Av (APN46825403).

6:11 P.M.

*Director Clark gave a brief history of the building and proposed scope of work.*

*On behalf of the Applicant, Sal Gonzales, Arman Devejjan, Mike Jundt, and Scott Beck were to provide information on the requested demolition. They reported that the building is an economic hardship to the owner and danger to the public. They feel that the building does not rise to the level of preservation status. The team agreed that the location is in the heart of the city and the age, significance, and integrity of the building are key factors. After over a year of research, they determined that making the existing structure functional is not economically feasible.*

*Vice Chair Sponsler voiced his concern that the property would be a dirt lot if demolition is allowed and added that the architect, Robert Stephens could be part of a future Thematic District ("Robert Stephens Architecture").*

*Commissioner Rocha noted that the integrity of the building is there, and that the integrity is what is recognizable from Stephen's architecture. He also reported that the building meets the criteria as we see it and agreed*



*with Sponsler's statements on the thematic district.*

*Commissioner Simmons told the applicants that the commission is more concerned with the integrity of the building than the condition of the building.*

*The applicant was unable to provide commission a plan of use or timeline of project.*

*Chair Hatwig explained that it is a difficult decision based on not knowing what is going to be built in its place.*

*No Public Comment was made.*

*Simmons motioned to deny the proposal and add the recommendation to Council that the property is added to the local register. Clark then restated the motion for clarification.*

**On motion of Commissioner Simmons, seconded by Commissioner Rocha, that the above Action Item be RECOMMENDED FOR DENIAL.  
The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 4 - Chair Hatwig, Vice Chair Sponsler, Commissioner Rocha  
and Commissioner Simmons

**Recused:** 1 - Commissioner Halajian

**VII-E** [ID 22-1680](#) Review and make recommendation regarding the proposed options of the Belmont Subway Plaque from the California High Speed Rail Authority pursuant to FMC 12-1606(b)(6).

7:38 P.M.

*Brett Rushing, High Speed Rail (HSR) Cultural Resources Manager, gave a brief presentation on the replacement of the missing Belmont Subway Plaque. He presented the Commission two options (Aluminum & Synthetic) and offered the strengths and weakness of each. He explained that Bronze was not an option they considered due to the high likelihood of theft attempts. He added that the expected timeline of installation is after the completion of the bridge (1.5 years).*

*Rushing and the Commission agreed deterring vandalism and/or theft is a priority in placement and design of the new plaque.*

*Halajian requested pre-cast concrete as an alternative option of material.*

*Sponsler confirmed that regardless of the material chosen, there would need to be a cover securing the replacement plaque and Rushing agreed.*

**VII-F** [ID 22-1672](#) Consultation regarding potential mural located at 1930 E Shields Ave.

*7:57 P.M.*

*No discussion due to the absence of a representative of Fresno Arts Council.*

**VII-G** [ID 22-1642](#) Discussion regarding changes to windows and possible remediation at 301 Van Ness Avenue

*7:57 P.M*

*Vice Chair Sponsler recently noticed window work in process at 301 Van Ness Ave.(Beacon's Warehouse Building). Director Clark stated that any changes to the windows would require a permit before work is authorized. Sponsler also reported the addition of stucco has been added to the windows recently, causing a loss of integrity in the historic feature that were those windows.*

*When Commissioners asked for resources and next steps, Clark recommended they use the FresGo App to report any concerns of this nature and Code Enforcement would review the requests. Property owners would be notified and have an opportunity to correct before any legal action could be taken.*

**VII-H** [ID 22-1683](#) Discussion regarding process for Council items receiving Historic Preservation Commission input

1. Railroad relocation (Council 22-1503 on 9/29/22 -Arias)
2. Armenian Homes (Council 22-1495 on 9/29/22-Successor Agency).

8:07 P.M.

*Director Clark explained the "Duties of Commission." The Commission voiced interest in better communication and sharing of information between the City Council and HPC.*

*Clark explained the railcar moving to Kingsburg is not a historically registered item.*

*Many supporters of the Proposed Historic Armenian Town District were in attendance. They voiced their concerns that the City Council had not moved on establishing Armenian Town as a Historical District. They talked about their histories and shared frustration. Many reported feeling forgotten & unheard. They asked that the Vartanian Home be a focus of the Proposed District and possibly a visitor center.*

*After public comment, the Commissioners encouraged the speakers. Chair Hatwig told the community to continue fighting. Simmons asked that the Hye Project be removed from the Council agenda. Rocha said he did not feel a proclamation would rectify the fact that the community did not feel heard.*

**VII-I**    [ID 22-1673](#)    Assign Subcommittees

1. Naming Subcommittee (Research & Background)
2. Roeding Park Sound Wall Subcommittee

9:04 P.M.

*1. Naming Subcommittee members include Commissioner Rocha and Vice Chair Sponsler.*

*2. Roeding Park Sound Wall Subcommittee will use the Architectural Subcommittee (Chair Hatwig and Commissioner Halajian).*

**VII-J**    [ID 22-1641](#)

UPDATE on Regular Monthly Topics:

1. Staff Updates
2. Architectural Subcommittee Updates
3. Economic Incentive Subcommittee Update
4. Plaque Design Subcommittee Update

9:07 P.M.

1. *The number of new requests for Commercial & Residential permits remained high for the month of October.*
2. *No Architectural Subcommittee meetings held in October.*
3. *We currently have 3 Mills Act Applicants pending. Contracts are expected to come to the Commission in November for review.*

### **VIII. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

N/A

### **IX. UNSCHEDULED ITEMS**

#### **IX. - A. Members of the Commission**

9:10 P.M.

*Vice Chair Sponsler attended a Historic Preservation training in Pasadena on ADU guidelines. He also reported drafting a letter requesting to add Pop Laval's home to the local registry*

#### **IX. - B. Staff**

N/A

#### **IX. - C. General Public**

9:12 P.M.

*Brett Rushing stressed the importance of having a Subcommittee meeting for the Roeding Park Sound Wall as soon as possible due to the tight timeline.*

### **X. NEXT MEETING**

*November 28, 2022.*

### **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

*Meeting adjourned at 9:14 P.M.*