

# City of Fresno

*City Hall  
2600 Fresno Street  
Fresno, CA 93721*



## Meeting Minutes - Final

**Monday, December 18, 2023**

**6:00 PM**

**Regular Meeting**

**In Person and/or Electronic  
City Hall, Room 2165**

## **Historic Preservation Commission**

***Chair - Jason Hatwig***

***Vice Chair - James Sponsler***

***Commissioner - Paul Halajian***

***Commissioner - Don Simmons***

***Commissioner - Julie Federico***

***Commissioner - Elizabeth Laval***

***Commissioner - Sarah E. Johnston***

***Staff:***

***Jennifer Clark, Director; Lisha Chen, Historic Preservation Specialist;***

***Janice Monroe, M.A. II; Myrna Rivas, Administrative Clerk***

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

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – 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. Public participation during Fresno City Historic Preservation Commission meetings is always encouraged and can occur in one of the two following ways:**

**1. Participate In Person: Room 2165, City Hall, 2nd Floor, 2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93721**

**a. To speak during a Commission meeting in person: You may approach the speaker podium upon the Chair’s call for public comment.**

**2. Participate Remotely via Zoom using the following link:**

**[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_cAUGIBe2SYygn3isiCuy4w](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_cAUGIBe2SYygn3isiCuy4w)**

**a. The above link will allow you to register in advance for remote participation in the meeting via the Zoom platform. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing additional details about joining the meeting.**

**b. To speak during a Commission meeting while attending remotely in the Zoom application, click on the icon labeled “Participants” at the bottom of the screen. Then select “Raise Hand” at the bottom of the Participants window. Your digital hand will now be raised. You will be asked to “unmute” when your name is called to speak. You will not be visible via video and there will be no opportunity to share your screen.**

**All public speakers will have up to 3 minutes to address the Commission pursuant to Rule No. 13 of the Historic Preservation Commission Bylaws of the City of Fresno (available in the City Clerk’s Office).**

**VIEWING PLANNING MEETINGS (non-participatory) – For your convenience, there are ways to view Historic Preservation Commission meetings live:**

**1. Community Media Access Collaborative website: <https://cmac.tv/>**

**2. Cable Television: Comcast Channel 96 and AT&T Channel 99**

**Should any of these viewing methods listed above experience technical difficulties, the Commission meeting will continue uninterrupted. Commission meetings will only be paused to address verifiable technical difficulties for all users participating via Zoom or in the Chambers.**

**The City of Fresno’s goal is to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Anyone requiring reasonable ADA accommodations, including sign language interpreters, or other reasonable accommodations such as language translation,**

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should contact the office of the City Clerk at (559) 621-7650 or [clerk@fresno.gov](mailto:clerk@fresno.gov). To help ensure availability of these services, you are advised to make your request a minimum of 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

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

*At 6:00 P.M. Chair Hatwig called the meeting to order.*

*Also present were Jennifer Clark, Dr. Lisha Chen, Janice Monroe and Myrna Rivas.*

**Present** 6 - Vice Chair James W Sponsler, Chair Jason Hatwig, Commissioner Paul Halajian, Commissioner Don Simmons, Commissioner Julie Federico, and Commissioner Sarah Johnston

**Absent** 1 - Commissioner Elizabeth Laval

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

*Chair Hatwig read the procedures aloud at 6:01 P.M..*

## **III. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES**

*6:02 P.M.*

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

**Aye:** 6 - Vice Chair Sponsler, Chair Hatwig, Commissioner Halajian, Commissioner Simmons, Commissioner Federico and Commissioner Johnston

**Absent:** 1 - Commissioner Laval

**III-A** [ID 23-1761](#) September 25, 2023 Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes

**III-B** [ID 23-1771](#) October 23, 2023 Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

**III-C** [ID 23-1805](#) November 27, 2023 Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes.

## **IV. APPROVE AGENDA**

*6:03 P.M.*

**On motion of Commissioner Halajian, seconded by Commissioner Federico, that the above Agenda be APPROVED. The motion carried**

by the following vote:

**Aye:** 6 - Vice Chair Sponsler, Chair Hatwig, Commissioner Halajian, Commissioner Simmons, Commissioner Federico and Commissioner Johnston

**Absent:** 1 - Commissioner Laval

## **V. CONSENT CALENDAR**

N/A

## **VI. CONTINUED MATTERS**

**VI-A**    [ID 23-1789](#)    CONTINUED FROM November 27, 2023

Consideration of the removal of the Historic Dale Bros. Coffee Can Sign (HP#247), located on the Benham Ice Cream Company building (HP# 248) at APN 46620511 (including but not limited to 1420 H St.).

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) take one of 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:** Request to donate the Sign to the Fresno County Historical Museum with the condition that the applicant develop a preservation plan including but not limited to the relocation of the resource, the restoration of the resource, and the ongoing preservation of the resource along with the written approval of the Fresno County Historical Museum for the placement of the resource.

Or:

2. **DENY:** Request to donate the Sign to the Fresno County Historical Museum.

6:03 P.M.

*Commissioners Halajian and Sponsler recused themselves from this item.*

*Director Clark introduced the item with a welcome to applicants JP Maroot,*

*property owner and his legal representative, Todd Wynkoop. Clark gave a brief introduction of their request to remove the sign and the options before the Commission.*

*Commissioner Johnston said that relocating the historic sign to the fairgrounds would affect the historic significance. The Commissioners had a lengthy discussion regarding the potential 3 options; take the sign down and to donate it to the Museum, take the sign down and replace the logo with Maroot's company logo, take the sign down and repair the original logo on one half and Maroot's company logo on the other half all options requiring the sign be taken down for repair as Maroot explained that it would be too costly and dangerous to repair in place.*

*Maroot reported having insurance problems with the sign in its current condition. He requested permission to remove the sign. to either donate to the Fresno County Historical Museum or inspect, repair and rebrand the sign with the logo of his company.*

*Wynkoop questioned the idea of preserving the sign because the sign is not legible.*

*A member of the public spoke in favor of relocating the sign to the fairgrounds.*

*Simmons proposed a Class 31 exemption motion, giving the applicant a chance to take the sign down and review possibilities, however Simmons was concerned the Fresno County Historical Museum had not agreed to take over the financial burden and ownership of the sign and would need to have a prepared plan in place before starting the renovation.*

*After a lengthy discussion on various options with the applicant, the applicant chose to withdraw the request to remove the sign, stating they would return when/if they had a new proposal to present. Hatwig then told the applicants he appreciated that they took the time to come to the meeting.*

## **VII. COMMISSION ITEMS**

**VII-A** [ID 23-678](#) Consideration of approval of requests by property owners to enter into Mills Act historical property contracts pursuant to FMC 12-1706:

1. The Ralph & Jenny Watson Home (HP# 284) located at 3537 E Huntington Blvd, in the Huntington Boulevard District.
2. The Ed and Chrissie Riggins Home located at 655 East Pine Avenue, in the Wilson Island District.

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. Staff recommends that the Commission hold a public hearing and authorize the Director of Development to enter into a Historical Property Contract for the subject properties pursuant to FMC 12-1706.

7:12 P.M.

*AT 7:10 P.M. HPC meeting paused due to technical difficulties and restarted at 7:13 P.M.*

*Dr. Chen introduced the 2023 Mills Act Applicants.*

*Chen reported that three properties initially applied, however 1 rescinded. HP #284 located at 3537 E. Huntington Blvd., and 655 E. Pine Ave in the Wilson Island District.*

*Elliot Balch, property owner at 655 E Pine Ave., has lived in home for 2 years. He spoke of work he has done recently to his home. He reported investing over \$175,000, and thanked the Commission for their consideration.*

*Edward Medrano, property owner at 3537 E Huntington Blvd., He reported that the 2009 Calendar included a rendering of his home. He talked about restoring his home back to the mansion of the 1920's.*

*Simmons added that Mr. Balch did some of the early work regarding the Mills Act and that it is good to see him benefiting from it and also happy to see a home from the Huntington Blvd area benefiting as well.*

*No public comments were made.*

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

**Aye:** 6 - Vice Chair Sponsler, Chair Hatwig, Commissioner Halajian, Commissioner Simmons, Commissioner Federico and Commissioner Johnston

**Absent:** 1 - Commissioner Laval

- VII-B** [ID 23-1277](#) Hearing to consider and make findings on the request to reframe garage doors, replace fence, add new sign, and repave parking lot of the Twining Laboratories (HP # 58), located at 2527 Fresno St.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **ADOPT** a finding of Categorical Exemption pursuant to Sections 15331/Class 31 of the California Environmental Quality Act guidelines.
2. **APPROVE:**
  - a. Request to install new signage on the Northeast façade with the condition that the design and installation of the sign meet the National Park Service requirements. Besides, the façade needs to be fully documented before any installation work.
  - b. Request to replace the current chain link fence and repave parking lot with the condition that the new fencing and parking pavement are unobtrusive and compatible with the historic character of the setting. Besides, the site needs to be fully documented before any construction work.
  - c. Request to reframe the garage door and add an additional entrance with the condition that entrances are compatible in size and scale or detailing with the historical building. Besides, the additional garage needs to be fully documented before any construction work.

Or:

2. **DENY:** Request to install new signage, request to replace the current chain link fence and repave parking lot, or request to reframe the garage door and add an additional entrance

7:24 P.M.

*Hatwig recused himself from this item.*



*Raul Martinez, (applicant) was present for questions and discussion.*

*Simmons stepped outside the room at 7:32 and reenters at 7:34.*

*Chen gave a brief description and history of the Twining Laboratories.*

*Martinez, presented photos and renderings of the proposed projects.*

*There were no public comments.*

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

**Aye:** 6 - Vice Chair Sponsler, Chair Hatwig, Commissioner Halajian, Commissioner Simmons, Commissioner Federico and Commissioner Johnston

**Absent:** 1 - Commissioner Laval

**VII-C**   [ID 23-60](#)   Consultation regarding Development Permit application P23-01976 located at 1470 E Bulldog Lane.

*7:44 P.M.*

*Hatwig has rejoined the meeting. The applicant for P23-01976 was not in attendance. Hatwig tabled this item.*

*Clark continued to next meeting on January 22, 2024.*

**VII-D**   [ID 23-237](#)   Discussion regarding site of start of Fresno and San Francisco Mail Route

*7:43 P.M.*

*Vice Chair Sponsler presented an item for future designation of a site, the Fresno and San Francisco Bicycle Mail Route. Sponsler stated this item falls under Criteria 1, as an event.*

*Hatwig and Halajian found this information fascinating. Simmons asked if this information could be something the State or National Registers would*

*be interested in.*

- VII-E [ID 23-1790](#) UPDATE REGARDING HISTORIC "G" SIGN LOCATED AT OLD GUARANTEE BUILDING (HP#167), LOCATED AT 1177 FULTON MALL.

*8:00 P.M.*

*Christine Markitarian was present to provide an update on the G Sign. She wanted clarity on the decision to deny the Demolition Permit, she felt that she had discussed all elements in the removal of the G sign, however after discussion she acknowledged the misunderstanding. Markitarian reported at last months meeting that the G sign would be removed, reengineered and brought back up. however, the permit was to take down the sign and relocate it to the Fresno County Historical Museum and the Fairgrounds. Markitarian added that a replica would replace the G sign of the same size and shape.*

*We needed a more clarified plan, Hatwig added. The Commission discussed being uncomfortable with not having a plan in place. Sponsler added that at some point there is going to be a tipping point with the Museum, and struggle for the Museum to be able to keep up with all these signs.*

*Markitarian, this sign does not look safe and is a safety issue with this sign right now.*

*Simmons asked who is responsible of the sign after it is taken down.*

*Simmons requested Staff consult with the Museum regarding the signs and their policy on maintenance and their capacity and intentions. We need to make sure these signs are accessible to the public. We don't want to restrict the public's access*

*Markitarian requests guidance from the Commission about what to do.*

*Halajian adds, that the G Sign could be an awesome exhibit for the Fair.*

*Staff reported that the Demolition Permit was rejected, after this clarification*

*the permit will be approved tomorrow morning.*

**VII-F** [ID 23-1791](#) UPDATE ON REGULAR MONTHLY TOPICS:

1. Staff Updates
2. Architectural Review Subcommittee Update
3. Economic Incentive Subcommittee Update
4. Plaque & Naming Subcommittee Update
5. Historic Preservation Month Subcommittee Update

9:25 P.M.

*Chen reported that she and Eric Frampton, (Professional Engineer) visited the Adobe Brewer building to confirm that the building is tarped and is protected from the elements and fenced. She explained the tarp situation and that there was no fence.*

*Halajian voiced concern with the heavy weight of the plastic on top of the already dilapidated building. He said that perhaps the property owner is using general laborers to do the work instead of restoration specialists.*

*Hatwig said he hopes to meet with the owner within the next month to help provide solutions.*

*Architectural review committee met several times this past month discussing various other projects such as signs and demolition projects.*

*Staff reported that the two Mills Act Contracts approved tonight would be filed with the County within the week.*

*Historic Preservation Month Committee, as an Ad Hoc Committee, they will reassign members next month.*

**VIII. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

N/A

**IX. UNSCHEDULED ITEMS**

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

9:37 P.M.

*Sponsler reported progress with the Historic Highway 99 project and has requested it be put on the agenda in January.*

*Simmons reported that Sally Caglia, who was very involved in historic preservation, recently passed away. He shared a recipe of hers with the Commissioners. He also shared that the California Preservation Foundation is conducting open house for Historic Preservation Month. The last day to apply is December 19, 2023.*

**IX. - B. Staff**

*9:45 P.M.*

*Clark announced that the Disclosure Subcommittee met and Historic Preservation Language will be added to the Fresno Municipal Code. We will be meeting with the Fresno Association of Realtors prior to bring the item to the Commission. She also announced that the Commission meetings will start taking place in Council Chambers. Personnel Badges will be updated soon.*

**IX. - C. General Public**

*9:45 P.M.*

*A member of the public presented information on the Fresno County Historical Museum at the Fresno Fairgrounds, she also informed the Commission that the museum is open on the third Saturday of the month or by appointment. She also shared a copy of the obituary for Sally Caglia found in the Fresno Bee.*

**X. NEXT MEETING**

*Chair Hatwig announced the next HPC meeting is on 1/22/24*

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

*Chair Hatwig adjourned the meeting at 9:50 P.M.*