

City of Fresno

*City Hall
2600 Fresno Street
Fresno, CA 93721*



Meeting Minutes - Draft

Monday, March 23, 2026

6:00 PM

Regular Meeting

City Hall, Council Chambers

Historic Preservation Commission

Chair - James Sponsler

Vice Chair - Jason Hatwig

Commissioner - Paul Halajian

Commissioner - Julie Federico

Commissioner - Elizabeth Laval

Commissioner - Sarah E. Johnston

Commissioner - Ryan Eddings

Staff:

Jennifer Clark, Director; Ashley Atkinson, Assistant Director

THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION WELCOMES YOU TO COUNCIL CHAMBERS, LOCATED IN CITY HALL, 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 by attending a meeting in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 2nd Floor, 2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93721. When called to speak during a meeting, you may approach the speaker podium upon the Chair's call for additional public comment.

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 HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION 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**
- 3. Participate Remotely via Zoom using the following link:**

https://fresno.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_BHr_6TJZR72DixRQkVVhog

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.

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, should contact the office of the City Clerk at (559) 621-7650 or 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

Chair Sponsler called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Also present were Jennifer Clark, Ashley Atkinson, Kari Camino, Jayda Symonds and Darcy Brown (CAO).

Present 6 - Chair James W Sponsler, Vice Chair Jason Hatwig, Commissioner Paul Halajian, Commissioner Elizabeth Laval, Commissioner Sarah Johnston, and Commissioner Ryan Eddings

Absent 1 - Commissioner Julie Federico

II. PROCEDURES

6:02 p.m.

Chair Sponsler read the Procedures aloud.

III. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES

6:03 p.m.

Camino reported no changes to the Meeting Minutes.

On motion of Commissioner Laval, seconded by Commissioner Johnston, the MEETING MINUTES were APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Chair Sponsler, Vice Chair Hatwig, Commissioner Halajian, Commissioner Laval, Commissioner Johnston and Commissioner Eddings

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Federico

III-A [ID 26-373](#) February 23, 2026 Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

IV. APPROVE AGENDA

6:03 p.m.

Camino reported no changes to the Agenda.

On motion of Vice Chair Hatwig, seconded by Commissioner Johnston, the AGENDA was APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Chair Sponsler, Vice Chair Hatwig, Commissioner Halajian, Commissioner Laval, Commissioner Johnston and Commissioner Eddings

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Federico

V. CONSENT CALENDAR

None

VI. CONTINUED MATTERS

VI-A [ID 26-315](#) **CONTINUED FROM FEBRUARY 23, 2026**

Hearing to consider eligibility for listing on the Local Register of Historic Resources, the property located at 755 E Shaw Ave (Assessor Parcel Number: 427-030-37)

6:04 p.m.

Prior to the staff presentation, Commissioners provided disclosures regarding any ex parte communications received from representatives of the applicant since the previous meeting. None of the Commissioners felt that communications from the applicant and its representatives caused them to be biased.

Atkinson provided a brief overview of the continued hearing regarding the eligibility of the property at 755 East Shaw Avenue, for listing on the Local Register of Historic Resources. She reiterated that the building is a separate anchor structure within Fashion Fair Mall and that a demolition application has been submitted for this building alone. Although the property is not currently designated and is not located within a historic district, its 1970 construction date makes it subject to evaluation under applicable criteria. She summarized key findings from the newly completed historic resource evaluation, noting that while the building was designed by Charles Luckman and Associates, evidence indicates Charles Luckman was not directly involved in its design. The evaluation identified several exterior modifications over time, including remodeled entrances and alterations to window walls, and concluded that the building is not a noteworthy example of late modern architecture, nor is it individually associated with significant events or persons. Based on these findings, the report determined that the building does not appear eligible for listing on the local or state registers and does not qualify as a historic resource under CEQA.

Andy Greenwood, Vice President of Development for Macerich, addressed the Commission and noted that the applicant team had further reviewed Commissioner comments from the prior meeting and worked with Page & Turnbull to conduct additional research and finalize the historic resource evaluation. He also addressed questions raised previously regarding potential reuse of the building, explaining that while short-term tenants may

temporarily occupy the space, the configuration and multi-story layout present significant challenges in securing long-term anchor tenants. He emphasized that the second and third floors have remained vacant for years and that vacant anchor buildings are a widespread issue in malls nationwide. He requested that the Commission determine that the building is not eligible for historic designation based on the findings of the evaluation and stated that he and representatives from Dick's Sporting Goods were available to answer questions.

Christina Dikas Brobst, principal at Page & Turnbull, presented updated findings from the historic resource evaluation for the former Forever 21 building at Fashion Fair Mall. The team conducted additional research, including reviewing Charles Luckman's autobiography and analyzing Fresno buildings constructed between 1965 and 1980. She summarized the building's characteristics, noted several alterations, and provided an overview of the area's postwar suburban development and the mall's role in regional retail trends. The building was identified as an example of late modernism but not a distinctive or important one, especially compared with stronger local examples. Although designed by Charles Luckman and Associates, it followed a standardized model used for multiple Broadway Hale stores, and the project architect, Richard McKnew is not considered a master architect. Consistent with evaluation criteria, the building was found not significant under events, persons, architecture, or information potential.

No public comment was given.

Commissioners asked whether other similar Charles Luckman and Associates department stores had ever been considered for historic listing. Questions were raised about why the evaluation did not examine the entire Fashion Fair Mall as a potential historic district, and Dikas Brobst explained that the study's scope was limited to the individual parcel. Several Commissioners expressed concern about cultural significance, community memory, and whether the building's association with Luckman carried weight, while others emphasized that it was a standardized design and not architecturally distinguished compared with other local late-modern buildings. The Commission debated local significance, architectural merit,

cultural context, evolving mall conditions, reuse challenges, and the requirements for determining eligibility under CEQA.

Johnston made a motion to find the building eligible and did not receive a second motion. A subsequent motion determining that the property is not eligible for listing on the Local, State, or National Registers was made by Chair Sponsler, seconded by Commissioner Laval, and approved by a vote of 5–1.

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

Aye: 5 - Chair Sponsler, Vice Chair Hatwig, Commissioner Halajian, Commissioner Laval and Commissioner Eddings

No: 1 - Commissioner Johnston

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Federico

VII. COMMISSION ITEMS

VII-A [ID 26-316](#) Review and Adopt the City of Fresno’s CLG 2024-2025 Annual Report pursuant to FMC 12-1606(b)(16).

7:15 p.m.

Clark commended Staff, for their extensive work preparing the report following delays in the release of the required state form. Atkinson reported that the primary content of the report is included in the combined attachments under Exhibit B and noted that the reporting period runs from October to September, resulting in the inclusion of activities from the prior year, such as the designation of three new local landmarks. She indicated there were no additional items of significance to highlight but welcomed questions from the Commission.

No public comment was received.

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

Aye: 6 - Chair Sponsler, Vice Chair Hatwig, Commissioner Halajian,
Commissioner Laval, Commissioner Johnston and
Commissioner Eddings

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Federico

VII-B [ID 26-317](#)

Update on Regular Monthly Topics:

1. Staff Updates
2. Subcommittee Updates

7:18 p.m.

Atkinson provided a brief update on the Jose Garcia Brewer Adobe building. She reported that, as noted the previous month, staff requested that the property owner schedule a meeting with an architect and engineer to discuss preparation of an acceptable demolition plan; however, no response has been received despite multiple attempts over several weeks. Staff will now meet internally with the Code Enforcement team and the City Attorney's Office to determine next steps regarding demolition or preservation of the required portions of the structure. Atkinson also summarized ongoing activity for the year, noting continued review and approval of planning entitlements and building permits for structures 50 years and older, with a high volume in January and a slight decrease in February. She reported that staff has assumed responsibility for concurring with Section 106 reviews prepared by the City's consultant and has completed several in recent months. There is no new activity in the Mills Act program, though a reminder letter to eligible historic resources will be issued within the next week. She also noted no new activity in the mitigation program, as staff is awaiting completion of a few projects that will utilize remaining funds for the fiscal year.

Commissioner Halajian gave a brief update on the Architectural Review Subcommittee.

Vice Chair Hatwig gave a brief update on the Municipal Code Subcommittee.

Chair Sponsler provided a brief update on the Historic Preservation Month Subcommittee and informed the Commission that the calendar of events is expected to be ready for distribution by the end of the week.

VIII. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

7:24 p.m.

Chair Sponsler acknowledged the attendance of Troop 60, noting that the scouts were present as part of their Citizenship in the Community merit badge requirement to attend a public meeting. He also mentioned that one of the scouts in uniform was his daughter and expressed appreciation for the troop's participation.

IX. UNSCHEDULED ITEMS

7:26 p.m.

IX. - A. Members of the Commission

None

IX. - B. Staff

None

IX. - C. General Public

A member of the public provided updates regarding May Historic Preservation Month activities and distributed an invitation to the May 28 event at the Warnor's Theatre, highlighting the building's architectural significance and the accompanying film and organ concert. She encouraged sharing the event with youth groups to promote appreciation for historic preservation. She also referenced additional library programs scheduled throughout the month and requested that notable preserved features, such as the lantern and the arch planned for installation at H and Mariposa, be included on the updated calendar, as they offer easily accessible opportunities for the public to view and appreciate preserved historic elements.

X. NEXT MEETING

April 27, 2026

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Sponsler adjourned the meeting at 7:31 p.m.