

City of Fresno

*City Hall
2600 Fresno Street
Fresno, CA 93721*



Meeting Minutes - Draft

Monday, March 25, 2024

6:00 PM

Regular Meeting

**In Person and/or Electronic
City Hall, Council Chambers**

Historic Preservation Commission

Chair - James Sponsler

Vice Chair - Jason Hatwig

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 COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 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: Council Chambers, 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

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 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

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

Meeting was called to order by Chair Sponsler at 6:00 P.M.

Jennifer Clark, Lisha Chen and Janice Monroe were also present.

Present 6 - Chair James W Sponsler, Commissioner Paul Halajian, Commissioner Don Simmons, Commissioner Julie Federico, Commissioner Elizabeth Laval, and Commissioner Sarah Johnston

Absent 1 - Vice Chair Jason Hatwig

II. PROCEDURES - PROCEDIMIENTOS - KEV SAB LAJ

6:00 PM

Procedures were read aloud by Chair Sponsler.

III. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES

III-A [ID 24-427](#) January 22, 2024 Historic Preservation Meeting Minutes

6:02 PM

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

Aye: 6 - Chair Sponsler, Commissioner Halajian, Commissioner Simmons, Commissioner Federico, Commissioner Laval and Commissioner Johnston

Absent: 1 - Vice Chair Hatwig

IV. APPROVE AGENDA

6:03 PM

On motion of Commissioner Simmons, seconded by Commissioner Laval, that the AGENDA be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Chair Sponsler, Commissioner Halajian, Commissioner Simmons, Commissioner Federico, Commissioner Laval and Commissioner Johnston

Absent: 1 - Vice Chair Hatwig

V. CONSENT CALENDAR

N/A

VI. CONTINUED MATTERS

N/A

VII. COMMISSION ITEMS

VII-A [ID 24-377](#) Workshop on High Speed Rail station area facilities and impact on Historic Resources

6:04 PM

Clark reported that the Commission requested information from the High Speed Rail Station, specifically the Fresno Historic Facility.

Margaret Cederoth, (High Speed Rail Authority HSRA) and Melissa Gaudreau, presented a brief update on the program. Gaudreau presented specifically on the Historic Fresno Passenger Depot. The pedestrian bridge will be open even when the station is closed. There are plans to build 1 acre Plaza's with access to parking and vehicle charging. The station is intentionally a bridge for both sides of the tracks Fresno.

The Historic Station Facility is an area of interest. In July 2023, a 20 million dollar Federal Raise Grant was awarded to do the construction of seismic retrofits, and ADA compliant retrofits.

Of the 165,000 sq ft, 80,000 are for the train platform, reported Cederoth.

The Commissioners explained that Chinatown has historically been shortchanged as an attraction. They asked questions about the size of and what attractions will bring people to the plazas. They asked when access to Chinatown will be improved, Toni Tonoko,(HSRA) shared that plans are to open Chinatown and Tulare Street in the Fall 2024.

Gaudreau shared plans on the Historic Fresno Station. Period of

significance range is 1889 to 1932. The investigative work began in 2022. We are currently working on a basis of design. The site and buildings have been surveyed, determining which buildings are of historic significance.

The Commissioners and Staff thanked the HSRA for the presentation.

- VII-B** [ID 24-299](#) Staff Update of the revised Resolution to include 3504 E Huntington Blvd as a contributor to the Huntington Boulevard Historic District

6:43 PM

Chen received a request from the new property owner at 3504 E. Huntington Blvd. to include the property to the Historic District of Huntington Blvd. The property has not undergone any changes that interfere with its historic integrity and therefore approves this request. Next steps for Chen will be to make an amendment to the original Resolution adding 3504 E Huntington Blvd. to the Local Historic Registry.

The Commissioners were thrilled to add it to the Registry.

The original exhibits on the agenda incorrectly referred to the properties address as 3045 E Huntington, which is incorrect. The property is at 3504 E Huntington Blvd.

There was no public comment

- VII-C** [ID 24-219](#) Update regarding site of start of Fresno and San Francisco Mail Route

6:49 PM

Sponsler presented an update on the Fresno and San Francisco Mail Route. He stated that a monument or a plaque will be prepared for a flowerbed near the Chuckchansi Park. The monument or plaque will not interfere with the Park in any way. Halajian asked Sponsler what his "vision" was for the designation of the route is. Sponsler stated that he will take the Historic Trail to the State Registry.

- VII-D** [ID 24-182](#) Monthly update regarding historic "G" sign located at old Guarantee building (HP#167), located at 1177 Fulton Street.

6:54 PM

Craig Speece from State Center Community College District presented an update on the "G" sign. He reported that the sign is down. They were able to cut the sign down, but left internal components in place, hoping to utilize them when installing the new sign. Renderings of the new sign will be presented at April's Historic Preservation Meeting.

- VII-E** [ID 24-426](#) Monthly update on the Jose Garcia Brewer Adobe Building (HP #227 located at 5901 W. Shaw (APN 51004038).

6:58 PM

Chen reported that the property owner of the Jose Garcia Adobe Brewer, Mazen Al-hindi was unavailable to attend the nights meeting. However, in February, Clark, Staff, Chen and Al-hindi met at City Hall. At this meeting Al-hindi stated that preserving the site was a technical and economic hardship and he asked for help. A list of professional contractors and potential developer was given to Al-hindi.

In Mid-March Al-hindi stated that two professionals responded with two options. One option was to take apart the walls brick by brick and rebuild them. The second option was to encase the walls with plywood to make them stable during demolition. Neither option guaranteed success and require professional engineer and architects. Al-hindi was still concerned with the financial hardship.

Johnston suggested, HABS HAER historic documentation of the building could be a last ditch effort in salvaging the existence of the Brewer Adobe.

The Commissioners discussed the options, though ultimately they want to remind Al-hindi what he agreed to when he asked for approval to build the apartments, that was to maintain those walls.

- VII-F** [ID 24-183](#)

UPDATE on Regular Monthly Topics:

1. Staff Updates
2. Architectural Subcommittee Updates
3. Economic Incentive Subcommittee Update

4. Plaque Design Subcommittee Update
5. Historic Preservation Month Subcommittee
6. Property Disclosures Subcommittee Update

7:08 PM

Chen reported there are three items she would like to discuss with the Commission. The adaptive reuse of the Helm building was brought to her attention. No substantial adverse changes to the exterior of the Helm Building, videos of the interior were received and there are substantial interior defining features and we have requested for them to be preserved.

The PARCS department is proposing some work for Camp Fresno. The three staff cabins of Camp Fresno were evaluated and found not eligible for listing.

Fresno Air traffic relocation and reconstruction of the parking lot. The Airport is proposing to demolish the existing facility, though the tower retains a high level of historic integrity and meets the criteria for listing criteria C or 3 based on the work of an international style of architecture Master Architect Allen Y. Lew. The Tower may be eligible to become a historical resource.

Clark emphasized to the Commission that time is of the essence and their comments on what needs to be studied is due on April 22, 2024, the Commissioners next HPC meeting date. A link will be mailed to the Commissioners so that they can express their concerns.

Chen gave an update on the Mitigation applications. There are 3 that have been approved and 1 is pending. Also, Staff will begin scheduling site visits for Mills Act Recipients, the newest recipients as well as 5 year anniversary recipients.

Sponsler and the Historic Preservation Month Subcommittee have met twice to begin the planning for the month. They reported a kickoff event for May 2nd, trying to give it more emphasis than last year. Sponsler also explained that he is hoping to have open houses with QR codes that will give the visitor more detailed information about the houses.

Laval reported on the kick off plans for the month, May 2nd. It is going to be the home of the Fresno City and County Historical Archive. Arthrop Night will be incorporated with it. The bar will be open and it will be a fun event. This will be the formal archive site for the Historical Society.

Laval ask the Commissioners to participate in planning and to encourage ideas.

Halajian's renovation of the Sun Stereo Building on Fulton, has been submitted for a design award and is willing to open it up for the Open House event.

Sponsler would like all ideas to be sent to Monroe.

Laval would ask the City Staff to draft a press release to announce the May 2nd kick off event information.

Sponsler shared that Hatwig is working on a clone of a beer made by Bohemian Lager that was made by Fresno Brewing Company. The beer will be available for the month of May.

Sponsler agreed to be the tour guide for the May 18th, Bike through History.

Clark requested final needs be submitted so Staff can be of assistance. Sponsler will get a calendar to Staff before mid-April.

VIII. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

7:26 PM

Sponsler commented that the conversations had with the Realtors Association have resulted in Historic Properties for sale are being appropriately identified on the MLS as historic.

IX. UNSCHEDULED ITEMS

n/a

IX. - A. Members of the Commission

N/A

IX. - B. Staff

N/A

IX. - C. General Public

7:29 PM

A member of the public suggested that since the kick off event will be at the Arthrop, the Commission should showcase Pat Hunter paintings. She asked what a Historic District Designation does for the District, and stated that Chinatown would like to be a designated Historic District and utilize the opportunities that status would grant them.

On May 25, there will be a Veterans Memorial Cleanup 1 day event and plant flags on site for Memorial Day.

X. NEXT MEETING

Chair Sponsler announced the next Historic Preservation Meeting will take place on April 22, 2024 in Chambers.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Sponsler adjourned the meeting at 7:31 PM.