



# Town of Mesilla, New Mexico

**THE PLANNING, ZONING AND HISTORICAL APPROPRIATENESS COMMISSION  
(PZHAC) WILL BE HAVING A WORK SESSION AT THE MESILLA TOWN HALL,  
2231 AVENIDA DE MESILLA.  
TUESDAY-JANUARY 20, 2026, AT 5PM  
(MINUTES)**

## **COMMISSIONERS**

Chair – Eric Walkinshaw  
Vice Chair – Eric Gallegos  
Secretary – Lori Miller  
Commissioner – RoseMary Alvillar  
Commissioner – Martha Mulvihill  
Alt. Commissioner – Stevie Paz  
Alt. Commissioner – Mary Lucero

## **STAFF**

Community/Economic Director (CED) – Eddie Salazar  
Historic Preservation Specialist (HPS) – Liana Aguirre  
N.M. Construction Industries Division (CID) – Thomas Maese

## **PUBLIC**

Mary H Ratje  
Trina Witter

**HISTORIC PRESERVATIOND WORK SESSION REGARDING CLG REQUIREMENT  
BY CREATING OUR OWN FORMAL LOCAL HISTORIC REGISTRY. STEPS TO DO  
SO, INCLUDING HOLDING HEARINGS FOR NOMINATIONS.  
WILL REVIEW 3 NOMINATIONS BEING SUBMITTED BY MESILLA HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION SPECIALIST.**

*Eric Walkinshaw*

All right. Well, we're here for Tuesday, January 20th. This is the Planning and Historical Commission for the Historic Preservation work session. Thank you.

*HPS Aguirre*

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. So what I really want to get out today is that, in order to—and it's not a requisite of CLG—we can actually have our historic register separately, independent of CLG, but it gives us kind of added notice. Additionally, it lets us come in. That was our first question.

Yeah, the benefits—let me start with that. I think that's something you do. What does it mean for me, for the town? Number one, there's an additional benefit as the town wants to incorporate incentives for people to nominate their own properties. In addition to being on the National Register, where you get a tax credit, we also want to be able to perhaps do a reduction in our local property taxes, waivers of use, perhaps some special-use permits, especially for properties mainly outside of the historic district. That is something I am looking at—significant historic properties outside of our historic district.

Another benefit is historic preservation itself. Transferable development programs allow us to work around what it means and how it can benefit the applicant. In addition, we're trying to protect the residents and the buildings themselves as historic resources.

This is very political and personal. People feel like, “This is my home. This is my property. I can do what I want.” But preservation takes precedence over that. I believe the two top priorities are preservation and fire code. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 establishes that what we have from the past is our prized possession. Without this, we can't move forward. Without the past, we can't move forward.

So my main reason for this workshop is that my intent is to nominate buildings to our own register, which I'm calling the Town of Mesilla Cultural and Historic Register. These can include mills, farms, or anything that holds true significance. That gin mill, for example, could absolutely be on the local register, though not on the national one. I was revising our historic district boundaries. It really encompasses the plaza and surrounding buildings, but there's so much more—our agricultural history, how the town was built through farming. So my discussion today is about how we can locally nominate these properties.

I gave you all a copy of the forms. We'll also have hard copies at Town Hall. I tried making a fillable PDF, but it became complicated. So I created a QR code that links to a Microsoft Form for local designation. It's a quick questionnaire, the same questions as the hard copy, just cleaner and faster. The only default is that I request people attach documents and send them to me with their application: photos, historical narratives, site plans, and any relevant documentation.

#### *Chair Walkinshaw*

I noticed you included “cultural” in the name. I spoke to Eric Liefeld this morning. Our historic district is also an arts and cultural district, and it includes farmland. That's part of the culture.

#### *HPS Aguirre*

I've also been looking into a Main Street program and a frontier program for funding. For example, a business on the plaza wanted to paint a mural on her historic building. However, once something like that is attached, it becomes part of the historic resource and must be maintained. So these designations matter.

The designation process starts with filling out the application, either hard copy or online. Documentation is required, including a narrative explaining the significance—historical, architectural, or cultural. After review, a notice is sent to the property owner, and a public hearing is held with 14 days' notice. The commission then makes a determination. We also need to adopt buildings already on the National Register into our local register. The national nominations are limited, often just a sentence. We need fuller narratives so we can tell the story of these properties and create pride in them.

Regarding owner consent: The town may designate historically significant properties regardless of owner consent, though owners can provide comments and appeal to the governing board. Lack of consent does not preclude designation if criteria are met.

This isn't about restricting interiors. It's about façades and design review. You can still make additions within guidelines. Adaptive reuse is encouraged—historic buildings can become museums, studios, community spaces, and more.

There are benefits. Through CLG, local nominations can open access to funding and tax incentives. My hope is to create a preservation fund. CLG funding comes from offshore oil revenues, with 10% allotted to the state and divided among CLGs.

The nomination steps are in our municipal code under Chapter 18.33. Applications must include documentation and a narrative. After review, notice is sent to the property owner and a hearing is held.

We looked at three example nominations. One is already on the National Register. Another is culturally significant but has had alterations. The third is outside the historic district—an 1890 adobe home on 10 acres tied to early farming history.

These stories are disappearing as people pass away. We need to document them now.

The work session is formally closed.

**THE PLANNING, ZONING AND HISTORICAL APPROPRIATENESS COMMISSION  
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Trina Witter  
Henry DiMatteo  
Bill Cook  
Janice Cook

*Eric Walkinshaw*

We'll go ahead and commence the Planning, Zoning, and Historical Appropriateness Commission meeting. It's 6:00 o'clock, Tuesday the 20th. We'll start with the Pledge of Allegiance. Will you join us?

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

**2. ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

*Eric Walkinshaw*

Next order of business is roll call. Mr. Salazar, if you could do roll call.

*CED Salazar*

Commissioner Gallegos, present.  
Commissioner Miller, present.  
Commissioner Alvillar, present.  
Commissioner Walkinshaw, present.  
Alt. Commissioner Paz, present.  
Alt. Commissioner Lucero, here.

Mr. Chair, you have quorum.

**3. COMMISSION'S RE-ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

*Eric Walkinshaw*

Now it's time for the commission—kind of déjà vu here—re-election of officers. Eddie, can you give us a brief explanation of why we're doing this again?

*CED Salazar*

It was brought to the Board of Trustees that there was concern about electing officers prematurely. They had mixed interpretations of the code. In my view, our process was initiated correctly, but one issue is that the mayor brings the commissioners' recommendations to the Board of Trustees for approval. If the mayor does not bring commissioners forward for approval, they won't be considered.

The title states that the mayor has the right to appoint commissioners with the approval of the Board of Trustees. The interpretation was that even if a term is up, it does not create a vacant seat if someone re-enlists. The Board of Trustees didn't feel that way, so to be fair and consistent, they decided to run it through re-approval to make sure nothing is missed or unfair to anyone after BOT consented.

In a nutshell, it's about timing and what constitutes a vacancy. They are going to work on clarifying the code and gave themselves 30 days to come up with a clearer version.

*Eric Walkinshaw*

Thank you. We'll go ahead and go through the nomination process again. According to Robert's Rules of Order, we'll do floor nominations. Let's start with secretary. Are there any nominations?

*Commissioner Alvillar*

I nominate Lori Miller for secretary.

*CED Salazar*

Commissioner Alvillar nominates Commissioner Miller for secretary. Any other nominations?

No.

*Commissioner Gallegos, yes.*

*Commissioner Miller, yes.*

*Commissioner Alvillar, yes.*

*Commissioner Mulvihill, no.*

Congratulations Secretary Miller

*Chair Walkinshaw*

Next position: vice chair. Nominations?

*Commissioner Miller*

I nominate Commissioner Gallegos.

*CED Salazar*

*Commissioner Miller, yes.*

*Commissioner Alvillar, yes.*

*Commissioner Walkinshaw, yes.*

*Commissioner Mulvihill, yes.*

Congratulations Vice-Chair Gallegos.

*Chair Walkinshaw*

Now nominations for Chair.

*Vice-Chair Gallegos*  
Nominate Eric Walkinshaw

*CED Salazar*

No other nominations.

Commissioner Gallegos, yes.  
Commissioner Miller, yes.  
Commissioner Alvillar, yes.  
Commissioner Mulvihill, no.

Congratulations, Mr. Chair Walkinshaw.

#### **4. CHANGES / APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*Commissioner Alvillar*  
Motion to approve the consent agenda.

*Commissioner Miller*  
Second.

*CED Salazar*  
First motion by Commissioner Alvillar, second by Commissioner Miller. Any discussion?  
No.

Vice Chair Gallegos, yes.  
Commissioner Miller, yes.  
Commissioner Alvillar, yes.  
Commissioner Mulvihill, yes.

Motion passes. 4-0

#### **5. PUBLIC INPUT**

*The public is invited to address the commission regarding items listed on the agenda as allowed by the chair. You can also email your comments to [clerktreasurer@mesillanm.gov](mailto:clerktreasurer@mesillanm.gov) at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting. All comments/questions need to be in a professional and respectful by EVERYONE while quorum is established. The Chairperson has the authority to determine when matters are distasteful and he/she will address them accordingly.*

*(No public comment)*

#### **6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

*\*Note: Items on the Consent Agenda, indicated by an asterisk (\*), will be voted on with one motion unless the commissioner requests that a specific item be removed for discussion.*

- a. **\*January 5, 2025, PZHAC Regular meeting minutes**

*Chair Walkinshaw*  
Next, approval of minutes for January 5, 2026.

*Commissioner Miller*

Motion to approve

*Commissioner Alvillar*  
Second the motion

*Commissioner Mulvihill*

Corrections: On page two, it should say “I read,” not “I wrote.” On item 11, “when the term ended” should be added. On page five, missing vote for Commissioner Mulvihill—she voted yes.

Vice Chair Gallegos, yes.  
Commissioner Miller, yes.  
Commissioner Alvillar, yes.  
Commissioner Mulvihill, yes.

Motion passes. 4-0

## 7. ACTION AND CONSIDERATION

- a. **ZONING CASE #062084** – 2905 Calle del Sur, submitted by Henry DiMatteo. Requesting approval to build an accessory pole barn on his property. ZONE: Rural Farm (RF).

*Vice-Chair Gallegos*  
Motion to approve zoning case 062084.

*Commissioner Alvillar*  
Second the motion to approve

*CED Salazar*

This is a request to build an accessory pole barn on an RF-zoned property. Construction began without a permit. The applicant was advised to stop and apply. The structure meets setback requirements. An investigation fee applies under town code. The applicant understands and will comply. Questions?

Discussion about investigation fee and permit costs.

Vice Chair Gallegos, yes.  
Commissioner Miller, yes.  
Commissioner Alvillar, yes.  
Commissioner Mulvihill, yes.

Motion passes. 4-0

- b. **ZONING CASE #062085** – 2872 Calle de San Albino, submitted by Jeffrery Buras. Requesting approval to put a prefabricated shed on property. ZONE: Historical Residential (HR).

*Commissioner Miller*  
Motion to approve.

*Commissioner Alvillar*  
Second the motion to approve.

Shed is 8x12, blue with gray trim, and no utilities. Applicant is willing to repaint to earth tone colors. Setbacks are compliant. Town code requires architectural similarity and earth tone colors.

Discussion focused on color compatibility and neighborhood character. Did not meet the design standards.

Vice Chair Gallegos, no.  
Commissioner Miller, no.  
Commissioner Alvillar, no.  
Commissioner Mulvihill, no.

Motion fails. 0-4. Applicant may resubmit with a different style or color.

- c. **BUSINESS CASE #1458** – 1705 Tierra de Mesilla, submitted by Cesar Huizar. Requesting approval to operate a restaurant. ZONE: Commercial (C).

*Vice-Chair Gallegos*  
Motion to approve.

*Commissioner Mulvihill*  
Second, the motion.

*CED Salazar*  
Business license application for El Parian de Mesilla. Alcohol application submitted to NM RLD; hearing scheduled. Parking fee of \$500 annually. Business plan and insurance submitted.

Questions about parking, drainage, signage, and EV chargers.

Vice Chair Gallegos, yes.  
Commissioner Miller, yes.  
Commissioner Alvillar, yes.  
Chair, yes.

Motion passes. 4-0

## **8. COMMISSIONERS / STAFF COMMENTS**

*Chair Walkinshaw*  
Now it is time for commissioner and staff comments. I thought you were there making noise. Do you want to say something? Oh, good.

*Alt. Commissioner Lucero*  
Oh, yeah—that we have... I'm confused about what happened with the shed section. Like, he wanted to change the motion—was it to change the color? I'm confused.

*Commissioner Mulvihill*  
No, we had a motion to go with it as is, and then we all voted no. So after we all voted no, we couldn't take another.

*Alt. Commissioner Lucero*  
Right. So it did not pass. I get that. But why wasn't he allowed to change it before you did the vote?

*Commissioner Mulvihill*  
Because he didn't want to change it before. He wanted to change it after we all voted.

My question—or my comment—is about the winery on Highway 28. You know, they have all that plastic shelter around the winery there. Were they supposed to get permission for that? Because that really doesn't look very tasteful.

And you know, if they're going to do it, then that's going to allow other people to do that too. So did codes go out and look at that, or is that within code? I looked it up. I didn't see anything in the code.

*CED Salazar*

The question is: do they need a permit? Because they don't have—Meline's actually wanted to do more of a structural-window enclosure. It's a little bit more structural. This is just a curtain.

Right now, if the commission feels that she needs to get a permit, then I'm on board with that. But again, I always put myself in the code department's shoes and say, okay, hey, you need to go get a permit for this. And they say, well, show me where it says I have to get one. So it's kind of debatable.

So if the commission feels that they need to get a permit, then I can request codes to go out there and talk to them and have them submit a permit.

*Commissioner Mulvihill*

My question was just like, you know, are we setting a precedent for other people just to come in and do that?

*CED Salazar*

So if they do come in and get a permit, what will be different? What changes? Do we require them not to put clear curtains, or would they have to enclose it more permanently? How would that work?

*Commissioner Miller*

Well, you're saying we don't have anything to prohibit them?

*CED Salazar*

No, I'm sorry. We don't have anything in the code to prohibit them—or allow them.

*Alt. Commissioner Lucero*

So does the way the structure looks matter?

*CED Salazar*

Yeah, there are different... it depends on the commission. I mean, if they feel like it needs to be brought up for a permit because it changes the appearance of the exterior of the building, then they need to come get a permit.

*Commissioner Alvillar*

So we're driving around, we see other ugly things, and we just come and say it's changed the appearance and we want to change that?

*CED Salazar*

That's going to be up to interpretation.

If they move a trash can from here to there, that changes appearance—do you get a permit for that?

*Commissioner Alvillar*

I haven't been to Madelyn's and compared that curtain with this curtain. I don't know. But this one, when you're driving by, you see it. It's plastic. It's not like a pretty one. It's just like cellophane wrapped around it.

*Alt. Commissioner Lucero*

Along those lines, they still have four signs. They're supposed to only have two.

*Commissioner Mulvihill*

In my opinion, I would think that they should have asked permission and not just put it up and then discuss it later, like everybody else does. Like Commissioner Alvillar said, is it compatible or comparable to Madelyn's or not?

*Commissioner Alvillar*

That's what I was saying. I'm driving around and I'm like, that one doesn't look like Madelyn's, and we approved Madelyn's. What is that? Or I go down the road and there's something else I don't like. Do I say, I don't like that one either? Where do you stop me from looking at code?

*Commissioner Miller*

Well, my commissioner buddy here said, I didn't sign up for this.

*Commissioner Alvillar*

So where does it start and where does it stop?

*CED Salazar*

I don't have an answer. All I do know is that I try to stick as close as I can to the code and interpret it as written. Enforcement is not something I'm familiar with.

Generally, when somebody comes in and asks about a possible code violation, I ask them to call dispatch. Dispatch will send the code officer over there. The officer looks at that section of the code to see if there's a violation.

*Alt. Commissioner Lucero*

You might want to look back at past precedents. Didn't they have something similar with the Don Felix restaurant? She had put shading on the outside. I don't know if they asked her to remove it because there was no permit or if she was allowed to keep it.

*CED Salazar*

Which restaurant? How long ago was that?

*Alt. Commissioner Lucero*

The Don Felix Restaurant. Maybe four or five years. I don't remember.

*CED Salazar*

I'll look at it. Best I can do is look at it and bring back a response next meeting.

I've got a couple of staff comments. This is regarding historic preservation—just some add-ons. Miss Liana, I think you did a great job. Thank you.

Now, this is just something to remember. I'm not looking for answers.

In the past, whenever we talked about historic structures, especially significant ones, the commission would ask about SHPO involvement. SHPO will only get involved if there are state funded structures.

They always refer you to your local code. So when it comes to nominations, it's not going to be as easy as we think.

There's going to be pushback. We have to consider the merits of approval. I don't want historic nominations to just be nominations. If a neighbor nominates a house with no historical bearing, it weakens our local registry.

We need to make sure there is significance to the building. There is a process—hearings and public input. We don't need owner consent, unfortunately, but that's part of protecting Mesilla.

We can set our own process meeting state requirements. For instance, we might require internal review, significance, age (50 years), and other criteria. Which ones do we do first? Maybe those already on the national registry. We might do three nominations a month.

*HPS Aguirre*

This is a long process. We want to streamline it as much as possible.

We need patience. We're going in the right direction.

We'll educate commissioners too. Read the Historic Preservation Act and Secretary of the Interior standards.

My office is always open.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

*Chair Walkinshaw*

Thank you, do I hear a motion to adjourn?

(Commissioners unanimously agreed)

Meeting adjourned.

**NOTICE**

If you need any accommodation for a disability to enable you to fully participate in the hearing or meeting, please contact us on 524-3262 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Posted on 1/15/26 at the following locations: Town Hall - 2231 Avenida de Mesilla; Public Safety Building - 2670 Calle de Parian; Mesilla Community Center - 2251 Calle de Santiago; Lucky's Food Mart - 2290 Avenida de Mesilla; and the U.S. Post Office – 2253 Calle de Parian; Mesilla website <https://www.mesillanm.gov/minutes-agendas/>

  
PZHAC Vice Chair – Eric Gallegos

**ATTEST;**

  
Town Clerk, Treasurer – Gloria Maya