



Town of Mesilla, New Mexico

THE PLANNING, ZONING AND HISTORICAL APPROPRIATENESS COMMISSION
(PZHAC) WILL BE HAVING A REGULAR MEETING AT THE MESILLA TOWN HALL,
2231 AVENIDA DE MESILLA.
MONDAY - MARCH 2, 2026 @ 6PM
(MINUTES)

COMMISSIONERS

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

STAFF

Historic Preservation Specialist (HPS) – Liana Aguirre
Community & Economic Director – Eddie Salazar

PUBLIC

Frank Mittel	Greg Lester
Joe Chrisman	Bill Cook
Andrea Bryan	Janice Cook

Call to Order

The meeting of the Planning, Zoning and Historical Appropriateness Commission was called to order shortly after 6:00 p.m. on Monday, March 2, 2026.

Chair Walkinshaw:

We are ready to get started. This is the Planning, Zoning, and Historical Appropriateness Commission meeting for Monday, March 2, 2026. It is a little after 6:00 p.m. If you will join us in the Pledge of Allegiance, I would appreciate that.

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.

Chair Walkinshaw:

Thank you very much.

2. Roll Call / Determination of Quorum

Chair Walkinshaw:

Mr. Salazar, if you would please conduct roll call for determination of a quorum.

Mr. Salazar:

- Vice Chair Gallegos – Present
- Commissioner Miller – Present
- Chair Walkinshaw – Present
- Commissioner Alvillar – Present
- Commissioner Mulvihill – Present
- Commissioner Paz – Present
- Commissioner Lucero - Present

Mr. Chair, you have a quorum.

Chair Walkinshaw:

Thank you very much.

3. Approval of Agenda

Chair Walkinshaw:

The next item is approval of the agenda for this evening. I need a motion, please.

Commissioner Miller:

So moved.

Commissioner Mulvihill:

Second.

Chair Walkinshaw:

We have a motion by Commissioner Miller and a second by Commissioner Mulvihill. Any discussion?

(No discussion.)

Vote:

- Vice Chair Gallegos – Yes
- Commissioner Miller – Yes
- Commissioner Alvillar – Yes
- Commissioner Mulvihill – Yes

Chair Walkinshaw:

The motion passes.

4. Public Input on Action Items

Chair Walkinshaw:

Now it is time for public input on the action items for consideration, specifically Item No. 6. If you wish to speak, please come forward, state your name and address.

(No public comments.)

Chair Walkinshaw:

Seeing none, we will move on.

Consent Agenda

5. Approval of February 17, 2026, Meeting Minutes

Chair Walkinshaw:

Next is approval of the consent agenda, which is the February 17 meeting minutes. I need a motion.

Vice-Chair Gallegos:

So moved.

Commissioner Miller:

Second.

Chair Walkinshaw:

Motion by Commissioner Gallegos and second by Commissioner Miller. Any discussion?

Corrections to Minutes

Chair Walkinshaw:

Yes, I had a couple of comments.

On **page 2**, above “Establishment of Quorum,” it states that Mr. Salazar indicated the public comment period was for Hearing No. 1, Items 1 and 2. It should read **Items 1, 2, and 3**, regarding the swearing-in for comments on the hearing.

Mr. Salazar:

Page 2, upper portion. I see it. Thank you.

Chair Walkinshaw:

Also on **page 4**, under Hearing No. 2, the fourth bullet point indicates there are no regulations regarding materials for the walls on University Avenue. That should be clarified because there **are regulations in our code regarding fence materials**.

Mr. Salazar:

Yes, that is correct. We discussed whether the wall needed to match the rock material used elsewhere, but the code does still regulate fence materials. I will revise that language.

Chair Walkinshaw:

That is all I have.

Commissioner Lucero:

On **page 10**, Mrs. Whitter’s name is misspelled. It reads “Mr. Wit.” There are two instances in that paragraph.

Chair Walkinshaw:

Thank you for pointing that out.

Vote on Consent Agenda

Chair Walkinshaw:

Any further comments?

(No further comments.)

Vote:

- Vice Chair Gallegos – Yes
- Commissioner Miller – Yes

- Commissioner Alvillar – Yes
- Commissioner Mulvihill – Yes

Chair Walkinshaw:

The motion passes.

6.Action Items for Consideration

Item 6a.

PZHAC Sign Request No. 062098

1200 West University – Jornada Masonic Lodge

Chair Walkinshaw:

The first action item is PZHAC Sign Request No. 062098 at 1200 West University, submitted by Jornada Masonic Lodge requesting approval to install a sign. The property is zoned R-1.

I need a motion to address the request.

Commissioner Mulvihill:

I move that we accept PZHAC Sign Request No. 062098.

Vice-Chair Gallegos:

Second.

Staff Presentation

Mr. Salazar:

This is a sign permit request for **1200 West University**, submitted by **Jornada Masonic Lodge**. The applicant is requesting approval to install a freestanding sign on the property.

The sign will be located approximately **four feet from the edge of the sidewalk and about fifty feet from the west boundary line**.

Sign specifications include:

- Size: **4 feet by 2 feet**
- Material: **Three pieces of 1/8-inch steel sandwiched together**
- Outer sheets will feature **cut-out letters and designs**
- Finished with **light brown powder-coat material**
- The inner sheet will be **turquoise powder-coated**

The legs will be constructed of **perforated galvanized steel square tubing**.

The total height will be approximately **10 feet**, with the bottom of the sign approximately **7.5 feet above grade**.

The base will be buried **3 feet into the ground** with two square tubing anchors designed as **breakaway supports**.

The purpose of the sign is to identify the location of the lodge. Mr. Joe Christmas stated that the lodge provides charitable services such as wheelchairs, crutches, hospital beds, and other medical equipment to members of the community, often free of charge. Many people have difficulty locating the building because it sits far back from the roadway.

The property is zoned **Single-Family Residential (R-1)**. Although zoned residential, it is being used as an **assembly occupancy** under the International Building Code (IBC), which is adopted by Mesilla Town Code.

The building currently has lettering signage on the structure itself, and **no lighting is proposed for the new sign**.

I was unable to locate historical permitting records for the lodge in town files, although the lodge has existed for many years.

I spoke with Mr. Christmas prior to the meeting, and it appears the lodge was established around **1955**, making it roughly **70 years old**.

Although staff has administrative authority for some sign permits, I felt this request was unique and appropriate for commission review.

Applicant Statement

Mr. Joe Christmas:

I am Joe Christmas, a member of the lodge.

We have been at that location for about 70 years. About 25 years ago we started a program to help the community by providing durable medical equipment—hospital beds, crutches, canes, and similar items—free of charge if we have them available.

One problem we have is that people cannot find the building. They often drive right past us and call saying they are lost. We sometimes have to go out to the curb to direct them. That is what prompted the request for a sign.

Commissioner Questions

Vice-Chair Gallegos:

Has there ever been a sign addressing the building along University Avenue?

Mr. Christmas:

Not that I am aware of.

Mr. Salazar:

The building does have letters on it, but the structure is set far back from the road, which contributes to the visibility issue.

State Right-of-Way Discussion

Mr. Salazar:

I also discussed with the applicant the need to obtain a **New Mexico Department of Transportation permit**, since University Avenue is a state roadway.

There is an office in Deming that regulates District 1 permits, with a satellite office in Las Cruces. The applicant will need to ensure the sign meets all **NMDOT requirements**.

Chair Walkinshaw:

DOT typically requires a **five-foot setback** from the right-of-way. The application shows four feet, so that should be adjusted if necessary.

Motion to Amend

Commissioner Alvillar:

I move to amend the motion so the sign is placed **five feet instead of four feet** from the right-of-way to meet DOT requirements.

Commissioner Miller:

Second.

Vote on Amendment:

- Vice Chair Gallegos – Yes
- Commissioner Miller – Yes
- Commissioner Alvillar – Yes
- Commissioner Mulvihill – No

Result: Motion passes 3-1.

Vote on Amended Motion

Vote:

- Vice Chair Gallegos – Yes
- Commissioner Miller – Yes
- Commissioner Alvillar – Yes
- Commissioner Mulvihill – No

Chair Walkinshaw:

Motion passes 3-1.

Item 6b.

Resolution 2026-08

Recommendation to Amend Mesilla Town Code 18.60.340 – Wall Height on University Avenue

Mr. Salazar:

This resolution reflects the public hearing held at the previous meeting regarding wall height along University Avenue.

The amendment addresses the **grade difference between the trail and adjacent residential properties**, allowing measurement from the trail grade to the top of the wall.

The resolution represents the commission's **findings of fact and recommendation** to the Board of Trustees.

I would also like to hold a **future work session** to discuss whether resolutions are always necessary for recommendations, as the current process can be redundant and time-consuming.

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioners discussed ensuring that any fencing constructed by residents continues to comply with existing **material regulations for the zoning district**, and that safety considerations for neighboring properties remain in place.

A correction was also noted that the resolution date should reflect **February 17**, not February 2.

Vote

Vote:

- Vice Chair Gallegos – Yes
- Commissioner Miller – Yes
- Commissioner Alvillar – Yes
- Commissioner Mulvihill – Yes

Result: Motion passes 4-0, with noted corrections.

Item 6c.

Resolution 2026-09

Amendments to Mesilla Town Code – Sign Regulations

The commission discussed proposed amendments related to:

- **A-frame signs**
- **Temporary signage**
- **Commercial zone signage**
- **Gas pump island signs**
- **Permit fees**
- **Maximum sign size based on building frontage**

The proposed amendments also allow **up to four temporary signs per year** and adjust the **sign permit fee to \$5 per square foot**.

Discussion

A question was raised about whether merchandise displayed on exterior walls could be considered signage.

Commissioners discussed the distinction between **merchandise display and signage**, noting that items displayed for sale without wording generally do not constitute signage under the code.

Vote

Vote:

- Vice Chair Gallegos – Yes
- Commissioner Miller – Yes
- Commissioner Alvillar – Yes
- Commissioner Mulvihill – Yes

Result: Motion passes 4-0.

Item 6d.

Resolution 2026-10

Historic Property Nominations

Properties nominated for inclusion on the **Mesilla Local Historic Register:**

- 2380 Calle de Principal
- 2600 Avenida de Mesilla
- 2090 Snow Road

Motion: Commissioner Miller

Second: Commissioner Alvillar

Vote:

- Vice Chair Gallegos – Yes
- Commissioner Miller – Yes
- Commissioner Alvillar – Yes
- Commissioner Mulvihill – Yes

Result: Motion passes 4-0.

Commissioner and Staff Comments

Mr. Salazar:

Staff will likely schedule a **work session at the next meeting** to review procedures for hearings, notices, and resolutions to ensure the commission consistently meets all code requirements.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Mulvihill reported attending a **New Mexico Municipal League training via Zoom**, which focused on code interpretation and the importance of consistent understanding among officials.

The presenter emphasized that **codes should not be individually interpreted**, and training is beneficial for ensuring consistent application.


Commissioners discussed possibly hosting future **virtual trainings at Town Hall** so multiple commissioners can attend together.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned @ 6:50pm.


PZHAC Chairperson-Eric Walkinshaw

ATTEST:


Town Clerk/Treasurer-Gloria Maya



