



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.**

MONDAY – JUNE 15, 2026 @ 5PM

(MINUTES)

COMMISSIONERS

Chairperson – Eric Walkinshaw
Vice Chair – Eric Gallegos
Secretary – Lori Miller
Commissioner – Rosemary Alvillar
Commissioner – Martha Mulvihill – **absent**
Alt. Commissioner – Paz (filled her seat)
Alt. Commissioner – Mary Lucero

STAFF

Director Community/Economic Development – Eddie Salazar
Historic Preservation Specialist – Liana Aguirre
NM CID – Thomas Maese

PUBLIC

Adrea Bryan

Work Session – 5:00 P.M.

Work session to follow up on amendment(s) recommendations to the Board of Trustees. Proposed amendments listed on our town website @ <https://www.mesillanm.gov/residents/project-ordinance-updates/>

MTC 15.15.040 – Building permit fees - Amendments – Expirations of building permits
MTC 18.35.060(I)(7) – Historical Residential – Development Standards -RVs
MTC 18.15.030(B) – Uncertainty of Zone Boundaries
MTC 18.85.110 - Variances & Special Use Permits – Scheduled Hearings

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair **Eric Walkinshaw** called the Work Session to order at approximately **5:00 p.m.**

Chair Walkinshaw stated that the purpose of the work session was to continue reviewing proposed amendments to various sections of the Mesilla Town Code prepared by Community & Economic Development Director **Eddie Salazar**. He noted this was the Commission's third work session devoted to code review and ordinance revisions.

Chair Walkinshaw invited Mr. Salazar to begin the presentation.

2. CODE AMENDMENT REVIEW

A. Building Permit Expiration, Extensions and Refunds (MTC 15.45)

Community & Economic Development Director **Eddie Salazar** explained that this was the Commission's third code-review work session and that staff had intentionally reduced the number of topics for discussion to allow Commissioners to fully evaluate each proposed amendment.

Mr. Salazar stated:

"This is the third work session we've had regarding some of our codes we've been reviewing. We're trying to make them more consistent, more detailed, and a little clearer for everyone. We're also trying to get the Commission on the same page regarding the direction we want our ordinances to go."

He explained that the draft ordinance was prepared as a working document.

Mr. Salazar noted that:

- Existing language proposed for deletion remained in **red strike-through** text.
- Proposed additions appeared in **blue** so Commissioners could clearly distinguish proposed revisions.

Commissioners agreed that this format made the review process easier.

Permit Expiration

Mr. Salazar directed Commissioners to the Building Code section dealing with permit expiration.

He explained that previous discussions centered on projects requiring longer than twelve months for completion, particularly adobe construction projects.

Mr. Salazar proposed language stating:

- Building permits expire **12 months from the date of issuance** by the Community Development Department.
- A six-month extension may be granted upon payment of **one-half of the original permit fee**.
- A second six-month extension may also be granted, provided no changes have been made to the original approved plans or permit conditions.

He further clarified:

"One thing we talked about was exactly when the clock starts. Sometimes permits aren't really ready because conditions still have to be met. The clock should start when Community Development actually issues the permit."

Discussion

A Commissioner questioned the wording "original fee."

The Commissioner noted that permit fees consist of multiple components.

Mr. Salazar responded that he intended the **entire permit fee**, including:

- Review Fee
- Construction Fee

He agreed that the ordinance should specifically identify the overall permit fee to avoid future confusion.

Commissioners agreed.

Permit Refunds

Mr. Salazar next discussed refunds for denied permits.

He explained that staff had added language providing:

"If a request for a building permit is not approved, a refund shall be issued less the review fee."

Commissioners agreed this language appropriately compensated the Town for staff review time while allowing applicants to recover the remaining permit fee.

No objections were raised.

B. Permit Fee Exceptions

Mr. Salazar next reviewed proposed amendments relating to permit fee exemptions.

He explained that although this amendment had not previously been discussed by the Commission, it would soon be considered during a public hearing before the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Salazar advised the Commission:

"We're going to have a hearing next Monday regarding this section."

He explained that the amendment originated after the **Gadsden Independent School District** submitted a building permit application for a major construction project.

Because the project valuation was substantial, permit fees would have exceeded approximately **\$63,000**.

Mr. Salazar stated:

"It would've been nice to collect that fee, but in the interest of being a good neighbor and working together with other governmental agencies, that's where this amendment comes in."

The proposed amendment would authorize exceptions for:

- School Districts
- Government Agencies
- Other qualifying public entities

He noted the proposal would also clarify that the Town would not charge itself permit fees for municipal construction projects.

Mr. Salazar reminded Commissioners that the language remained subject to change after the public hearing.

Commission discussion followed.

One Commissioner commented that the amendment simply created an exception and did not raise significant concerns.

Another Commissioner stated:

"I think it would be prudent to wait until after the public hearing before we spend much time discussing it."

The Commission agreed.

C. Recreational Vehicles (Historical Residential Zone)

Mr. Salazar then directed the Commission to proposed amendments concerning recreational vehicles within the Historic Residential Zone.

He explained that this topic generated considerable discussion during previous work sessions.

He advised Commissioners that he attempted to prepare language reflecting the Commission's overall consensus while leaving unresolved issues open for discussion.

The proposed language included:

- Prohibiting the use of vehicles for permanent dwelling purposes.
- Removing language allowing RV occupancy for fourteen days.
- Eliminating references to permanent utility hookups.
- Adding language prohibiting RV storage within front setbacks or side setbacks adjacent to public streets.

Mr. Salazar explained:

"The reason I added that language is so an RV isn't sitting out in public view."

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioners questioned whether campers, trailers, snowmobiles and similar recreational equipment should all fall under the same definition.

Another Commissioner questioned why language concerning temporary utility connections had been omitted.

Mr. Salazar replied:

"Again, I left it open because there wasn't consensus. We still couldn't agree, so I left it simple so we could continue discussing it."

Discussion continued regarding:

- Temporary utility hookups
- Permanent hookups
- Backflow prevention
- Enforcement difficulties
- Temporary visitors
- Long-term occupancy
- Historic district appearance
- Storage versus habitation

One Commissioner stated:

"The whole point is we don't want somebody living in an RV forever."

Mr. Salazar agreed.

He explained that visible evidence such as:

- Utility hookups
- Fencing
- Landscaping
- Permanent improvements

could establish evidence of permanent occupancy.

However, proving someone had been residing in an RV for a specific number of days remained extremely difficult.

One Commissioner observed:

"Temporary is a subjective term."

Commissioners generally agreed.

Discussion then turned to whether RV storage itself should be prohibited.

Several Commissioners felt homeowners should retain the ability to store their own RVs on private property.

Others expressed concern regarding RVs parked prominently along public streets within the Historic Residential district.

Mr. Salazar explained that corner lots presented unique challenges because they effectively have two street frontages.

The Commission agreed additional revisions would be necessary before final language could be finalized.

D. Interpretation of Zoning Boundaries (MTC 18.15)

Mr. Salazar next introduced proposed amendments concerning uncertainty of zoning boundaries.

He explained that the Town's ongoing GIS mapping project had revealed numerous properties divided by zoning boundaries.

Using the Town's GIS map displayed on the television monitor, Mr. Salazar showed several parcels where zoning lines crossed directly through individual properties.

He explained:

"Zoning really shouldn't work that way."

Mr. Salazar proposed clarifying ordinance language stating that when zoning boundaries divide a parcel, the property would be assigned the zoning classification occupying the greatest portion of the parcel.

Commissioners reviewed examples displayed on the GIS map.

Discussion followed regarding:

- RF and RA zoning
- Nonconforming parcels
- Historical zoning maps
- Dona Ana County mapping
- Boundary interpretation
- Future rezoning
- Property taxation

- GIS improvements

Mr. Salazar also discussed several subdivision issues involving:

- Del Rio Drain
- Historic parcel splits
- Annexations
- Nonconforming one-acre lots
- R-1 subdivisions approved during the 1970s

He explained that several subdivisions had been approved by the Town decades earlier, yet many lots were now considered nonconforming.

Mr. Salazar remarked:

"People call wanting to build a shed or an addition and I'm forced to tell them they can't. I don't think that's a good answer."

Commissioners agreed further study would be necessary.

COMMISSIONERS

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PUBLIC

Adrea Bryan
Mary H. Ratje
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REGULAR MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Following conclusion of the Work Session, Chair **Eric Walkinshaw** called the Regular Meeting to order.

Chair Walkinshaw welcomed everyone in attendance and proceeded with the regular agenda.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Those present joined Chair Walkinshaw in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Community & Economic Development Director **Eddie Salazar** called roll.

Present

- Chair Eric Walkinshaw
- Vice Chair Gallegos
- Commissioner Miller
- Commissioner Alvillar
- Commissioner Mulvihill – **absent**
- Alt. Commissioner – Paz (filled her seat)
- Alt. Commissioner Lucero

A quorum was declared present.

Staff Present

- Eddie Salazar, Community & Economic Development Director
 - Ms. Liana Aguirre, Historic Preservation Planner
 - CID Thomas Maese
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4. CHANGES / APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Walkinshaw asked if there were any requested changes to the published agenda.

Mr. Salazar advised there were no staff changes to the agenda.

Chair Walkinshaw asked Commissioners whether they wished to make any amendments.

Hearing none, Chair Walkinshaw entertained a motion.

Motion

Commissioner Miller moved to approve the agenda as presented.

Second: Commissioner Paz.

There being no further discussion, a vote was taken.

Vote

- Vice Chair Gallegos — Yes
- Commissioner Miller — Yes
- Commissioner Alvillar — Yes
- Commissioner Paz — Yes

Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

5. PUBLIC INPUT

Chair Walkinshaw opened Public Input for agenda items.

He announced that speakers would have three minutes to address the Commission regarding items listed for consideration during the meeting.

Mr. Salazar confirmed that no speaker request forms had been received.

Chair Walkinshaw asked once more whether anyone wished to address the Commission.

There being no requests to speak, Public Input was closed.

6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Salazar advised the Commission that the agenda mistakenly referenced the May 4 meeting minutes.

He clarified that the minutes presented for approval were actually the **May 18, 2026 Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes**.

Chair Walkinshaw thanked staff for the correction.

No additional corrections were offered by the Commission.

Motion

Commissioner Miller moved to approve the Consent Agenda, including the corrected reference to the **May 18, 2026** minutes.

Second: Commissioner Paz.

There being no further discussion, Chair Walkinshaw called for the vote.

Vote

- Vice Chair Gallegos — Yes
- Commissioner Miller — Yes
- Commissioner Alvillar — Yes
- Commissioner Paz — Yes

Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

7. ACTION AND CONSIDERATION

A. PZHAC CASE #062141

Conceptual Review – Town Hall Multipurpose Building (Continued)

Following the architect's presentation, Chair Eric Walkinshaw opened the floor for Commission discussion.

The Commission emphasized that because this was a **conceptual review**, the purpose was to provide architectural guidance before construction documents were finalized.

Architectural Character

Chair Walkinshaw stated that he appreciated the overall direction of the design and believed it reflected many of the architectural characteristics expected within Mesilla.

He commented that while the building appeared attractive, he encouraged the design team to continue simplifying certain architectural elements so the building maintained the appearance of a traditional Mesilla structure rather than a contemporary interpretation.

He noted that the proportions of openings, portals, and wall planes often contribute more to historic character than decorative elements.

Building Scale

Vice Chair **Gallegos** commented that the overall size of the building appeared appropriate for its intended use.

He stated that because the building would serve numerous public functions, adequate interior space was important.

He encouraged maintaining human-scale architectural features around the entrances so visitors would not perceive the structure as overly institutional.

Windows

Commissioner **Alvillar** focused discussion on window placement.

She expressed appreciation that the windows appeared vertically proportioned but suggested reviewing:

- Window spacing.
- Overall rhythm.
- Recessed depth.
- Trim details.

She stated that these details would contribute significantly to the building's historic appearance.

The architect agreed and explained that window schedules had not yet been finalized.

Portal Design

Commissioner **Miller** commented on the proposed portal.

She stated that the portal should become one of the defining architectural features of the building.

Discussion followed regarding:

- Portal depth.
- Beam spacing.
- Viga projections.
- Column spacing.
- Traditional proportions.

Several Commissioners agreed that a slightly deeper portal would provide improved shade while reinforcing traditional Mesilla architecture.

The architect stated that structural calculations were still underway and that portal dimensions could likely be adjusted.

Exterior Materials

Mr. Salazar reminded Commissioners that exterior finish materials had not yet been finalized.

Discussion centered on:

- Adobe-colored stucco.
- Earthen textures.
- Wood accents.
- Natural stone.
- Metal roofing.
- Traditional colors.

Commissioners generally agreed that synthetic materials should be minimized wherever practical.

Landscaping

Commissioners discussed landscaping around the building.

Suggestions included:

- Native vegetation.
- Shade trees.
- Courtyard seating.
- Traditional landscape walls.
- Additional pedestrian gathering areas.

Mr. Salazar explained that landscaping plans would be presented separately once site engineering had progressed further.

Parking

Discussion then shifted toward parking.

Commissioners emphasized that parking should not dominate the site visually.

Suggestions included:

- Landscape islands.
- Additional shade trees.
- Decorative screening.
- Pedestrian walkways.
- Improved accessibility.

The architect explained that the design team intended to soften the appearance of the parking areas through landscaping.

Historic Compatibility

Chair Walkinshaw summarized the Commission's comments.

He stated that the overall concept appeared compatible with Mesilla's architectural traditions but emphasized the importance of continuing refinement.

He remarked that the Commission's role was not to redesign the project but rather to ensure that the completed building reflected the architectural character residents expect within Mesilla.

Mr. Salazar thanked the Commission for providing direction during the conceptual phase.

He stated:

"This is exactly why we wanted to bring this forward early. Your comments today allow the architect to make changes before construction drawings are completed."

The architect thanked the Commission and indicated the recommendations would be incorporated into the next design revision.

Motion

Chair Walkinshaw asked whether the Commission wished to provide formal direction to staff.

Motion:

Vice Chair **Gallegos** moved to accept the conceptual review and direct staff and the project architect to continue refining the design while incorporating the architectural recommendations discussed by the Commission.

Second:

Commissioner **Miller**

No additional discussion followed.

Vote

- Vice Chair Gallegos — Yes
- Commissioner **Miller** — Yes
- Commissioner **Alvillar** — Yes

- Commissioner **Paz** — Yes

Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

STAFF COMMENTS

Eddie Salazar

Community & Economic Development Director **Eddie Salazar** thanked the Commissioners for their thoughtful comments throughout both the Work Session and Regular Meeting.

Mr. Salazar stated that the conceptual review provided valuable guidance for the architect before construction drawings are finalized.

He noted that staff would continue reviewing ordinance amendments discussed during the Work Session and anticipated bringing additional revisions back before the Commission over the coming months.

Mr. Salazar also advised the Commission that work continues on several historic preservation projects, including the Historic Blacksmith Shop.

He reported that Mayor Hernandez continues organizing an ad hoc committee to assist with future planning efforts related to the Blacksmith property.

Commissioners were encouraged to participate if interested.

Ms. Liana Aguirre

Historic Preservation Planner **Ms. Liana Aguirre** thanked the Commission for its continued support of historic preservation efforts.

She stated that preserving Mesilla's architectural identity depends upon maintaining consistency in design standards while allowing thoughtful improvements to existing buildings.

Ms. Aguirre also expressed appreciation for the Commission's attention to architectural detail during the conceptual review, noting that early input often results in better final projects.

She stated staff would continue working closely with applicants throughout the design review process.

8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Chair Eric Walkinshaw invited Commissioners to offer comments regarding the meeting, future agenda items, and matters of interest pertaining to planning, zoning, and historic preservation.

Vice Chair Gallegos

Vice Chair Gallegos expressed appreciation to staff for preparing the ordinance amendment drafts reviewed during the Work Session. He stated that reviewing fewer ordinance sections during each work session allowed the Commission to have more productive discussions and better understand the intent of the proposed amendments.

Vice Chair Gallegos also thanked the architect for presenting the Town Hall Multipurpose Building concept before final design work had been completed. He commented that receiving the project during the conceptual phase allowed the Commission to provide meaningful input that would ultimately improve the project while preserving Mesilla's historic architectural character.

Commissioner Miller

Commissioner Miller stated that she appreciated the detailed discussions held during both the Work Session and Regular Meeting.

She commented that many of the proposed ordinance revisions would provide greater clarity for residents and applicants while improving consistency in the Town Code.

Regarding the Town Hall project, Commissioner Miller stated that she believed the building had tremendous potential and appreciated the willingness of the architect and staff to receive recommendations before final plans were prepared.

She emphasized that maintaining traditional Mesilla architectural proportions would be essential as the project progressed.

Commissioner Alvillar

Commissioner Alvillar expressed appreciation for the thoughtful discussion regarding architectural compatibility.

She stated that Mesilla's historic character is one of the community's greatest assets and that every new public building should reinforce that identity.

Commissioner Alvillar noted that small architectural details—including window placement, portal proportions, parapet heights, and building materials—often have the greatest influence on whether a structure feels historically appropriate.

She thanked staff for seeking Commission guidance early in the design process.

Commissioner Paz

Commissioner Paz thanked staff for continuing the ordinance review process and commented that each work session had shown measurable progress.

She stated that she looked forward to continued discussion regarding recreational vehicles, permit extensions, zoning interpretation, and other code amendments before recommendations were forwarded to the Board of Trustees.

Commissioner Paz also thanked the project architect for considering the Commission's recommendations regarding the Town Hall Multipurpose Building.

Chair Eric Walkinshaw

Chair Walkinshaw thanked Commissioners for their preparation and participation throughout both the Work Session and Regular Meeting.

He noted that the Commission's purpose is not only to review applications but also to help preserve the unique architectural and historical character that distinguishes Mesilla from surrounding communities.

Chair Walkinshaw commented that the conceptual review process worked well because it allowed constructive dialogue between the Commission, staff, and the architect before significant design resources were invested.

He also thanked Community & Economic Development Director Eddie Salazar and Historic Preservation Planner Ms. Liana Aguirre for their continued work in preparing ordinance revisions and assisting applicants through the review process.

9. STAFF CLOSING COMMENTS

Eddie Salazar

Mr. Salazar thanked the Commissioners for their continued commitment to improving Mesilla's development regulations.

He stated that staff would:

- Continue refining the proposed ordinance amendments based on the Commission's direction.
- Prepare revised language for future work sessions.
- Continue coordinating with the Town Attorney as necessary.
- Work with the architect to incorporate the Commission's recommendations into the next conceptual design for the Town Hall Multipurpose Building.

Mr. Salazar also reminded the Commission that future work sessions would likely focus on only a few ordinance sections at a time to allow more in-depth discussion and avoid overwhelming the Commission with too many proposed amendments in a single meeting.

Ms. Liana Aguirre

Ms. Aguirre thanked the Commission for its continued support of historic preservation efforts within the Town.

She noted that receiving Commission input early in project design often results in better projects while reducing revisions later in the review process.

She also thanked Commissioners for their continued attention to architectural details that help preserve Mesilla's historic character.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Planning, Zoning and Historical Appropriateness Commission, **Chair Eric Walkinshaw** asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Commissioner **Miller** moved to adjourn the meeting.

Second: Commissioner Paz.

There being no objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Walkinshaw declared the meeting adjourned at approximately **6:45 p.m.**

APPROVED:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eric Walkinshaw", written over a horizontal line.

Eric Walkinshaw, Chair

Planning, Zoning and Historical Appropriateness Commission

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gloria Maya", written over a horizontal line.

Gloria Maya

Town Clerk/Treasurer