



TOWN OF MESILLA
PLANNING, ZONING AND HISTORICAL APPROPRIATENESS COMMISSION
(PZHAC)

WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, August 17, 2026

Mesilla Town Hall, 2231 Avenida de Mesilla

(MINUTES)

Commissioners Present

- Chair Eric Walkinshaw
- Secretary Lori Miller
- Commissioner Mulvihill
- Commissioner Alvillar
- Commissioner Lucero

Staff Present

- Community Development Eddie Salazar
- Community Development Paulo Rocha
- Historic Specialist Liana Aguirre

Public Present

- C. Alexander
- Andrea Bryan
- Trina Witter

PUBLIC HEARING 5 PM

1. OPENING OF PUBLIC HEARING

Chair Walkinshaw opened the Planning, Zoning and Historical Appropriateness Commission Public Hearing at Mesilla Town Hall. He explained that the hearing consisted of two principal sections: nominations to the Town of Mesilla Historic and Cultural Register and proposed amendments to the Mesilla Town Code.

Chair Walkinshaw noted that the nomination descriptions provided on the hearing agenda were brief and suggested that Historic Preservation staff first explain the nomination process and review each nominated property individually. Members of the public would then have an opportunity to address the nominations during the appropriate portion of the meeting.

NOMINATIONS TO THE TOWN OF MESILLA HISTORIC AND CULTURAL REGISTER

2. OVERVIEW OF LOCAL HISTORIC REGISTER NOMINATION PROCESS

Ms. Liana Aguirre provided an overview of the Town of Mesilla Historic and Cultural Register and explained how local designation differs from the New Mexico State Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

She explained that the Town's local register was created as part of Mesilla's participation in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program, which the Town achieved in April 2026. Local designation may make approved properties eligible for future preservation funding administered through the State Historic Preservation Office.

Ms. Aguirre explained that local designation carries stronger preservation protections than state or national recognition. Once locally designated, demolition, major exterior alterations, new construction, and certain maintenance activities may require review. Interior alterations generally remain permissible provided they do not affect the historic exterior characteristics of the property.

She emphasized that preservation review is intended to retain historic materials and character whenever reasonably possible, while acknowledging that exact replacement of historic materials may not always be practical. Windows were used as an example of an important character-defining feature that should be preserved or appropriately rehabilitated whenever possible.

Ms. Aguirre explained that nominations are initially considered by PZHAC and then forwarded to the Board of Trustees for final consideration. The Commission's primary determination is whether the property is historically significant and retains sufficient historic integrity.

She further explained that owner consent is not necessarily required for nomination under the Town's local preservation ordinance because of Mesilla's unique historic character and preservation objectives. Design review primarily concerns exterior features.

Ms. Aguirre identified benefits of local designation, including preservation of neighborhood character, increased community pride, possible stabilization or enhancement of property values, and eligibility for rehabilitation and grant funding.

She also explained the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which guide appropriate preservation work and emphasize retaining historic materials and character.

Regarding the State and National Registers, Ms. Aguirre explained that those programs are primarily recognition programs and generally do not impose local design review on privately funded work. Properties listed on the State or National Registers may, however, be eligible for certain tax credits and grants.

She also discussed Section 106 review, which applies when federal undertakings have the potential to affect historic properties.

Chair Walkinshaw asked about the relationship between local nominations and the National Register. Ms. Aguirre explained that the local register is a separate designation process, but local documentation and future surveys may assist the Town when updating its National Register documentation.

She stated that the Town's existing National Register information is approximately 50 years old and that Mesilla would eventually benefit from a comprehensive historic preservation plan and updated survey of properties throughout the community.

Ms. Aguirre explained that historic eligibility is primarily evaluated through age, integrity, and significance. Properties generally should be at least 50 years old unless they possess exceptional significance.

Historic integrity may be evaluated through location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. These criteria are used by the National Register and are also applicable when considering Mesilla's local nominations.

Ms. Aguirre encouraged property owners and residents to nominate historically significant properties and advised that applications and assistance were available through the Town's Historic Preservation office.

3. HISTORIC REGISTER NOMINATION – ARONA SILO, 1560 HIGHWAY 292

Ms. Aguirre presented the nomination commonly identified as the Arona Silo, located at approximately 1560 Highway 292/Calle de El Paso.

She explained that the concrete silo may date from approximately 1910–1920 and appears to be the last remaining historic silo in Mesilla. Historic silos became more prevalent in southern New Mexico following development of irrigation infrastructure and the expansion of feed crops, including alfalfa, grain, sorghum, and corn.

Research identified approximately 22 silos historically located throughout Doña Ana County in a 1950 USDA survey. The nominated silo was associated with Mesilla's agricultural development and the former Arona farming and cattle operation.

The structure retains its original concrete construction and serves as a rare surviving example of an agricultural building type that once formed part of the Mesilla Valley landscape. Ms. Aguirre noted that another historically recognized silo on West Union had previously been demolished, further increasing the rarity of the nominated structure.

4. HISTORIC REGISTER NOMINATION – GRIGGS FAMILY HOME

Ms. Aguirre presented the historic Griggs Family Home, which is identified as Property No. 259 on the National Register documentation.

The residence was described as one of the most significant Territorial-style homes in the Mesilla Valley. Historical information indicates that the house was completed in approximately 1874 for James Edgar Griggs, a prominent Mesilla merchant.

The residence retains important architectural features, including a rectangular floor plan, central hallway, wood-framed windows, louvered shutters, pediments, a flat roof with a slightly pedimented parapet, and an ornate entry portico supported by wood columns.

Ms. Aguirre discussed the significance of the Griggs family to Mesilla's history and noted that the family's legacy remains associated with several properties and historical resources throughout the Town.

The residence was also identified as significant because of its distinctive architecture, historic adobe construction, association with the Griggs family, and continued retention of its historic footprint and character.

5. HISTORIC REGISTER NOMINATIONS – CANO PROPERTIES, 2190 AVENIDA DE MESILLA

Ms. Aguirre presented three historically significant structures located on the same property, identified during the discussion as the Cano properties.

The address was clarified during the presentation as approximately 2190, although a different number appeared in County parcel records.

Café de Mesilla

The first structure discussed was the building currently occupied by Café de Mesilla, identified as Property No. 38 on the National Register documentation.

The building is a flat-roofed stuccoed adobe residence dating to approximately 1920, with wood-framed windows, rejas, and a ramada along the façade.

The building has historically served multiple community uses, including restaurants and a barber or hair salon, and continues to function as a restaurant. Despite later additions such as outdoor seating, the original building largely retains its historic footprint and adobe construction.

Old Potteries Building

The second structure was identified as the Old Potteries Building, located toward the rear of the property.

Ms. Aguirre explained that the building historically served as a pottery-related workspace and contributes to the historic character and setting of the property. It retains its historic footprint and architectural materials. The structure was reported as currently unoccupied.

Unplastered Adobe Workshop

The third structure was identified as the unplastered adobe building, historically used as a workshop by Mr. Cano.

The building retains exposed adobe construction and a significant amount of its historic fabric, although natural weathering has occurred.

Ms. Aguirre discussed Mr. Cano's involvement in preserving Mesilla's historic identity, including service as a commissioner and participation on the Town's historical architectural review board. His involvement in maintaining and painting the Plaza kiosk was also noted.

The structure is identified as Property No. 162 on the National Register documentation and was described as an exposed adobe, U-shaped building with a flat roof, parapet, wood-framed windows, and tin canales.

6. HISTORIC REGISTER NOMINATION – TEXAS PACIFIC HOTEL

Ms. Aguirre presented the property identified as the Texas Pacific Hotel, listed as Property No. 128 in the National Register documentation.

She explained that historical information concerning the property's connection to the Texas Pacific Hotel was limited. The original deed referenced the Texas Pacific Hotel property, and research suggested a possible association with Texas Pacific Railroad surveyors who had been stationed in the area.

The property also served as a local land-grant office associated with La Asociación Unificadora Española Americana, which administered land-grant matters locally.

According to the National Register description, the remaining structure is part of what had once been an important social center during the 1870s. At its peak, the complex reportedly included a bar, billiard room, and theater and occupied a substantially larger portion of the block.

The surviving adobe structure retains wood-framed windows, architectural pediments, canales, buttresses, and rough-hewn lintels. The structure is believed to date to approximately 1850.

Ms. Aguirre identified the property as significant both for its surviving architectural characteristics and its historical association with social and cultural activity in Mesilla.

7. HISTORIC REGISTER NOMINATION – COLONEL A.J. FOUNTAIN RESIDENCE

Ms. Aguirre presented the former Colonel A.J. Fountain Residence, identified as Property No. 88 on the National Register documentation.

The large Territorial-style adobe building occupies a significant portion of a block and now contains multiple residential units. Architectural features include a zaguan leading to an interior courtyard, wood-framed windows, pedimented lintels, a flat roof, parapets, and tin canales.

The residence is believed to date from approximately the 1850s and was historically associated with Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain, a prominent territorial attorney who came to Mesilla with the California Column during the 1860s.

Ms. Aguirre also discussed Fountain's role in regional history, including involvement with education and acquisition of land associated with the university, as well as his legal representation of Billy the Kid.

The property was later associated with the Guerra and Fountain/Fritze family histories, all of which were described as significant to Mesilla.

The residence retains its historic footprint, adobe materials, and many original wood architectural elements.

A question was raised regarding whether the Fountain Theatre had originally formed part of the residence. Ms. Aguirre stated that the theatre was not part of the nominated residence and appears to have developed or functioned as a theatre later.

Chair Walkinshaw noted that PZHAC would consider and vote on the nominations during the Regular Meeting, after which recommendations would be forwarded to the Board of Trustees.

Ms. Aguirre encouraged residents with additional historical information—or corrections to information presented—to contact her so that Mesilla's historical record could be documented as accurately as possible.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO MESILLA TOWN CODE

8. AMENDMENT TO MTC 15.15 – BUILDING CODE

Mr. Salazar presented proposed amendments to MTC 15.15, Building Code, noting that the Commission had previously held several work sessions to develop the proposed language and address areas of confusion in the existing code.

Building Permit Expiration and Extensions

Mr. Salazar explained that building permits currently remain valid for approximately 12 months from issuance.

The proposed amendment would clarify that building permits expire 12 months after issuance by the Community Development Department; a six-month extension may be granted at one-half of the original permit fee; and additional extensions may require payment of an additional extension fee.

The Commission had previously discussed encouraging applicants to obtain permits only when they were prepared to begin construction.

Mr. Salazar clarified that the official permit issuance date is not necessarily the date PZHAC or the Board of Trustees approves a request. If an approval contains conditions, the permit is not considered fully issued until required documents, plans, conditions, and approvals have been completed and Community Development can formally issue the permit.

Refunds

The proposed language would clarify that when a building permit request is denied, the applicant is eligible for a refund of the permit fee, less any applicable plan-review fee. Review fees would remain nonrefundable because those costs had already been incurred by the Town.

Fee Exceptions

Mr. Salazar referenced existing provisions adopted following discussion of a school construction project that had generated approximately \$62,000 in permit fees.

He explained that the Board of Trustees may waive certain permit fees for qualifying governmental or similar entities, including school districts. However, utility connection costs, water meter fees, and other Public Works-related charges would remain the responsibility of the applicant.

Chair Walkinshaw noted that large projects could also be permitted in phases where appropriate rather than attempting to complete an entire large-scale project within one permit period.

Mr. Salazar agreed that phased permitting could be appropriate and reiterated that applicants should be informed clearly about permit expiration dates and timelines.

9. AMENDMENT TO MTC 18.15 – ESTABLISHMENT OF ZONE BOUNDARIES

Mr. Salazar presented a proposed amendment addressing properties divided by more than one zoning designation.

The discussion centered on MTC 18.15.030(B). The proposed amendment would provide that where a zoning boundary passes through a parcel and is not precisely dimensioned on the zoning map, the largest zoning area within the parcel would be used to identify the zoning classification of the property.

Mr. Salazar explained that zoning boundaries are most easily understood when they follow visible physical features such as roads, railroad tracks, acequias, highways, or other identifiable boundaries.

He noted that approximately 16 to 18 properties had been identified in Mesilla where zoning boundaries currently pass through individual parcels, creating uncertainty that would eventually need to be resolved.

10. AMENDMENT TO MTC 18.35 – HISTORICAL RESIDENTIAL ZONE

Mr. Salazar presented proposed amendments to the Historic Residential Zone concerning recreational vehicles (RVs).

The Commission reviewed MTC 18.35.060 regarding development standards.

The proposed language would prohibit storage of an RV or recreational vehicle within the front or side setbacks adjacent to a public street.

The Commission had previously discussed removing or revising language limiting use of an RV as a dwelling to 14 days and language prohibiting permanent utility connections. Mr. Salazar noted that simply prohibiting “permanent” connections could create enforcement issues because temporary connections, such as hoses, could still allow long-term occupancy.

The intent of the proposed amendment was to provide clearer and more enforceable standards regarding RV storage and use within the Historic Residential Zone.

11. AMENDMENT TO MTC 18.85 – VARIANCES AND SPECIAL USE PERMITS

Minor Deviations

Under MTC 18.85.060, references to the Board of Adjustment were proposed to be replaced with the Planning, Zoning and Historical Appropriateness Commission for consideration of minor deviations.

The existing section allows minor modifications to certain dimensional requirements, including reductions not exceeding approximately 10 percent under specified circumstances.

Applications and Final Approval

Under MTC 18.85.110, discussion concerned which body should have final approval authority for variances and special-use permits.

Mr. Salazar stated that the Commission had previously discussed the issue but that he did not recall a clear consensus from the work session. He indicated that the matter would therefore be brought forward for a vote rather than assuming agreement.

Filing Fees

Under MTC 18.85.140, proposed language would require filing fees for variances and special-use permits to be paid before a public hearing is scheduled.

The purpose was to avoid situations in which the Town incurred hearing and review costs before receiving payment from an applicant.

Additional Professional Review Fees

The proposed amendment would also allow the Town to charge an applicant for extraordinary professional review costs when a variance or special-use permit requires services beyond normal staff review.

Examples included engineering review, legal review, and other specialized consulting services.

The applicant would be notified of those additional costs, and the fee would be determined through coordination between Community Development staff and the applicant.

References to the Town Clerk/Treasurer would be replaced with Community Development where that department now administers the application process.

Setting Hearings

Mr. Salazar continued reviewing proposed amendments to MTC 18.85. He clarified that the Community Development Department would be responsible for scheduling required hearings and placing matters before the appropriate commission or governing body. The Commission had discussed adjusting the timing requirement for the first hearing so that it could occur sooner than 30 days while still allowing sufficient time for processing, with an outside period discussed of approximately 45 days.

Under MTC 18.85.170, the Commission discussed removing language that would require members of the reviewing body to personally inspect the property. Mr. Salazar stated that commissioners should not be individually visiting sites in connection with pending cases unless properly handled through the established review process.

Under MTC 18.85.190, language was proposed to clarify that whichever body gives final approval—whether the Board of Adjustment, Planning Commission, or Board of Trustees—would be the body responsible for adopting written findings and taking the actions required by the code.

Additional language was also proposed to clarify responsibility for forwarding decisions and resolutions to applicants after final action.

A commissioner questioned highlighted language referencing MTC 18.85.160. Mr. Salazar clarified that the language was already contained in the existing code and had only remained highlighted in the working document.

Mr. Salazar stated that this concluded the proposed amendments presented during the Public Hearing.

Chair Walkinshaw then concluded the Public Hearing and announced that the Commission would proceed into the Regular Meeting.

Commissioners Present

- Chair Eric Walkinshaw
- Secretary Lori Miller
- Commissioner Mulvihill
- Commissioner Alvillar
- Commissioner Lucero

Staff Present

- Community Development Eddie Salazar
- Community Development Paulo Rocha
- Historic Specialist Liana Aguirre

Public Present

- C. Alexander
- Andrea Bryan
- Trina Witter
- Karin Rice

REGULAR MEETING 6 PM

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Walkinshaw called the Regular Meeting of the Planning, Zoning and Historical Appropriateness Commission to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Present: Chair Walkinshaw; Secretary Miller; Commissioner Alvillar; Commissioner Lucero; Commissioner Mulvihill

Absent: Vice Chair Gallegos; Commissioner Paz

A quorum was established.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion: Commissioner Mulvihill

Second: Secretary Miller

Vote: 4-0

Outcome: Motion carried; the agenda was approved.

4. PUBLIC INPUT

Chair Walkinshaw opened the floor for public comment regarding both the historic-property nominations and the proposed Town Code amendments.

Chris Alexander

Mr. Alexander identified himself as an eighth-generation Mesilla resident and stated that his family had lived in the area for more than 400 years. He discussed his family's historical involvement in Mesilla and his own approximately 30 years of service on various Town boards and commissions.

Regarding the property identified as the Colonel Fountain residence, Mr. Alexander stated that Colonel Fountain was his great-great-grandfather and asserted that the nominated property was never Fountain's residence. He stated that the property belonged to his great-great-grandmother and that Colonel Fountain had lived in only one residence in Mesilla. He argued that although the nominated building itself was historically significant and should be protected, it should be registered under the correct historic ownership rather than under Colonel Fountain's name.

Regarding the silo property, Mr. Alexander stated that the silo was the only historically significant structure remaining on the property because the original barns and other historic structures had been demolished. He stated that if the silo were designated historic, the designation should ensure that it could not later be removed during redevelopment.

He also expressed concern about increased development density and argued that Mesilla's existing zoning framework had played an important role in preserving the Town's historic character.

Mr. Alexander further stated that the property identified as the Griggs Home should more accurately be identified as the Chavez-Griggs Home based on family history.

He urged the Town to ensure that the historical information used for local nominations is accurate and supported by proper research before final action.

No additional public comments were received.

5. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda consisted of approval of the prior Work Session and Regular Meeting minutes.

Motion: Secretary Miller

Second: Commissioner Lucero

Vote: 4-0

Outcome: Motion carried; the Consent Agenda was approved.

6. ACTION AND CONSIDERATION

A. BUSINESS LICENSE #1521 – MESILLA VALLEY RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL CLEANING LLC, 2212 CALLE DE SAN ALBINO

Mr. Salazar presented Business License #1521, submitted by Jorge Larrazabal, requesting approval to operate a residential and commercial cleaning business from his home at 2212 Calle de San Albino.

The property is located in the Historic Commercial Zone. Mr. Salazar explained that the business would operate as a home occupation. Cleaning services would be performed off-site, supplies would be stored inside the residence in a designated closet, and customers would not visit the residence for business purposes.

The applicant had submitted the required home-occupation checklist, site plan, tax identification information, proof of ownership, and other required business documentation.

Mr. Salazar reviewed the home-occupation requirements, including that the business remain incidental to the residential use, that there be no outdoor storage, that commercial activity not alter the residential character of the property, and that parking and business-related traffic not adversely affect neighboring properties.

A nearby resident, Karin Rice, stated that she did not object to Mr. Larrazabal operating the business but expressed concern about the potential visual and neighborhood impacts if multiple commercial vehicles were parked on the property. She also raised concerns about existing trash and activity in the area and asked how those impacts would be enforced if the business were approved.

Mr. Salazar responded that concerns involving trash or nuisance conditions could be investigated separately by Code Enforcement. He emphasized that home occupations are subject to strict requirements intended to preserve the residential appearance and character of the property.

He stated that customers, excessive traffic, outdoor business activity, and multiple commercial vehicles would not be permitted in a manner inconsistent with the home-occupation requirements. The application indicated that all actual business activity would occur off-site.

Motion: Commissioner Alvillar

Second: Commissioner Mulvihill

Vote: 4-0

Outcome: Motion carried; Business License #1521 was approved.

8. CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR LOCAL HISTORIC REGISTER NOMINATIONS

A. 2201 AVENIDA DE MESILLA – THREE HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Mr. Salazar addressed concerns raised during public comment regarding the accuracy of historical information.

He explained that staff relies on historical inventories, public records, archival research, and available sources when preparing nominations. He emphasized that staff welcomes additional information from longtime residents and families with direct historical knowledge.

Mr. Salazar stated that when significant historical information is provided at the meeting itself, staff may not have adequate time to verify it before Commission action. He reminded commissioners that they could postpone consideration if they did not feel comfortable proceeding.

Regarding the three structures at 2201 Avenida de Mesilla, Mr. Salazar stated that the existing documentation dated back to the Town's 1980 historic inventory and that the owner had been cooperative and interested in having the property locally designated so that it could receive additional protection and potentially qualify for preservation funding.

Motion: Commissioner Alvillar

Second: Secretary Miller

Vote: 4-0

Outcome: Motion carried; the Commission recommended approval of the three structures at 2201 Avenida de Mesilla for inclusion on the Town of Mesilla Historic and Cultural Register.

B. 1560 CALLE DE EL PASO – HISTORIC SILO

The Commission considered the historic silo at 1560 Calle de El Paso.

Mr. Salazar clarified that the proposal did not involve rezoning the property. The nomination concerned only the historic silo itself.

He explained that the property is not presently located within a historic zone, so placing the silo on the local historic register would allow the Town to apply historic-preservation protections to that specific structure.

Mr. Salazar stated that preserving agricultural structures such as the silo was consistent with objectives identified in the Town's Comprehensive Plan regarding preservation of agricultural lands and historically significant structures.

A commissioner thanked staff for clarifying that the action concerned preservation of the silo rather than rezoning the entire property.

Motion: Commissioner Mulvihill

Second: Commissioner Lucero

Vote: 4-0

Outcome: Motion carried; the Commission recommended approval of the silo at 1560 Calle de El Paso for inclusion on the local historic register.

C. GRIGGS HOME / CHAVEZ-GRIGGS HOME

The Commission considered the property commonly identified in the existing historical documentation as the Griggs Home.

Mr. Salazar explained that the property did not currently have a formal street address and was identified through a Doña Ana County parcel number. Staff intended to improve address verification as part of future GIS work.

A commissioner stated that, based on the public testimony received, the property name should potentially be changed to the Chavez-Griggs Home.

Discussion followed regarding whether the Commission's action concerned the building itself or the historical name attached to it. Staff clarified that the primary action before the Commission was whether to recognize and preserve the structure as historically significant. Historical names and supporting narratives could later be corrected or amended if additional verified information was obtained.

Commissioner Lucero asked whether approval would result in the property being identified under the corrected name on the National Register.

Mr. Salazar clarified that the action concerned the Town's local historic register, not the National Register. The historical narrative could later be amended if staff received reliable documentation supporting a correction.

Ms. Aguirre reiterated that the fundamental question before the Commission was whether the building itself was historic. She welcomed additional information that could improve the accuracy of the historical record.

Motion: Secretary Miller

Second: Commissioner Mulvihill

Vote: 3-1

Outcome: Motion carried 3-1; the structure was recommended for inclusion on the Town's local historic register.

D. 2551 CALLE DE PRINCIPAL – TEXAS PACIFIC HOTEL

The Commission considered the property identified as the Texas Pacific Hotel.

Mr. Salazar explained that he had originally suggested the property for nomination and that Ms. Aguirre and staff had continued researching its history.

He acknowledged that historical documentation remained limited but noted the building's reported associations with land grants, a hotel, bar, pool hall, and other community activity.

Mr. Salazar also stated that the building had recently acquired a new owner who was a contractor experienced with historic buildings. The property had previously experienced deterioration and fire damage, and the new owner intended to work through the Town's required processes to restore the building.

Mr. Salazar supported the nomination based on the building's historical role and architectural significance.

Motion: Commissioner Mulvihill

Second: Commissioner Lucero

Vote: 4-0

Outcome: Motion carried; the Commission recommended approval of 2551 Calle de Principal, the Texas Pacific Hotel property, for inclusion on the local historic register.

E. 2480 CALLE DE SAN ALBINO – FORMERLY IDENTIFIED AS COLONEL ALBERT JENNINGS FOUNTAIN PROPERTY

The Commission considered the historic property at 2480 Calle de San Albino.

Mr. Salazar stated that the historical information presented during public comment concerning the property's association with Colonel Fountain was unexpected and warranted additional research. He indicated that staff intended to speak further with Mr. Alexander and review any additional historical documentation available.

Mr. Salazar emphasized that regardless of the disputed historical name, the building itself appeared historically significant and remained in relatively good condition. Staff supported including the structure on the local register so that it could receive continued preservation protection and potentially qualify for future preservation funding.

Commissioners discussed whether the nomination should proceed without using Colonel Fountain's name until the historical association could be verified.

The Commission agreed that preservation of the building itself was the immediate issue and that the name could be removed pending further research.

The original motion was amended to remove the reference to Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain and require further research and verification of the property's historical association before that information was used.

Original Motion: Commissioner Mulvihill

Second: Secretary Miller

Amended Motion: Recommend approval of the historic structure at 2480 Calle de San Albino without identifying it as the Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain property, pending additional historical research and verification.

First to Amendment: Commissioner Mulvihill

Second to Amendment: Commissioner Alvillar

Vote: 4-0

Outcome: Motion carried with the condition that the disputed historical name be removed pending further research.

9. CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR PROPOSED TOWN CODE AMENDMENTS

A. MTC 15.15 – BUILDING CODE

Mr. Salazar summarized the proposed Building Code amendments previously presented during the Public Hearing.

The amendments focused primarily on the issuance and expiration of permits. A Town construction/zoning permit would generally remain valid for one year, with Community Development determining the official issuance date after all required documents and conditions had been satisfied.

A six-month extension could be granted after expiration, and the Commission discussed allowing an additional six-month extension when the project remained exactly the same as originally approved. Any substantive changes to the approved project would require a new permit.

Mr. Salazar also reiterated that the Board of Trustees retains discretion to waive certain permit fees for qualifying governmental agencies or similar entities.

Motion: Secretary Miller

Second: Commissioner Lucero

Vote: 4-0

Outcome: Motion carried; the Commission recommended approval of the proposed amendments to MTC 15.15.

B. MTC 18.15 – ESTABLISHMENT OF ZONE BOUNDARIES

Mr. Salazar summarized the proposed amendments concerning properties divided by multiple zoning designations.

He emphasized that the Town was not proposing to rezone properties. Rather, staff was attempting to clarify the correct zoning designation where existing zoning-map boundaries pass through individual parcels.

As an example, he referenced the elementary school property, portions of which appeared to fall within different zoning categories.

Mr. Salazar stated that the Town should periodically review and formally approve its zoning map so that corrections and clarifications remain current and are properly documented.

Motion: Commissioner Alvillar

Second: Commissioner Mulvihill

Vote: 4-0

Outcome: Motion carried; the Commission recommended approval of the proposed amendments to MTC 18.15.

C. MTC 18.35 – HISTORICAL RESIDENTIAL ZONE

Mr. Salazar summarized the proposed amendments to the Historical Residential Zone relating primarily to recreational vehicles.

He stated that the Historical Residential Zone is among the Town's most sensitive areas and that preservation of its residential character is especially important.

The amendments were intended to address RVs parked in visible locations and RVs being used as long-term living quarters with water hoses, extension cords, or similar temporary utility connections.

Mr. Salazar explained that Town Code generally allows one primary residence per parcel and may permit a qualifying casita, but use of an RV as an additional long-term dwelling is not intended to be allowed.

Additional Off-Street Parking Concern

Chair Walkinshaw raised a separate concern regarding language in MTC 18.35.060(G) and its reference to the Town's general off-street parking requirements.

He questioned language that appeared to exclude private garages from counting toward required off-street parking and noted that carports were not clearly addressed.

Chair Walkinshaw stated that if a garage or carport cannot count toward required off-street parking, residents could theoretically be forced to park vehicles on the street even though they had available parking on their property, which appeared contrary to the purpose of the regulation.

Commissioners discussed whether the issue should be addressed immediately or returned to a future work session because it had not been part of the previously reviewed RV amendments.

Mr. Salazar stated that commissioners could make additional changes during the meeting if they were comfortable doing so, but they could also postpone the matter for additional study.

Discussion continued regarding the meaning of the existing off-street parking requirement and whether garages and carports should count toward satisfying that requirement.

Mr. Salazar continued explaining that the intent of the existing parking requirement is to ensure that residential properties provide adequate parking outside the public right-of-way. He noted that many property owners use garages for storage or work areas rather than vehicle parking, which is why counting a garage toward the required number of spaces could create parking shortages.

The Commission reviewed the applicable parking table and discussed whether carports should be treated in the same manner as private garages.

After further discussion, the Commission agreed to amend the proposed language in MTC 18.35.060(G) so that required off-street parking shall not include a private garage or carport when calculating required parking spaces.

Amended Motion: Commissioner Mulvihill

Second: Secretary Miller

Amendment: Add language to MTC 18.35.060(G) stating that required off-street parking shall not include a private garage or carport in calculating the required parking area.

Vote: Motion passed with the amendment.

Outcome: The Commission recommended approval of the proposed MTC 18.35 amendments with the additional parking-language amendment.

D. MTC 18.85 – VARIANCES AND SPECIAL USE PERMITS

The Commission considered the proposed amendments to MTC 18.85 – Variances and Special Use Permits.

Mr. Salazar reviewed the principal changes, explaining that many were intended to clarify responsibilities and remove outdated references.

Under MTC 18.85.060, the reference to the Board of Adjustment would be replaced with the Planning, Zoning and Historical Appropriateness Commission for certain minor deviations and modifications.

Under MTC 18.85.110, the proposed language would clarify that the Board of Adjustment retains final authority over variances while the Board of Trustees retains final authority over special-use permits. Community and Economic Development staff would provide the required forms and determine what information applicants must submit.

Under MTC 18.85.140, applicants would be required to pay applicable filing fees before a public hearing is scheduled.

The same section would also allow the Town to recover extraordinary professional-review costs, such as engineering or legal fees, when an application requires review beyond the normal staff process. The fee would be coordinated between Community and Economic Development staff and the applicant.

Mr. Salazar explained that references assigning these responsibilities to the Town Clerk/Treasurer were being replaced with references to Community and Economic Development because that department now administers these applications.

The proposed amendments would also clarify that Community and Economic Development staff—not PZHAC or another reviewing body—are responsible for scheduling hearings.

Mr. Salazar further discussed language regarding site investigations. References requiring members of the reviewing body to visit properties were proposed for removal. He stated that commissioners, trustees, and members of the Board of Adjustment should not independently visit sites associated with pending applications prior to the hearing.

Under MTC 18.85.190, the proposed language would clarify that the reviewing body that gives final approval is responsible for issuing findings and taking the actions required by the code.

Where PZHAC or another body is only making a recommendation to the Governing Board, the language would reflect that the body is recommending, rather than adopting, written findings.

Under MTC 18.85.210, the amendments would also clarify that the approving body is responsible for ensuring that the applicant receives the final decision or resolution.

Motion: Commissioner Mulvihill

Second: Commissioner Alvillar

Vote: 4-0

Outcome: Motion carried; the Commission recommended approval of the proposed amendments to MTC 18.85.

10. COMMISSIONERS / STAFF COMMENTS

Community and Economic Development

Mr. Salazar introduced the Town's new Community Development Coordinator, Paulo Rocha.

He stated that Mr. Rocha had completed a competitive interview process, lived in Mesilla, and was joining the Community and Economic Development team.

Paulo Rocha

Mr. Rocha introduced himself to the Commission and residents. He stated that he was a Mesilla resident and was pleased to be joining the Town staff.

He explained that he attended New Mexico State University and earned a business degree. His professional background included retail and office experience, and he expressed enthusiasm about serving the Mesilla community and working with Mr. Salazar.

Mr. Salazar also welcomed a returning attendee who had recently experienced health difficulties and stated that he was glad to see him doing better.

Training Opportunities

Mr. Salazar reminded commissioners of Municipal League training scheduled for September 9.

Several commissioners had already committed to attending. Those still interested were asked to notify staff promptly so registration and lodging could be arranged before late fees applied.

Mr. Salazar clarified that another Municipal League conference scheduled for later in August was geared primarily toward elected officials, department heads, fire officials, marshals, and other municipal personnel rather than PZHAC commissioners.

He stated that he did not plan to attend that conference because he intended to remain in Mesilla to catch up on projects and assist with training Mr. Rocha.

Historic Preservation Comments

Ms. Liana Aguirre thanked Karin Rice for assisting with the historic-property nominations. She emphasized that some of the strongest historical information comes from property owners, descendants, and longtime residents who have direct knowledge of a property's history.

She encouraged residents whose families have lived in Mesilla for generations to share their stories and historical information with the Town so that the local record can be as complete and accurate as possible.

Ms. Aguirre stated that Preservation Week had been intended in part to encourage greater community participation and engagement in historic-preservation efforts.

She also reported that the Historic Preservation newsletter remained in development and would include information regarding proposed changes to Section 106 review.

Ms. Aguirre stated that she intended to schedule a future informational meeting concerning Section 106 and hoped that members of the public, Town officials, and commissioners would attend.

She concluded by emphasizing that her office remained open to residents wishing to provide historical information or discuss preservation matters.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Walkinshaw adjourned the meeting at 7:27 P.M.

The Regular Meeting concluded following Commissioners/Staff Comments.

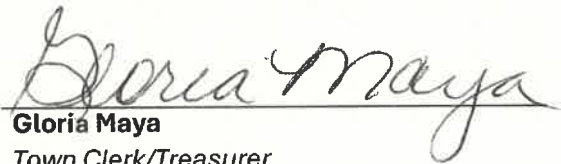
APPROVED on September 8, 2026 by:



Eric Walkinshaw, Chair
Planning, Zoning and Historical Appropriateness Commission



ATTEST:



Gloria Maya
Town Clerk/Treasurer