Town of Mesilla, New Mexico

TOWN OF MESILLA

PLANNING, ZONING AND HISTORICAL APPROPRIATENESS COMMISSION (PZHAC)

WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 05, 2026

Mesilla Town Hall - 2231 Avenida de Mesilla, Mesilla, New Mexico

(MINUTES)

Commissioners Present

- Vice Chair Gallegos
- Secretary Miller
- Commissioner Alvillar
- Commissioner Mulvihill
- Commissioner Lucero

Staff Present

- Community Development Eddie Salazar
- Community Development Paulo Rocha
- Community Development Liana Aguirre
- NM CID Thomas Maese

Public Present

- Felix Armijo
- Sam Bernal
- Annette Granado

WORK SESSION 5:00 PM

The Planning, Zoning and Historical Appropriateness Commission (PZHAC) convened a work session at approximately 5:00 p.m. The work session focused on matters associated with the property at 2450 Calle de Principal and the previously approved project for Felix Armijo. Staff explained that the current request and the earlier approval were being treated separately so the Commission could distinguish the new work from the conditions and representations associated with the original project.

PZHAC Case #062169 - 2450 Calle de Principal - Felix Armijo

Staff reviewed the request for red/clay-colored brick pavers and fencing at the Historic Commercial property. The pavers would provide a solid accessible route from the parking area to the building entrances. Staff explained that roof drainage from the south side could not discharge across the pedestrian route; the canales would be collected by guttering, brought toward the southwest corner, and routed beneath the pavers toward the drainage pond.

The Commission discussed the proposed fencing around the ponding area and the need to protect pedestrians while maintaining the historic character of the area immediately adjacent to the Plaza. The applicant initially proposed wrought iron. Commissioners discussed alternatives including latillas/coyote fencing and landscaping. The discussion ultimately favored latillas/coyote-style screening as a more historically compatible treatment, while retaining the required safety enclosure.

The Commission and building-code representative clarified that water from the roof could not be discharged onto the accessible walking surface because it could create a slipping or freezing hazard. The applicant agreed that the drainage would be carried under the pavers rather than across the top of the walkway.

The Commission also discussed the electrical panel. The applicant had installed wood directly around the panel after earlier aesthetic discussions. It was clarified that the panel must remain accessible and maintain required working clearances. The wood covering would therefore be removed, while the zoning requirement to screen the equipment from street view would still be satisfied through a separate screen, hedge, fence, or other historically appropriate treatment that does not interfere with electrical or fire-code access.

Commissioners returned to the appearance of the proposed fence. Because the project is immediately adjacent to the historic Plaza and National Historic Landmark area, the Commission emphasized that new construction should be compatible with the historic setting. Latillas/coyote fencing was discussed as a practical way to screen the drainage

pond and electrical equipment while providing the required barrier. The applicant indicated willingness to use latillas. The Commission discussed a height generally within the Town's six-foot fence limitation and the need for the gate to receive the same treatment.

The building-code representative confirmed that the fence and gate could not interfere with the restaurant's required emergency exit route. The Commission also discussed the depth of the drainage pond and whether additional guard protection would be required. Based on the dimensions discussed, the pond was understood to remain below the threshold that would independently require a guard, while the front barrier remained important for safety and screening.

Discussion of Previously Approved PZHAC Case #061823 - 2450 Calle de Principal

Staff then shifted to the previously approved case for the same property. Staff explained that the original project had already gone through a historic-appropriateness work session and approval process in 2023. Because the approval already existed, staff presented the matter for discussion and direction rather than as a new action item. The Commission reviewed the original packet and elevations to determine whether the completed or installed work reflected what had been approved.

The applicant stated that his contractor had used doors and windows similar to those used on other Mesilla projects and believed those products were acceptable based on past practice. The applicant emphasized that, had he understood that natural wood doors and a different window treatment were required, he would have incorporated those items originally. Commissioners responded that the elevations submitted with the approved plans were the visual basis on which the Commission evaluated the project, particularly because of the property's prominent historic location.

The Commission discussed the location of a bathroom/side window and the relationship to the firewall and property line. Staff and the building-code representative reviewed the separation requirements and possible corrective options. A clear fire-rated or fire-resistive film was discussed as a potential way to address the window without removing the entire assembly, subject to confirmation that the product meets applicable building-code requirements.

Discussion then focused on the exterior doors and window trim. Commissioners noted that the approved elevations showed a more traditional Territorial/historic appearance and that the installed doors did not reflect that appearance. Possible cosmetic modifications were discussed, but the building-code representative cautioned that field modifications to rated doors or windows could affect product approvals and warranties. The Commission

continued to seek a solution that would comply with building code while also satisfying the historic-design approval.

The building-code representative clarified that the installed doors were exterior-rated insulated doors and therefore were not, by themselves, a building-code violation. The issue before the Commission was one of zoning and historic appropriateness. Staining or other aesthetic treatment was discussed, but commissioners concluded that the installed doors did not match the design represented in the approved elevations.

The Commission reached a general consensus that the exterior doors should be replaced with wood doors of a historically compatible design, without the modern glazed appearance. Commissioners recommended that the applicant submit photographs of the proposed replacement doors before purchasing them to avoid further expense or misunderstanding. Territorial-style wood framing around the windows was also discussed. The applicant indicated he would work with the direction provided. The work session concluded after confirming the principal outstanding items: ponding/drainage treatment, screening, the bathroom window/code solution, exterior doors, and historic-style window framing.

Regular Meeting 6 PM

Commissioners Present

- Vice Chair Gallegos
- Secretary Miller
- Commissioner Alvillar
- Commissioner Mulvihill
- Commissioner Lucero

Staff Present

- Community Development Eddie Salazar
- Community Development Paulo Rocha
- Community Development Liana Aguirre
- NM CID Thomas Maese

Public Present

- Felix Armijo
- Sam Bernal
- Andrea Bryan

- Greg Lester
- Kennet Magoon
- John Robinson
- Anita Rivard
- Janice Cook
- Bill Cook

REGULAR MEETING 6 PM

Vice Chair Gallegos called the regular meeting to order at approximately 6:08 p.m. and announced the date as Monday, October 5, 2026. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

1. CALL TO ORDER / 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / 3. ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Roll call was taken. Secretary Miller, Commissioner Alvillar, Commissioner Mulvihill, and Commissioner Lucero were present. Vice Chair Gallegos presided. A quorum was declared.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Secretary Miller

Second: Commissioner Mulvihill

Secretary Miller moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Mulvihill seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Miller - yes; Alvillar - yes; Mulvihill - yes; Lucero - yes. Motion passed 4-0.

4. PUBLIC INPUT

Annette Granado, speaking on behalf of her mother, Rebecca Segovia of 2928 La Mesilla Circle, reiterated that they were not opposed to Sam Bernal's subdivision so long as Ms. Segovia's private road was not used for access to the subdivision, either now or in the future. She noted that the revised access was proposed directly from Calle del Sur and asked whether the notarized letter discussed by the Board of Trustees had been provided. She requested that any such letter become part of the official subdivision record and emphasized that the family wanted the newly proposed access to be the regular and emergency access for the subdivision.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: Secretary Miller

Second: Commissioner Alvillar

Secretary Miller moved to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Alvillar seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Miller - yes; Alvillar - yes; Mulvihill - yes; Lucero - yes. Motion passed 4-0.

6. CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

A. PZHAC Case #062169 - 2450 Calle de Principal - Felix Armijo

Motion: Commissioner Mulvihill

Second: Commissioner Lucero

Staff presented the request associated with the Historic Commercial property, including red brick pavers, fencing, and drainage improvements. The pavers would provide access from the parking area to the building entry doors and support ADA accessibility. Staff reiterated that exterior changes in the historic district require PZHAC review for compliance with the Town's historic-preservation standards and final approval by the Board of Trustees.

Commissioners incorporated the work-session discussion into the action item. The proposed wrought-iron treatment was changed to latillas/coyote-style fencing. The wood installed directly around the electrical panel was to be removed, with the panel screened from street view in a manner that maintains required access. The roof drainage/canales were to be routed beneath the pavers rather than across the pedestrian surface.

Commissioner Mulvihill moved to approve PZHAC Case #062169 with the conditions discussed during the work session, including the latillas/coyote-style fence treatment, removal of the wood covering from the electrical panel with appropriate screening, and routing the drainage beneath the pavers. Secretary Miller seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Miller - yes; Alvillar - yes with conditions; Mulvihill - yes with conditions; Lucero - yes. Motion passed 4-0.

B. PZHAC Case #062172 - 2615 Calle del Sur - Sam Bernal - Alternate Summary Subdivision

Motion: Secretary Miller

Second: Commissioner Mulvihill

Staff presented Mr. Bernal's request to divide approximately 1.09 acres in the Historic Residential zone into two parcels and realign the parcel on which he resides. Access was proposed through his property from Calle del Sur. The private access would begin as a 20-foot easement and widen to approximately 35 feet alongside the new parcels. A hammerhead turnaround would be provided to meet fire-code requirements, and a fire hydrant was proposed on La Mesilla Circle. Staff stated that the private road was to be capable of supporting a 75,000-pound fire apparatus.

Staff reviewed the requested variance from the Historic Residential public-street frontage requirement and the request associated with paved street/curb-and-gutter improvements because the access would be private. Staff also reviewed the alternate summary subdivision provisions, noting which subdivision requirements may be waived unless specifically required by the Commission, and confirmed that Public Works, Fire, Community Development, and New Mexico CID had reviewed the proposal within their respective areas.

Commissioners asked whether the fire-access issue that had previously concerned the Board of Trustees had been resolved. Staff responded that the Fire Department had reviewed and signed off on the proposed access and turnaround. Eddie Salazar clarified that the Board wanted the Commission to understand that an alternate summary subdivision does not eliminate the Commission's authority to require appropriate subdivision safeguards. He also addressed the notarized letter discussed by the Board, explaining that it had been recommended but had not yet been submitted.

The Commission discussed the neighboring family's concern that traffic might continue through the existing private road and considered whether a physical barrier or other measure could reduce the possibility of unintended use. Staff noted that the Commission could not control private-property use beyond its authority, but commissioners expressed interest in creating a clear separation between the new access and the neighboring private road.

Commissioners reviewed the draft plat and requested that an obsolete/internal dotted boundary line be removed as part of the final legal replat. Staff confirmed that, if approved, a licensed surveyor would prepare the final plat reflecting the approved changes. The Commission also discussed notice requirements and clarified that certified letters to surrounding owners were not listed among the specific alternate summary subdivision requirements being applied to this request.

Commissioner Mulvihill stated that the notarized letter should be required. The Commission also clarified that the variance request encompassed both the public-

frontage issue and the private-road/paving and curb-and-gutter issue, even though the application wording could be read as identifying them separately.

Commissioner Mulvihill moved to add the condition requiring a notarized letter stating that the neighboring private road would not be used for access and to clarify the additional component of the variance request. The motion was seconded. Roll call vote: Miller - yes; Alvillar - yes; Mulvihill - yes; Lucero - yes. Motion passed 4-0.

C. PZHAC Case #062188 - 2200 Calle de Los Huertos - John S. Robinson

Motion: Secretary Miller

Second: Commissioner Alvillar

Staff presented Mr. Robinson's request to remove approximately 550 square feet of cracked flagstone sidewalk and replace it with stamped, colored concrete at a Historic Residential property. Staff explained that most of the work would occur inside the enclosed front-entry area and would have minimal visibility from the street. The existing flagstone had cracked and become a tripping hazard. The proposed stamped concrete would use a square pattern and a color intended to remain close to the existing material.

Commissioner Alvillar asked whether the reference image's contrasting border was part of the proposal. Staff clarified that the white border was not proposed; only the stamped center treatment was being used as a visual reference, and the surrounding area would remain as existing.

Following discussion, the Commission proceeded to vote. Roll call vote: Miller - yes; Alvillar - yes; Mulvihill - yes; Lucero - yes. Motion passed 4-0.

D. Business License #1546 - 2456 Calle de Guadalupe - Strands of Enchantment

Motion: Commissioner Alvillar

Second: Commissioner Mulvihill

Staff presented the business-license application for Strands of Enchantment in the Historic Commercial zone. The business was described as a bead/jewelry studio selling beads, supplies, tools, books, and jewelry-making materials, with the applicant also designing and selling jewelry. Proposed hours were 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday. Staff noted that the applicant would be the only employee and that a parking fee would apply because there was no available on-site parking at the location.

The Commission reviewed the interior layout and departmental signatures. A commissioner noted that the date format on the signature page should be corrected to the

customary month/day format. Staff acknowledged the formatting error and agreed to correct it. A question about signage was deferred to the separate sign case.

Roll call vote on Business License #1546: Miller - yes; Alvillar - yes; Mulvihill - yes; Lucero - yes. Motion passed 4-0.

E. PZHAC Case #062189 - 2456 Calle de Guadalupe - Strands of Enchantment Signs

Motion: Commissioner Alvillar

Second: Secretary Miller

Staff presented a request for two exterior signs for Strands of Enchantment. The first was a projecting sign using an existing exterior wood mount, with a primary panel approximately 24 by 18 inches and two smaller attached panels approximately 24 by 8 inches. The second sign, approximately 43 by 28 inches, was proposed above the entry door. Staff reviewed the Town's projecting-sign, directory-sign, number-of-signs, and Historic Commercial wall-sign requirements.

Staff explained that the existing directory sign serving the complex could not simply be extended downward because doing so would create a height/code issue. The proposed projecting sign would use the same existing wood support previously used by another business. Commissioners confirmed that the request was for the projecting sign and the sign above the entry door.

Roll call vote on PZHAC Case #062189: Miller - yes; Alvillar - yes; Mulvihill - yes; Lucero - yes. Motion passed 4-0.

7. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Eddie Salazar advised the Commission that this would likely be his last routine meeting attending alongside Paulo Rocha, although he would continue to attend public hearings, more complex matters, or meetings when requested. He explained that he wanted to create appropriate separation so Mr. Rocha could take the lead on Commission matters, while assuring commissioners that staff would continue to ask questions and seek guidance when necessary. He thanked the Commission for helping staff through the transition.

Mr. Salazar reported on the recent conference and advised that the Town would need to review the new childcare law, SB 96, and determine what amendments may be necessary to Mesilla's code. He also reported that an ADHOC committee was being formed to work on the noise ordinance following the Board of Trustees work session. He noted an

upcoming outdoor economic-development conference in Ruidoso and stated that useful information would be brought back to the Town and Commission.

Ms. Liana Aguirre thanked the Commission for its preservation work and discussed the importance of buildings as symbols of Mesilla's heritage. She reported that a new historic-preservation newsletter had been prepared and that copies would be made available at Town Hall, with efforts to provide additional distribution locations. She also described a new informational handout for owners and prospective purchasers of historic homes, which would be available at Town Hall and on the Town website.

Ms. Aguirre reported on her trip to Washington, D.C., with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and discussions concerning preservation policy and proposed changes affecting federal historic-review processes. She also updated the Commission on the Blacksmith Shop ADHOC committee and the concept of adaptive reuse for historic structures. She discussed ongoing interest in recognizing Mesilla's agricultural lands and collecting primary sources and oral histories that document the agricultural history and labor that shaped the community.

Commissioner Mulvihill thanked Mr. Salazar for his assistance to the Commission and complimented Mr. Rocha's work. She asked for clarification regarding the doors and windows discussed during the earlier work session. Staff clarified that the original case had already been approved; the discussion was intended to clarify compliance with the approved elevations and conditions rather than to create a new action item. Commissioners and staff thanked one another for their work and assistance.

ADJOURNMENT 7:13 p.m.

The meeting was declared adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

APPROVED:

Eric Gallegos, Vice Chair
Planning, Zoning and Historical Appropriateness Commission

ATTEST:

Gloria Maya
Town Clerk/Treasurer