



Minutes

Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board
January 15, 2026

State of Texas

County of Brazoria

City of Freeport

BE IT REMEMBERED, that the Historical Commission and Main Street Advisory of Freeport, Texas, met on Thursday, January 15, 2026, at 5:00 PM at the Freeport The Nat Hickey Education Center located at 311 E Park Ave, Freeport, Texas, for the purpose of considering the following agenda items:

The following attendees were present:

Board Members: Irene Ocañas
Edith Fischer
Sandra Leavey
Betty Lopez
Michelle Backman
Flora Green
Jeff Crisp
James Wood

Staff: Maria Lopez - Main Street Coordinator
Robert Johnson-Economic Development Director
Loretta Cady-Interim Museum Manager

Visitors: Crystal Piña
David McGinty
Jarvis Davis-City Council Liaison

CALL TO ORDER:

Call to Order

Chair Irene Ocañas called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

Invocation/Pledge

Michelle Backman led the invocation, and Robert Johnson led the Pledge.

Public Comments - (This is an opportunity for citizens and visitors to address the Freeport Historical

Commission & Main Street Advisory Board on any agenda or non-agenda item. Individuals must register in advance and adhere to a (4) two-minute time limit.)

There were no public comments as no one had signed up to speak.

PRESENTATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Staff Announcements

Museum Update

Loretta Cady reported that the museum is doing well. She announced that a Martin Luther King Jr. event is scheduled for Saturday, where children can write their dreams on leaves to create a "dream tree" that will remain on display through February for Black History Month. Loretta also shared that she is partnering with the Smithsonian on traveling exhibits, including one on MLK's initiative to eradicate poverty and another introducing the National Museum of African American History. She noted that she is organizing the collections room and looking forward to working with the board on future projects.

Main Street Update

Maria Lopez invited board members to attend upcoming training sessions including:

- A roundtable in Richmond on January 28th hosted by the Houston-Galveston Council
- A La Porte roundtable on February 20th hosted by Texas Downtown

Maria mentioned that a new event is coming in March and that the Downtown Event Center event has been postponed due to venue booking and promotion timing issues. She also confirmed that she submitted the Quarter 4 report to Texas Main Street on Monday, January 12.

Chair Comments and Announcements

The Chair acknowledged and welcomed representatives from Mama C Restaurant, a new business coming to downtown Freeport. The restaurant owners shared they would be serving American comfort food with breakfast, lunch, and dinner Monday through Friday. They chose Freeport because of their connection to the area (having lived there for 20 years) and their belief in downtown's potential comeback.

Maria presented an acknowledgment to Mama C Restaurant and CSI Body Shop (the husband's business) for their contributions to the city and Main Street. CSI Body Shop restored the Santa mailbox for the tree lighting event, and they also provided an 8x8 backdrop wall for downtown events that is currently being painted by an artist.

BUSINESS-REGULAR SESSION:

Consideration and possible action to approve the December 18, 2025, meeting minutes.

The Freeport Historical Commission and Main Street Advisory Board reviewed the December 18, 2025, meeting minutes that were previously emailed. A motion to approve the December 18, 2025 meeting minutes was made by Jeff Crisp and seconded by Sandra Leavey, with all present voting "Aye"; the motion passed unanimously.

Consideration and possible action to make appointments to committees: Design, Economic Vitality, and Organization & Promotion.

Board members expressed their committee preferences:

- Irene Ocañas agreed to serve on Economic Vitality.
- Sandra Leavey and Betty Lopez chose to remain on the Design committee, with Betty indicating she

was not sure if she wanted to continue as chair.

- Edith Fischer would continue on the Promotion sub-committee.
- Maria read an email response from James Wood selecting Organization and Lon Siddall selecting Economic Vitality.

The board discussed the option to co-chair committees and noted that non-board members could be recruited to chair committees, particularly those with relevant skills such as architects for the Design committee.

Discussion on the Main Street *Transformation Strategy Work Plan* for 2026.

Maria Lopez led an extensive discussion on the Main Street Transformation Strategy Work Plan for 2026, explaining that this framework would guide their efforts throughout the year as required by Texas Main Street and Main Street America. She distributed a draft document she had prepared and invited the board to brainstorm goals for two main transformation strategies:

- Freeport Downtown Plan Implementation: The board identified three key goals:
- Separate the Freeport Historical Commission and Main Street Advisory Board to focus on historic preservation initiatives and apply to become a Certified Local Government.
- Complete an implementation roadmap for Memorial Park renovation
- Develop a roadmap for downtown infrastructure priorities
- Increase Downtown Activity and Business Recruitment in the Main Street District: The board identified three key goals:
 - Community engagement and education about the Main Street program
 - City staff and officials' engagement
 - Business recruitment (with a target of recruiting five businesses to downtown)

James Wood emphasized the importance of having different approaches for three distinct audiences: the public, the city government, and the business community. The board discussed the need for measurable goals and agreed that funding would be a critical component of any implementation roadmap.

The board also discussed the importance of collaboration with partners like EDC and working with the city building official to address vacant buildings, particularly on West Broad Street. Maria noted she would incorporate all these ideas into a formal document that could be reviewed and potentially approved at the February meeting.

Work Session:

Upcoming Events:

New Event: Move & Groove Downtown (March 2026)

Maria introduced a new event called "Move & Groove Downtown" planned for March 21, 2026. The event will feature a community walk with light breakfast, coffee, and water. Maria is working with Ita on the promotions subcommittee to plan the event. The museum could potentially open during the event to welcome participants. The goal is to increase downtown activity while promoting downtown buildings.

New Event: Historic Preservation Workshop (April 2026)

ITEMS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION- NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

Future Discussion Items for Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board

The next meeting is scheduled for February 19, 2026, and will include discussions on strategies to develop a Downtown Freeport property inventory and an introduction to the Freeport Downtown Flagpole Restoration Project and Campaign.

Board member James Wood suggested developing a clear message that the board could deliver consistently at all events and opportunities to address the public. He emphasized the importance of articulating that their efforts benefit everyone in Freeport, not just the downtown area. The board also discussed the need to address misconceptions about downtown events and the challenge of overcoming negative perceptions of Freeport that have persisted for generations.

The next Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory meeting is scheduled for February 19, 2026.

Discussion on strategies to develop a Downtown Freeport property inventory.

Introduction to the Freeport Downtown Flagpole Restoration Project and Campaign.

ADJOURNMENT:

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Betty Lopez, seconded by James Wood, with all present voting "Aye". The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:02 PM.



Maria Lopez, Main Street Coordinator
City of Freeport, Texas