



---

## Minutes

Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board  
February 19, 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, February 19, 2026 at 6:00 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:               Edith Fischer  
                                      Sandra Leavey  
                                      Betty Lopez  
                                      James Wood  
                                      Flora Green

Staff:                             Maria Lopez - Main Street Coordinator  
                                      Loretta Cady-Interim Museum Director  
                                      Dr. Danielle Kelly-City Manager

Visitors:                       Jarvis Davis-City Council Liaison  
                                      Melanie Oldham

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

#### Call to Order

Edith Fischer, Vice-Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

#### Invocation/Pledge

Betty Lopez led the invocation, and Edith Fischer 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:**

Main Street America-Main Streets in Action

Main Street Coordinator Maria Lopez introduced a three-and-a-half-minute video from Main Street America titled Main Streets in Action. She explained that the purpose of the presentation was to provide the board with an overview of what Main Street America does at the national level, including its role in revitalizing historic downtowns, supporting small business development, and fostering community-led economic development.

#### Staff Announcements

##### Museum Update

Museum staff member Loretta reported that the museum was doing well. Key updates included the following: the Black History Month exhibit had been well received and was scheduled to come down on the 27th, after which preparations would begin for an upcoming appearance by Dinosaur George, a featured presenter who drew approximately 400 visitors the previous year and was expected to draw more this year. The museum was also seeking quotes for a new security system that, per the IT director, would sound an alarm upon a break-in attempt and simultaneously transmit a live camera feed to the police department. Additionally, Brazosport College's Crafts Academy had offered to repair the museum's wind tunnel exhibit, which was in significant disrepair, using it as a learning project for their students before returning it fully renovated. The college would also examine the museum's train set to explore whether it could be restored to working order.

##### Main Street Update

Main Street Coordinator Maria Lopez stated that a board training was being planned and would likely be held on a Saturday, consisting of approximately two hours of training led by an outside facilitator. She anticipated having a confirmed date available by the March meeting. Lopez also announced that she and Loretta would be traveling to La Porte the following morning for a roundtable event, and noted that board members were still welcome to join if they reached out before the end of the meeting. Departure was planned for 7:15 AM.

#### Chair Comments/Announcements

Vice Chairperson Fischer invited any board comments. No comments were offered by any member.

### **BUSINESS-REGULAR SESSION:**

#### Consideration and possible action to approve the January 15, 2025, meeting minutes.

The Freeport Historical Commission and Main Street Advisory Board reviewed the January 15, 2026, meeting minutes that were previously emailed. A motion to approve the January 15, 2026 meeting minutes was made by Sandra Leavey and seconded by James Wood, with all present voting "Aye"; the motion passed unanimously.

#### Distribution and discussion of the MSA Board Handbook.

Coordinator Lopez presented a newly compiled board handbook distributed in binder form. She explained that the first tab contained guidance from Main Street America's board handbook, to be used as a reference for how the local Main Street program operates within the national framework. She noted that Main Street America evaluates and scores local programs, and directed members to the second tab, which contained the annual report submitted for 2025, including a community assessment worksheet that reflects how the program is scored. Lopez encouraged members to review the report at home and consider areas for improvement. She also noted that as the board progresses, additional materials—such as the transformation strategy work plan discussed later in the meeting—would be added to the binder as a living reference document. No questions were raised.

#### Introduction of the Freeport Downtown Flag Pole Restoration Project/Campaign.

Coordinator Lopez introduced the Downtown Freeport Beautification Project, specifically the historic flagpole restoration initiative. She described it as a collaborative effort between the Main Street Board and the Public Works Department, with potential involvement from the Parks and Recreation Board. Lopez noted that Public Works Director John Perez was unable to attend but was already aware of the project.

Lopez explained that the flagpole historically served as Freeport's hurricane alert system and that the project would involve repainting the pole, replacing the rope, making landscaping improvements, installing lighting such as spotlights facing the flag, and eventually placing a historical plaque to share the structure's story with the community. She noted that historical background on the flagpole was included in the document provided, drawn from the 2024 Historic District Design Guidelines.

A board member with historical knowledge of the pole recalled that it had also served for many years as the base of a

lit Christmas tree, with the Parks Department stringing lights along it, and that a star had been affixed to the top using a lift. The member offered to look for photographs and suggested that former Parks Director Larry Fansher might also have images from that era.

Board member James Wood was identified as the lead for volunteer coordination. Lopez noted that a volunteer waiver form was being prepared for liability purposes. No estimated budget had yet been finalized, as Lopez was still working with the interim Public Works Director, but she characterized the project as primarily a maintenance and beautification effort rather than a large capital expenditure.

Discussion turned to opportunities to engage the community around the project. One member suggested erecting signage near the flagpole to publicize the project in progress, including historical photographs and a description of what the restoration would entail, arguing that visible signage would raise awareness of the Main Street program even before physical work began. Vice Chairperson Fischer suggested considering the sale of commemorative pavers or painted bricks around the base as a fundraising mechanism. A board member raised the broader idea of eventually establishing a "Friends of Main Street" nonprofit entity to allow tax-deductible donations, though it was acknowledged this would be more relevant to larger future projects. Coordinator Lopez confirmed that board Chair Irene had already begun exploratory discussions about the process for establishing nonprofit status, noting it would be a multi-step process.

Lopez noted that John Perez was expected to attend the March meeting to advance the project further and that the Design Subcommittee, led by Betty Lopez, would take the lead on this initiative.

#### Discussion on the [DowntownTX.org](http://DowntownTX.org) vacant buildings registry.

Coordinator Lopez briefed the board on DowntownTX.org, a free platform provided by the Texas Historical Commission (THC) designed to host a property inventory for Main Street districts. Lopez reported that she had contacted THC and received virtual training from a coordinator named Madisson on how to use the platform. Lopez informed the board that Freeport's Main Street District already had 130 properties pre-loaded into the system, apparently entered by a previous Main Street manager. This meant the board would not need to conduct a full property inventory from scratch. What remained was to go through each property one by one and update its status—indicating whether it was vacant, for lease, for rent, or otherwise—and to add photographs and details such as square footage.

Lopez noted that once the profile was fully updated and made live, the site could be used to pitch downtown Freeport to prospective developers and businesses, functioning as a public-facing inventory of available commercial space. She also mentioned that the EDC was currently holding similar information offline due to it not being updated, and that a live registry would serve their needs as well. Lopez added that the ultimate goal beyond completing the registry was to pursue what THC calls an "Imagine the Possibilities Tour," in which prospective business owners and developers are brought to the district for a structured tour of available properties, with THC also able to provide design assistance to interested parties.

Board member James Wood volunteered to serve as the project manager for updating the registry, expressing comfort with the organizational and computer-based nature of the work. It was noted that any board member could be granted a login to the platform. Vice Chairperson Fischer confirmed that an action item to formally appoint a project leader for the DowntownTX.org registry would be added to the March meeting agenda.

#### Discussion and consideration of the FY26 Freeport Transformation Strategy Work Plan.

Coordinator Lopez presented the FY26 Freeport Transformation Strategy Work Plan, which she described as a document developed collaboratively with board member James Wood following the January meeting. She noted that the plan was organized around color-coded transformation strategies.

Transformation Strategy 1 – Comprehensive Downtown Plan & Historic District Design Guidelines Implementation contained three goals. The first was to conduct outreach initiatives to increase community awareness of the Freeport Comprehensive Downtown Plan and the historic design guidelines, through social media, events, and other channels. The second, which Lopez identified as her favorite, was to identify one priority catalytic streetscape or infrastructure project from the Comprehensive Downtown Plan and develop a written plan of action, including cost estimates and potential funding sources, that could ultimately be presented to City Council. Lopez noted this goal was shaped directly by the January discussion, in which infrastructure concerns in the downtown were a central topic. The third goal was to plan and implement a low-cost beautification project, with the flagpole restoration serving as one example, and Betty Lopez designated as lead through the Design Subcommittee.

Lopez explained that the board separation item discussed in January had been deliberately removed from the work plan, as it was deemed an administrative function rather than a Main Street Board goal. Vice Chairperson Fischer agreed, noting it was a matter governed by ordinance.

Transformation Strategy 2 – Increase Downtown Activity and Business Recruitment and Retention included three goals. The first was to conduct a vacancy assessment of West Broad Street properties and develop a targeted action strategy to support occupancy, including coordination with Building Official Reggie Harris on safety-related issues in those properties. The second goal was to increase visibility of the Freeport Main Street district among business partners, residents, volunteers, and visitors, with Vice Chairperson Fischer and James Wood identified as leads. Lopez noted this area was one where the program had scored lower in 2025, and emphasized that events going forward should be purposeful in communicating the program's revitalization mission, not merely social gatherings. The third goal was to complete the downtown building registry using DowntownTX.org, which tied directly to the item discussed under agenda item 4.

Lopez also reiterated the connection between the vacancy assessment and the building registry, noting that information gathered through the assessment should be entered into the registry.

Vice Chairperson Fischer commended Lopez and Wood for translating the January discussion into a structured, actionable document. The board approved the work plan as presented, with the understanding that it was a living document subject to amendment.

A motion to approve the FY26 Freeport Transformation Strategy Work Plan was made by Edith Fischer and seconded by Betty Lopez, with all present voting "Aye"; the motion passed unanimously.

### **COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

#### Economic Vitality Subcommittee

No representative was present and no update was provided.

#### Promotion & Organization Subcommittee

Vice Chairperson Fischer noted that the committee was working on the upcoming Move and Groove Downtown event happening March 21st, 2026. She reported that a fitness instructor had been tentatively secured to lead a warm-up and serve as a walk leader, with the event designed to be accessible to all fitness levels. The planned route would begin at Memorial Park, proceed down Broad Street, turn onto Cherry Street, stop at the corner slab, and return via Second Street back to the park, which would serve as the final stop for refreshments and breakfast. Approximately four designated stops had been identified, at which Betty Lopez would provide historical storytelling. Maria Lopez noted that downtown business owners had been engaged to participate. The board was reminded that sponsorships to offset the cost of breakfast items were still being accepted, and flyers with a QR code for event registration were available. Board members were encouraged to share the information and suggest any fitness or health-related organizations that might wish to participate. James Wood reported on the Organization Subcommittee, noting that he was still in the process of recruiting volunteers to serve on that subcommittee and that, for the time being, the promotion and organization functions remained informally combined until sufficient membership existed to justify a standalone subcommittee meeting.

#### Design Subcommittee

Betty Lopez reported that the Design Subcommittee had a project — the flagpole restoration — and would be meeting in March, at which time she would reach out to all subcommittee members.

### **NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING/UPCOMING EVENTS:**

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

The next regular meeting was confirmed for March 19, 2026, at 6:00 PM

#### Move & Groove Downtown 3.21.26

Discussed under Committee Updates.

#### Reimagining Main Street: Preservation & Occupancy Workshop 4.18.26

Maria Lopez described the Reimagining Main Street: Preservation & Occupancy Workshop, planned for April 18, 2026, as a two-hour event to be held in collaboration with the EDC and the building official. Building Official Reggie Harris would speak on building codes and occupancy requirements. EDC representative Robert Johnson, who has a background working with the THC, would speak on historic preservation. The EDC had agreed to provide breakfast. The city's audio-visual support had also been coordinated. Lopez noted that a commercial realtor was still being sought to present on leasing and renting to property owners, and that participation would be offered at no cost to the presenter. A board member suggested Mireles Diaz Realty as a potential contact given their work with commercial properties in the area. The meeting venue was still to be confirmed, with the museum being considered as a location.

### **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 6:48 PM.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maria Lopez". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Maria Lopez, Main Street Coordinator  
City of Freeport, Texas