



## Minutes

Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory  
Board-Special Meeting  
April 23, 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, April 23, 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: Sandra Leavey  
Betty Lopez  
Flora Green  
Michelle Backman  
Lon Siddall  
James Wood  
Irene Ocañas  
Edith Fischer

Staff: Maria Lopez - Main Street  
Coordinator

Visitors: Kathy Ragan  
David McGinty

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

#### Call to Order

Chairperson Irene Ocañas called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM on Thursday, April 23, 2026, at the Nat Hickey Education Center.

#### Invocation/Pledge

Lon led the invocation and 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) four-minute time limit.)

Kathy Ragan provided public comments suggesting the creation of a butterfly sanctuary instead of planting annual flowers in the downtown area. The resident recommended consulting with Texas Master Naturalist to identify plants that would attract butterflies and create a destination-type attraction rather than flowers that would need replanting each year. Chairperson Ocañas noted that similar ideas had been discussed and that plans were in development for that

area.

## **PRESENTATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

### Staff Announcements

#### Museum Update

Maria Lopez read Loretta's update on behalf of the interim museum director, who was not present. Key updates included:

- The museum will display the Humanities Texas Juneteenth traveling exhibition for the month before Juneteenth
- Old photo negatives are beginning to decay, so the museum is paying a local curation specialist to scan the negatives before deterioration continues
- Loretta attended both the THC conference and Texas Association of Museums conference this month, representing Freeport.

#### Main Street Update

Maria Lopez provided several Main Street updates:

- Created a one-page summary for the city's newly hired grant writing services to help them identify and apply for grants for Main Street projects
- Attended the Main Street Now conference in Tulsa, including visits to Sapulpa, Oklahoma, gaining ideas for downtown beautification and attending sessions on preservation, redevelopment of underutilized buildings, and developers' perspectives on downtown investment
- Planning to take initiative on Dia de los Muertos event this year and seeking one lead board member to assist, as she may be unavailable that day.
- Board member applications have closed and will be reviewed at the May meeting before going to council
- Quarter 1 report was submitted, emphasizing the importance of volunteer hours tracking
- After new board members are selected, officer selections will take place.

### Chair Comments/Announcements

No chair comments were provided.

## **BUSINESS-REGULAR SESSION:**

Consideration and possible action to approve the March 19, 2026, meeting minutes.

Receive an update, discuss, and consider possible action on the Historic Downtown Flagpole restoration project

Maria Lopez presented information on the historic downtown flagpole restoration project, explaining that the board needed to provide direction on how to proceed. Two main options were presented: pursuing the Texas Historical Commission marker process, which may involve additional time and cost, or proceeding with basic restoration work. Board members expressed strong support for pursuing the historical marker through the Texas Historical Commission rather than simply doing cosmetic improvements. Chairperson Ocañas emphasized the importance of capitalizing on Freeport's location in Brazoria County where the Republic of Texas began, noting that historical markers attract visitors interested in Texas history. The board discussed that the application fee is only \$100 and that the process would provide proper guidelines for restoration.

Visitor David mentioned that Brazoria County Historical Commission also provides medallions at no cost. Sandra volunteered to find the flagpole's maintenance history, and the group discussed the need to research the flagpole's history more thoroughly before applying.

The board agreed that applying for the historical marker should be done before any restoration work to ensure compliance with historical preservation standards. Sandra made a motion to have Maria work on putting together the application and use budget funds to pay for the application process. Lon seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Receive an update, discuss, and consider possible action on beautification recommendations submitted to staff.

This agenda item was deferred to be discussed under the Design subcommittee update later in the meeting.

Receive an update, discuss, and consider possible action to identify two downtown infrastructure projects.

Maria Lopez explained that the board needed to identify two manageable infrastructure projects for potential implementation, suggesting one localized project (such as Memorial Park improvements) and one with broader citywide impact (such as wayfinding or sidewalk improvements).

Board members expressed concern that infrastructure projects might be beyond their scope, with electrical and utility issues being the primary concerns. James Wood emphasized that electrical infrastructure should be the foundation for any other improvements, noting safety issues with current electrical systems in Memorial Park and throughout downtown.

The discussion revealed that wayfinding and alley improvements were already being addressed by Robert and the EDC, so the board focused on electrical infrastructure as the primary need. Sandra noted safety concerns with exposed and deteriorating electrical systems in the park area.

The board agreed that a comprehensive electrical infrastructure assessment and upgrade was needed for the downtown area, including Memorial Park and Second Street, to support future lighting and other improvements. Sandra made a motion to direct Maria to request funding during the budget process for updating and repairing all electrical services in the Main Street area, and to coordinate with Robert on wayfinding and alley progress. Lon seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Consideration and possible action to approve the DowntownTX Freeport profile summary.

James Wood presented a draft profile summary for the DowntownTX website but indicated that additional work was needed to merge his version with Robert's more tourist-oriented version. Wood explained that his approach focused more on economic data and opportunities for investors and entrepreneurs rather than tourist attractions.

The board discussed including information about Freeport as a birding destination, with Betty Lopez emphasizing that birders spend significant money and that Freeport ranks high nationally for bird counts and migration patterns. Wood agreed to incorporate this information.

Wood explained that the profile should appeal to people looking for business opportunities and investment potential rather than just tourism, noting that economic data, demographics, and available properties would be more valuable for the intended audience.

The item was postponed to allow time for Wood to merge the different approaches and present a completed version at the next meeting.

## **COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

### Economic Vitality subcommittee update

Chairperson Ocañas reported no activity due to personal commitments preventing subcommittee meetings.

### Promotion subcommittee update

No specific update was provided for the promotion subcommittee.

### Organization subcommittee update

James Wood, serving as a subcommittee of one, provided an update on the DowntownTX website inventory project. He reported receiving updated ownership information from Brazoria County for the 130 properties listed in the downtown database. Wood explained challenges with obtaining current contact information for property owners due to privacy restrictions, but noted that the city's recent efforts to collect updated contact information through water bills may help resolve this issue.

Wood discussed the need to coordinate with real estate agents and provide appropriate contact mechanisms for interested parties viewing the property inventory. Sandra Leavey offered to help update parcel information based on her knowledge of downtown property owners.

### Design subcommittee update

Betty Lopez reported that the design subcommittee met to brainstorm high-impact, low-cost, highly visible projects for Memorial Park. Key recommendations included:

- Creating a colorful mural or artistic element on the pump building
- Establishing cohesive design elements throughout the park to tie together the various bench styles (green plastic-coated, teak wood, and concrete benches)
- Using paint to create a unified theme, possibly with wave graphics
- Ensuring all projects are intentional, connected, and easy for the city to maintain

The subcommittee discussed fundraising through a "clutter and craft" community sale, charging low vendor fees (\$5-10) for garage sale items, crafts, plants, and produce. This would provide funding for beautification projects while engaging the community.

David graciously offered to build planters and donate his time and materials, with the suggestion of having individuals or businesses adopt planters and take responsibility for their maintenance. The subcommittee emphasized the importance of having adoption sponsors to ensure long-term care of any plantings.

The group suggested involving Brazosport High School art students in the pump house project, as they had participated in previous community art projects.

Betty Lopez made a motion to move forward on creating a colorful space with the pump house for beautification purposes. Edith Fischer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

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

The next Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for May 21, 2026.

The next meeting will be held on May 21, 2026, returning to the third Thursday schedule.

Stars & Stripes: Patriotic Bike Bash & Fest (7.4.2026, 311 E Park Ave)

#### **Adjournment:**

##### Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Sandra Leavey, seconded by James Wood, with all present voting "Aye", the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:07 PM.



Maria Lopez, Main Street Coordinator  
City of Freeport, Texas