



MINUTES

Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board

May 21, 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, May 21, 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
 Betty Lopez
 Flora Green
 Irene Ocañas
 Lon Siddall
 James Wood

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

Visitors: Kathy Ragan
 David McGinty
 Leslie Anguiano

 Jarvis Davis-City Councilman

CALL TO ORDER:

Call to Order

Chairperson Irene Ocañas called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM on Thursday, May 21, 2026, at the Nat Hickey Education Center.

Invocation/Pledge

The invocation was led by Lon Siddall, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

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.)

No members of the public signed up to speak.

PRESENTATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Board Member Recognitions

Main Street Coordinator Maria Lopez opened announcements with formal board member recognition, noting that member terms were expiring that month and that volunteer time is highly valued. She presented individual recognition to board members Lon Siddall, Betty Lopez, and Flora Green, and offered special acknowledgments to board members James Wood and Edith Fischer for their sustained contributions, including work on documents, event coordination, and community outreach on behalf of Main Street. Chairperson Irene Ocañas, who was not reapplying to the board, was also recognized for her years of service to Main Street and her key role in helping fill the Main Street Coordinator position, which allowed the program to continue. A recognition for board member Sandra Leavey, who was absent, was noted.

Staff Announcements

Museum Update

Interim Museum Director Loretta Cady reported several active and upcoming programs. A Juneteenth exhibition of Humanities Texas was in the process of being installed. A shark exhibit was set to open the following Saturday. Fort Velasco Day was scheduled for June 13, featuring cannon and musket demonstrations as well as a textiles demonstration. Story events in partnership with the library were scheduled for May 30, June 10, and two additional dates in July and August. She also noted that both she and Coordinator Lopez were heavily engaged in the budget season.

Main Street Update

Main Street Coordinator Lopez reported on four items. First, she is working to schedule a board training tentatively July 25 or August 8 to be led by a San Antonio-based consultant covering the Main Street America four-point approach and board roles, but funding for the training is still being worked out. Second, board member Michelle Backman has stepped down due to business commitments, though she was thanked and welcomed to continue as a volunteer. Third, Freeport Main Street received its Main Street America affiliate designation, officially placing the program within the national Main Street network. Fourth, Coordinator Lopez has begun collaborating with Reggie Harris to send letters to downtown property owners to begin building relationships in the district. She also noted her intent to bring a historical marker application for the downtown flagpole to the following month's agenda.

Chair Comments/Announcements

Chairperson Ocañas read a prepared statement expressing gratitude to several individuals for their contributions to the Freeport Main Street program. She specifically thanked Robert Johnson for his extensive knowledge, EDC financial support, assistance with the UTSA strategic plan, and guidance of current and past coordinators. She also thanked Ana Silbas for providing structure and initiating the UTSA strategic plan, Wade Dillon for his leadership following Silvas' departure, and all board and subcommittee members for their dedication. She extended her best wishes to Coordinator Lopez and to Reggie Harris, who will be taking on a supervisory role over the program going forward.

A brief discussion followed regarding the realignment of Main Street within the city's organizational structure. City Manager Dr. Danielle Kelly clarified that as part of the budget process, Main Street is being moved from under the EDC into a newly created Community Development department, which will also encompass building and planning, zoning, and code enforcement, with a focus on development rather than enforcement.

BUSINESS-REGULAR SESSION:

Consideration and possible action to approve the April 23, 2026, meeting minutes.

Coordinator Lopez identified two corrections to be made prior to posting: the addition of "Special" to the meeting header to reflect that the April meeting was a special meeting, the addition of "Interim" to the museum director's title, and the addition of "Edith Fischer" to the attendee list. No other corrections were raised by board members. A motion to approve April 23, 2026, meeting minutes, with corrections, was made by Lon and seconded by James Wood, with all present voting "Aye"; the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion on downtown infrastructure projects

Dr. Kelly presented a map illustrating existing, recently installed, and pending street lighting in Ward A, noting that CenterPoint Energy pulls permits and installs approximately 50 lights per year across the city, with each ward allocated roughly about 12 lights. Dr. Kelly encouraged the board to identify priority locations for additional downtown lighting and to coordinate with Councilman McDonald, who will submit the ward's requests. Input is needed by June 13 so it can be voted on and forwarded to CenterPoint. Board member James Wood noted that a prior walkthrough with Coordinator Lopez revealed that many existing streetlights downtown are simply not operational, rather than absent, describing the CenterPoint-style lights as "a little sterile" and expressing a preference for addressing non-functioning lights first.

Dr. Kelly then reported on the city's broader infrastructure budget, noting that approximately \$2.5 million in unspent funds has been identified for infrastructure, with an additional \$1 million pending confirmation. The board was encouraged to bring forward any identified projects with engineering estimates so they can be incorporated into the budget. The first budget workshop with the city council is tentatively scheduled for June 13, with documentation needed approximately one week prior.

Board member Betty Lopez raised the ongoing issue of drainage problems in the downtown alley, prompting an update from Robert Johnson (EDC Director). He reported that a prior communications breakdown with CenterPoint due to emails being blocked between the two systems had been resolved. Work is now progressing on the alleyway project, including moving utility wires to accommodate trash collection and requiring CenterPoint to rebury gas lines that are currently at an 8 to 15-inch depth when the minimum standard is 36 inches. CenterPoint has agreed to bear the cost of reburying its own lines, and the work is currently in engineering. Board member Betty Lopez further raised the concern that, beyond the gas lines, the overall elevation of the alley has been built up over time, which is the root cause of persistent flooding of adjacent buildings. She questioned how that grading issue could be incorporated into the current project. Dr. Kelly indicated this would be a matter for engineers and public works to coordinate, and noted that had permits been submitted for the original work, the in-depth issues would have been caught. She announced that an offer for an Assistant City Manager has been made and accepted, and that individual is expected to focus primarily on implementing infrastructure projects in her first year.

Discussion on the upcoming Stars & Stripes Patriotic Celebration.

Coordinator Lopez presented an update on planning for the Fourth of July celebration, scheduled from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at 311 E Park Ave, in partnership with the Freeport Historical Museum. Confirmed activities include daytime fireworks (color bombs), a DJ, approximately 21 vendors, an art station for children managed by Kathy Ragan, E-bike rentals (returning from the Christmas event), a water slide, a misting canopy, and a complimentary offering of iced coffees and mini corn dogs to attendees. A patriotic costume contest is planned in three age divisions: children (ages 3–12), youth (ages 13–17), and adults (18+). A prize of a large-screen TV in partnership with Veolia is planned for the adult division, with a multi-game table being considered for the youth/children's division. A bike parade open to bicycles, scooters, and strollers, with no motor vehicles, is scheduled to begin at 10:00 AM, followed by the costume contest at 11:00 AM and daytime fireworks around 12:30 PM. Parade route logistics are being coordinated with Board Member James Wood. Drone footage will be captured for future marketing use. Street pole banners reading "America 250" have been ordered to complement the existing antique poles, and a street banner for Highway 288 has been created. Water balloon activities for children are also planned.

The board discussed logistics, including placement of the water slide, the location and configuration of barricades for the bike parade, and potential coordination with the fire department for an additional cooling station. Interim Museum Director Loretta confirmed that two museum misting canopies are operational, and that water hookups are available at several locations in and around the event area. Board Member Wood noted the importance of finalizing placement and layout details in a follow-up planning session. Coordinator Lopez noted that sponsorship letters are being sent to solicit additional funding. Regarding fireworks, it was noted that Robert Johnson had not yet followed up with a contact about potentially launching fireworks from property near the marina. Discussion also touched on the logistics and space requirements for the daytime color bomb fireworks, with the area in front of the stage location on the street identified as a possible site. Board Member Wood raised the need to reconfigure barricades on Second Street if the fireworks are to be viewed from within the event perimeter.

Consideration and possible action to approve an annual Fourth of July celebration.

Coordinator Lopez brought forward the question of whether the Fourth of July event should be established as an annual recurring celebration. Discussion noted that while a Fourth of July celebration already exists in Freeport (managed by the Lions Club, which also shoots fireworks), the Main Street event could serve as a complementary daytime celebration and fill a gap should other community events change over time. The board expressed enthusiasm for formalizing the event, particularly in light of America's 250th anniversary context and the absence of comparable events in nearby communities. A motion to approve an annual Fourth of July celebration was made by Board Member Betty Lopez and seconded by Lon Siddall. The motion passed unanimously.

Consideration and possible action to review, select, and recommend Historical Commission & Main Street board member applications to City Council.

The Chair noted seven applications had been received for six open positions on the board. Applicants present introduced themselves: David McGinty, a returning former board member with a background in hands-on historical work and museum support; Flora Green, a current board member seeking reappointment; James Wood, a current board member seeking reappointment who expressed enthusiasm about momentum he is seeing in the city; and Leslie Anguiano, a Freeport native and local business owner (including a tattoo shop, barbershop in development, and medical aesthetics clinics) who expressed a strong desire to contribute to community development.

Following the discussion, the board agreed that City Council should make the final determination and that all applicants should be encouraged to attend the June 1 City Council meeting at 6:00 PM to express their interest directly. A motion to forward all applicants to the City Council for final appointments was made by Board Member Edith Fischer and seconded by Board Member Lon Siddall. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Economic Vitality subcommittee update

Robert Johnson reported that the low-interest loan program is ready after a longstanding issue with Community Reinvestment Act compliance questions from participating banks was resolved, with particular credit given to Chairperson Irene Ocañas. The program now incorporates design standards to ensure financed improvements are appropriate for a historic district. He further reported that Friends of Main Street, Coordinator Lopez, and Ocañas met with a financial representative to determine an appropriate fund account structure that would keep donations at arm's length from the city. Additionally, Mama C's, a local downtown business, opened during the week of the meeting, and the board was encouraged to support them. The business operates from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM.

Promotion subcommittee update

Edith Fischer reported that while the subcommittee had not formally convened since the last meeting, members had been actively working with Coordinator Lopez on Fourth of July event planning and sponsorship outreach.

Organization subcommittee update

Board Member Wood reported that the subcommittee has not met as a formal group but has been engaged in logistics planning for the America 250th anniversary celebrations, coordinating with the See My Legacy volunteer tracking platform. He noted that volunteer coordination will be an ongoing focus going forward.

Design subcommittee update

Board Member Betty Lopez reported that the subcommittee met with a local mural artist to discuss beautification of the pump house in the park. Upon closer inspection, however, the structure, a plywood enclosure sitting directly on soil, was found to be in a significantly deteriorated condition, with moisture intrusion causing structural damage. The subcommittee determined that applying a mural without first repairing or replacing the structure would not be durable. David McGinty has volunteered his labor to reshingle the structure if materials funding is secured. The subcommittee is considering a fundraising effort and potential corporate sponsorships, as well as the possibility of selling branded merchandise at the Fourth of July event to raise funds. A contest engaging Brazosport High School juniors and seniors is being explored to solicit community input on the mural's design and color scheme. Volunteer from the subcommittee, Kathy, is assisting with the creation of a promotional flyer for the effort.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING/UPCOMING EVENTS:

The next Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for June 18, 2026.

Stars & Stripes: Patriotic Celebration (7.4.2026, 311 E Park Ave)

Adjournment:

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by James Wood, seconded by Lon Siddall, with all present voting "Aye", the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 PM.



Maria Lopez, Main Street Coordinator
City of Freeport, Texas