

THE CITY OF



FREEPORT

200 West Second St • Freeport, TX 77541

979.233.3526 • Fax 979.233.8867

**FREEPORT HISTORICAL COMMISSION & MAIN STREET ADVISORY BOARD
BOARD TRAINING/WORKSHOP MINUTES
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2023 AT 5:00PM
FREEPORT CITY HALL, 3RD FLOOR TRAINING ROOM
200 W. SECOND STREET, FREEPORT, TX 77541**

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF BRAZORIA

CITY OF FREEPORT

BE IT REMEMBERED, that the Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board met on Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 5:00 PM at Freeport City Hall, 3rd Floor Training Room, 200 W. Second Street, Freeport, Texas for the purpose of considering the following agenda items:

Chairperson:

Margaret McMahan

Board Members:

Sandra Barbree
Keith Stumbaugh
Ronnie Martin
William Leitch
Betty Lopez
Jack Bullman
Sandra Wood-Wicke

Vice Chairperson:

Irene Ocañas

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Margaret McMahan called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. The following attendees were present:

Board Members

Margaret McMahan
Irene Ocañas
Betty Lopez
Jack Bullman
Sandra Wood-Wicke

Staff Members

Ana Silbas, Main Street Coordinator
Wade Dillon, Museum Manager
Robert Johnson, Freeport EDC Executive Director

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Invocation was led by Margaret McMahan and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Wade Dillon.

PRESENTATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS: Announcements by Board Members and/or Staff.

Main Street Update (Silbas)

Main Street Coordinator Ana Silbas provided an update regarding recent activities and projects. Silbas stated she attended H-GAC's Livable Centers Workshop: Elements of Placemaking and the Brazoria County Business Expo hosted by the Brazoria County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce- in partnership with the Freeport Economic Development Corporation. Additionally, Silbas mentioned event season is in full swing, as she is working on Día de Los Muertos event planning with several community organizations and Fall Market.

Silbas met with colleagues from the Texas Main Street Program including, Dr. Chris Moore- Assistant State Coordinator, Sebastian Whelan-Community Liaison and Jamie Crawley- Architect & Design Lead to further discuss the goals and initiatives of Freeport Main Street Program as a whole. Furthermore, Silbas mentioned she worked closely with Sarah O'Brien to coordinate the board training/workshop and thanked all those who were in attendance.

Lastly, Silbas shared that she presented the historic design guidelines project to the Freeport Economic Development Corporation in September and October and gave an overview of smaller projects currently being worked on for Freeport Main Street.

Museum Update- Recent Exhibits/Events (Dillon)

Museum Manager Wade Dillon shared with the board the status of the Día de Los Muertos Altars and Haunting Tales of the Texas Coast Exhibits. Dillon stated that the Freeport Historical Museum received their first field trip group since COVID from Brazosport High School and multiple senior groups. Regarding events, Dillon mentioned Texas Archeology Month, which the museum will host a Pre-Historic Archeology Program from 10am-2pm on October 21, 2023.

The improvements of the museum include: a repainted lobby, arrival of last five interpretative panels and purchase orders approved -4 new museum quality cases, which are major components of completing the restructuring project.

Dillon stated he is working on a hard hat project to go along with the interpretative panels highlighting the local industries—thus far has received hard hats from Port Freeport and Shintech, and will be receiving a hard hat from Phillips 66 with the help of Councilman Matamoros. Lastly, Dillon will be attending the Texian Rally in early November hosted by the Texas Independence Trail Region. The Freeport Historical Museum won the Spirit of Texas Award through the Texas Independence Trail Region in 2022 for the Fort Velasco program. For 2023, Dillon nominated the Slavery Exhibit for the same award.

Board Member Announcements

Irene Ocañas congratulated Wade Dillon on the exhibits, especially the Día de Los Muertos Exhibit. Ocañas stated that the lobby looks beautiful and she is impressed with the work done.

Additionally, Ocañas thanked Ana Silbas for her hard work and dedication to Freeport Main Street. Ocañas stated that she learned a lot at the workshop and there is still a lot to learn.

Sandra Wood-Wicke mentioned that anytime the Freeport Historical Museum has an event with children to contact the Lions Club to conduct vision screenings.

BUSINESS-REGULAR SESSION

Consideration and possible action to approve meeting minutes from August 17, 2023.

On a motion made by Irene Ocañas, seconded by Betty Lopez, with all present voting “Aye”, the Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board **unanimously approved** the meeting minutes from August 17, 2023.

Consideration and possible action to approve meeting minutes from September 21, 2023.

On a motion made by Irene Ocañas, seconded by Betty Lopez, with all present voting “Aye”, the Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board **unanimously approved** the meeting minutes from September 21, 2023.

Consideration and possible action to approve University of Texas at San Antonio’s RFP-Historic Design Guidelines and Downtown Comprehensive Plan.

The Design Subcommittee has been leading the efforts of a project to develop historic design guidelines and a comprehensive downtown plan with UTSA Center for Urban and Regional Planning Research. Chair Margaret McMahan has led this initiative along Main Street Coordinator to facilitate meetings with Ian Caine-Director of UTSA CURPR, Robert Johnson-Executive Director of Freeport EDC and Tim Kelty-City Manager. Silbas mentioned that she received a motion of support from the Freeport Economic Development Corporation for this project and a financial investment of \$30,000.00 upon the approval of City Council.

Robert Johnson shared that he is glad to report back the support of the Freeport Economic Development Corporation for this project, as it has been discussed at several meetings. Additionally, Johnson shared his Main Street experience and how design guidelines help to move communities forward and provide a great foundation to development and preservation of downtowns.

On a motion made by Sandra Wood-Wicke, seconded by Irene Ocañas, with all present voting “Aye”, the Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board **unanimously approved** the University of Texas at San Antonio’s RFP for Historic Design Guidelines and Downtown Comprehensive Plan.

Consideration and possible action to approve new Freeport Historical Museum logo.

Museum Manager Wade Dillon shared with the board that he has been working since 2020 to restructure the museum. He hopes to have a grand reopening in December. Dillon stated he has learned so much about our community. The current logo is generic and basic and does not capture the city’s history.

Dillon believes the new logo conveys with the passage of time-- Freeport is moving forward.

As an illustrator/artist, Dillon created the new logo and would like the support of the board to make this branding change.

On a motion made by Sandra Wood-Wicke, seconded by Betty Lopez, with all present voting “Aye”, the Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board **unanimously approved** to support the new Freeport Historical Museum logo.

Discussion on updating Transformation Strategies.

Edith Fischer submitted ideas on this topic, which included exploring the transformation strategies of beautification initiatives and design, Business Activation and Development and Ecotourism and Recreation Economy. Betty Lopez shared her ideas, which included exploring transformation strategies on Arts and Entertainment, Downtown Living and Ecotourism. Additionally, Lopez added that she believes there seems to be a foundational strategy the program must tackle first before working on other strategies. Irene Ocañas stated she gravitated towards the Business Activation and Development and would like to develop benchmarks to measure progress. On a motion made by Betty Lopez, seconded by Sandra Wood-Wicke, with all present voting “Aye”, the Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board **unanimously approved** to table the discussion on updating Transformation Strategies.

Discussion on Main Street Christmas Event.

The Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board discussed potential ideas for the Christmas on the Coast Market scheduled for December 2, 2023.

WORK SESSION

Design Subcommittee Chair Margaret McMahan stated the City and EDC have committed funding to UTSA to formulate regulatory design guidelines. The monies have been included in the 2023-2024 city budget. This project will be brought before council bundled with a downtown plan. McMahan mentioned the project is expected to begin in January 2024 and a Zoom meeting has been set for the Design Subcommittee for November 7, 2023 to communicate next steps.

Economic Vitality Subcommittee Chair Irene Ocañas stated the committee has a draft of a downtown survey and will work with Main Street Coordinator to disburse once finalized.

Main Street Coordinator Ana Silbas stated the design project is set to go before Council on November 6th—an alternative date would be November 20, 2023. Silbas invited the board to attend upcoming events and expressed ways to improve communication for meeting attendance.

Museum Manager Wade Dillon stated he could use volunteers for Archeology Day. Dillon mentioned he is pursuing the museum permanently using what was the Brazosport College space, in order to expand and grow the museum. Lastly, Dillon will work to get logo on City Council agenda and continue to work towards planning a grand reopening.

Silbas gave an overview of upcoming events.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION-NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The discussion of Transformation Strategies will be tabled to next general meeting, which is set for November 16, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Irene Ocañas, seconded by Sandra Wood-Wicke, with all present voting “Aye”, the Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board Chair Margaret McMahan adjourned the meeting at 5:54 pm.

Ana Silbas, Main Street Coordinator
City of Freeport, Texas