

THE CITY OF

1201 N. Avenue H Freeport, TX 77541



FREEPORT

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**FREEPORT HISTORICAL COMMISSION & MAIN STREET ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024 AT 5:00PM
FREEPORT CITY HALL, 1st FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
1201 N. AVENUE H, 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, March 21, 2024 at 5:00 PM at Freeport City Hall, 1st Floor Conference Room, 1201 N. Avenue H, Freeport, Texas for the purpose of considering the following agenda items:

Chairperson:

Margaret McMahan

Board Members:

Keith Stumbaugh
Ronnie Martin
William Leitch
Betty Lopez
Edith Fischer
Melanie Oldham

Vice Chairperson:

Irene Ocañas

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Irene Ocañas called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. The following attendees were present:

Board Members

Irene Ocañas
Ronnie Martin
Betty Lopez
Keith Stumbaugh
Edith Fischer
William Leitch

Staff Members

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

Guests: Jordan Strother, Jose Lopez and Jeff Pena, Councilman-Ward A

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Invocation was led by Irene Ocañas and Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ronnie Martin.

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

Main Street Update (Silbas)

Main Street Coordinator Ana Silbas informed the board of Jack Bullman's resignation from the Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board.

Silbas informed the board that the deadline for the Texas Main Street Program Q1 Report is set for April 10th. Additionally, Silbas announced the upcoming Houston- Galveston Area Council Brining Back Main Street Roundtable scheduled for Tuesday, April 23, 2024 in Columbus, Texas. The topics of discussion for this event will include: An Overview of Columbus, Funding Downtown Revitalization, Removing Barriers to Business, Business Owners Perspectives and Working with Community Partners and Business Owners.

Also, Silbas informed the board that the SBDC at Brazosport College is set to host: Social Media Simplified Workshop on Wednesday, April 27 from 10AM to 12PM at the Corporate Learning Center-Brazosport College.

Silbas gave an overview of events/initiatives she has been involved with, which included: Brazosport Area Chamber Awards Luncheon – Economic Vitality Subcommittee Member Jesse Glatz won Ambassador of the Year, hosting the Share the Love Community Resource Fair in partnership with United Way and Star of Hope and meeting with the UTSA Center for Urban and Regional Planning Research to prepare for Community Visioning Session. Additionally, Silbas mentioned the joint TIRZ meeting in partnership with the TIRZ and EDC Boards.

Silbas reminded the board that the NexTrex Community Recycling Challenge is still ongoing and preparations are being made for Cinco de Mayo. The Cinco de Mayo event will be held in downtown on May 3rd from 5pm-8pm.

Edith Fischer inquired about Cinco de Mayo event activities. Main Street Coordinator Ana Silbas stated event activities last year included: Westside Elementary Ballet Folklorico, a young, local group -Los Corales and Amy Martinez (Tengo Talento, Mucho Talento) and community organizations were in attendance.

Museum Update- Recent Exhibits/Events (Dillon)

Museum Manager Wade Dillon stated that in February, the Freeport Historical Museum's "...this worst of evils" Slavery in Brazoria County Exhibit opened. Dillon informed the board that the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Committee sponsored admissions or the entire month.

Dillon informed the board of a massive roof leak in the exhibit hall. The leak did not stop a portion of the exhibit from continuing for the public to enjoy within the museum space. Dillon stated the leak helped to identify a poor roof job from years ago. Additionally, Dillon stated Lance Petty, City Manager received a quote for repairs of the entire building for \$160,000.00, which would have to be approved by City Council, potentially being pulled from the Golf Course funds. The Freeport Historical Museum would not have to close—a temporary fix would be in place until repairs are approved. Dillon stated roof repairs are necessary to insure the building for windstorm damage.

Dillon gave an overview of upcoming trainings he will attend in April, which included: THC Real People, Real Places Conference in Austin, TX and the Texas Association of Museums Conference in Lubbock, TX.

Lastly, Dillon provided an overview of improvements at the Freeport Historical Museum, which included: street banners, discussion of a concrete path for a bike rack and thinking outside the box for ad space dollars in publications, i.e. Texas Highways and Brazosport Area Map.

Edith Fischer stated the Brazosport Area Map is the number one requested item when people come into the Brazosport Area Chamber Office.

Board Member Announcements

William Leitch inquired about the square footage of the Freeport Historical Museum building. Dillon stated he would have to look for that information. Leitch stated he has been in the construction industry since he was 15 years old, nearly 50 years, and in his opinion, the quotes the City of Freeport are receiving seem to be too high. Additionally, Leitch inquired about the type of roof that would be on the Freeport Historical Museum. Dillon stated he was not informed of the particular roof.

Ronnie Martin stated the roof would be high end, as he believes Brazos Commercial Roofing put in a bid. Martin stated Brazos Commercial Roofing is known to do top of the line work. Edith Fischer and Wade Dillon agreed. Lastly, Martin stated the company does not short cut and guarantees the work ----it is the best of the best and you will get what you pay for with Brazos Commercial Roofing.

Leitch stated he understands and has done residential, commercial and industrial work for a long, long time. He believes the \$160,000 quote is a lot of money for a building that size. Leitch would like to hear the details of what it needs, who is doing the work and what work will be done to the building. Dillon stated the quote was sent to Lance Petty, City Manager. Also, Dillon stated he went on top of the roof and could see that the prior roof job was not good. Dillon stated hopefully this matter will be in front of City Council in April.

Ronnie Martin reminded the board about the recycling program. Martin told the board members to bring their soft plastics to every meeting or his store. He stated he is getting ready to turn in about 300lbs. for our program—close to halfway of the 1,000-pound goal.

BUSINESS-REGULAR SESSION

Consideration and possible action to approve meeting minutes from February 15, 2024.

On a motion made by Edith Fischer, seconded by Ronnie Martin, with all present voting “Aye”, the Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board **unanimously approved** the meeting minutes from February 15, 2024 with the necessary corrections of listed board members.

Update and Discussion on Community Visioning Session with UTSA’s Center for Urban and Regional Planning Research.

Main Street Coordinator Ana Silbas provided an overview of recent updates for the UTSA Center for Urban and Regional Planning Research project. Silbas stated she would be meeting with Ian Caine and Robert Johnson to discuss final logistics for the planning session that will be

held on March 26th at Freeport Riverplace from 5:30pm-7:30pm. Silbas mentioned that EDC will be graciously sponsoring sandwiches and light finger foods for us to enjoy.

Silbas went over a breakdown of the agenda for the session, which is set to include a 20-minute introduction, 80-minute exercise -----5 groups that will cover public realm, economic revitalization, housing, historic preservation and programming. Silbas stated the community members in attendance will be able to move around to find what area of focus fits them. Additionally, Silbas stated there will be time for a wrap up session to hear community feedback.

Silbas stated the Economic Vitality Subcommittee met early in the morning to finalize the downtown survey, which will be linked to a QR Code for event attendees to complete. Silbas mentioned the survey will help the Economic Vitality Subcommittee move forward and see how they can expand upon the survey.

Lastly, Silbas stated the UTSA team is excited to come and see our community and engage with the board. Silbas also mentioned that the Texas Historical Commission is aware of the project to ensure all parties are working in alignment. She has also presented updates to the Freeport EDC Board, due to their monetary contributions to fund project.

Museum Manager Wade Dillon stated that a team member from Post Oak Preservation Solutions is set to visit museum and go through the research library and historic photos.

Discussion on partnership with Freeport Economic Development Corporation to launch a Small Business Social Media Campaign and host a Business Development Breakfast.

Freeport Economic Development Corporation Executive Director Robert Johnson provided an overview of a Small Business Social Media Campaign. Johnson stated the purpose of launching a Small Business Social Media Campaign would be to highlight small business in Freeport. Additionally, he stated he would like to include Main Street because he would like to highlight many in the downtown area, which could encourage businesses to move to the downtown area.

Johnson stated the Small Business Social Media Campaign will aim to showcase Freeport businesses in an effort to attract new customers and businesses to the City and is a positive way to show the EDC's and Main Street's support of existing local business at a very low cost. Johnson gave an overview of a one-week social media campaign template, which would focus on an introduction, business history, video message from owner, sharing reviews from staff and customers and a business showcase.

Regarding the Business Development Breakfast, Johnson stated he would propose for these to be two times a year. Johnson stated this would be a breakfast for business owners to get together and share a meal, while someone provides a talk—continuing education for small business owners. Johnson gave an example of a potential speaker: Irene talking about how to prepare a business loan proposal—topical things that would impact a business and have it over breakfast. Additionally, Johnson provided an overview of potential logistics to host a Business Development Breakfast.

Irene Ocañas inquired about the start for the development of this initiative. Johnson stated as soon as possible. Ocañas asked if it would be this year and Johnson stated yes, this year.

Discussion on 2024 Accountability Agreement.

Main Street Coordinator gave an overview of the 2024 Accountability Agreement. Silbas stated the board accountability agreement sets expectations of board members. Additionally, Silbas stated that, as we continue to grow the program, it is very important to establish guidelines to ensure all board members understand their responsibilities. Lastly, Silbas read through board accountability agreement for the board.

Irene Ocañas stated that it is very important for board members to really consider their responsibilities. Ocañas stated she does not live in Freeport but would like to see more Freeport participation, but good participation, positive participation. Additionally, she stated let's get a movement going that is something she is willing to provide help.

William Leitch inquired about term length. Silbas stated it depends, however, his term is two years. Silbas listed the board members who would be up for consideration to be reappointed.

WORK SESSION

William Leitch inquired about Design Subcommittee meetings. Silbas stated the Design Subcommittee met on December 6, 2023. Betty Lopez stated now that professionals are on board to guide them, the committee would not be meeting at this time, per Subcommittee Chair Margaret McMahan. Silbas stated she would follow up with Margaret to see how they will move forward.

Economic Vitality Subcommittee Chair Irene Ocañas stated the subcommittee met earlier in the day to discuss one item—Survey.

Ocañas stated the survey will be distributed at the community visioning session. Additionally, Ocañas extended an invitation to everyone to attend and participate in session and encourage folks to complete the survey.

Main Street Coordinator Ana Silbas mentioned the different ways the community visioning session was advertised.

The board discussed the status of subcommittees, recruitment, the creation of Friends of Freeport Main Street, recycling and UTSA project.

Upcoming Events

The upcoming events were mentioned in Main Street & Museum Updates.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION-NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

Ronnie Martin stated he would like to address signage. Edith Fisher stated she has contacted TXDOT about directional signage for points of interests and is waiting for follow up on the matter. Keith Stumbaugh stated signage that highlights lodging and food should be discussed.

The next Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory meeting is scheduled for April 18, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Betty Lopez, seconded by Ronnie Martin, with all present voting "Aye", the Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board Vice Chair Irene Ocañas adjourned the meeting at 5:47 pm.



Ronnie Martin, Secretary
Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board



Ana Silbas, Main Street Coordinator
City of Freeport, Texas