



**FREEPORT HISTORICAL COMMISSION & MAIN STREET ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2023 AT 5:00PM
311 EAST PARK AVENUE (NAT HICKEY LANE), 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 30, 2023 at 5:00 PM at the Freeport Historical Museum, 311 East Park Avenue (Nat Hickey Lane), Freeport, Texas for the purpose of considering the following agenda items:

Chairperson:

Margaret McMahan

Board Members:

David McGinty
Irene Ocañas
Keith Stumbaugh
Olivia Kloss
Ronnie Martin
Douglas Domingues
William Leitch

Vice Chairperson:

Sandra Barbree

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Margaret McMahan called the meeting to order at 5:09 pm. The following attendees were present:

Board Members

Margaret McMahan
Irene Ocañas
David McGinty
Keith Stumbaugh
Ronnie Martin
Douglas Domingues
William Leitch

Guests: Patty Richardson

Staff Members

Ana Silbas, Main Street Coordinator
Wade Dillon, Museum Manager

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Invocation was led by Douglas Domingues and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Margaret McMahan.

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

Main Street Update (Silbas)

Main Street Coordinator Ana Silbas thanked the board for their time volunteering at the Mardi Gras Festival. Silbas expressed that it takes team effort to make these community events possible. Also, Silbas introduced and welcomed the newest board members: Ronnie Martin, William Leitch and Douglas Domingues.

Silbas informed the board of her meeting with Anna Duron -Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, who serves as a County Extension Agent -Family & Community Health to discuss potential partnerships in the future for the community. Additionally, Silbas spoke about her attendance at several Día de Los Muertos Planning Meetings between the Center of the Arts & Sciences, Brazoria County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Brazoria County Library System and our local museums to plan for a countywide Día de Los Muertos event. Freeport Museum will display altars and Freeport Main Street will partner to host a community procession.

Museum Update -Recent Exhibits/ Events (Dillon)

Museum Manager Wade Dillon provided an update on the restructuring of the museum, and the success of the "...this worst of evils..." Slavery in Brazoria County Exhibit. Furthermore, Dillon informed the board of a sponsorship received from the Martin Luther King Celebration Committee to cover museum admission from February 20th to March 4th for the community.

Additionally, Dillon informed the board of the success of Dinosaur George Exhibit. Despite the weather and the cancellation of the Spring Market & Food Truck Festival, the museum saw over 500 people within a two-day period and 20% of gift shop profits were donated to the museum.

Board Member Announcements

David McGinty expressed his enjoyment of the Mardi Gras Festival and Dinosaur George Exhibit.

Keith Stumbaugh stated he would like for Freeport Main Street to have a walking tour of downtown in conjunction with Freeport Economic Development Corporation and the Planning and Zoning Commission, in order for the board to become familiarized with the building inventory. Additionally, he would like to see maps produced with information such as residential vs. commercial, ownership, occupancy status and any additional information to help plan for development in downtown.

Irene Ocañas stated that it is vital for the board to continue to build relationships in the community with stakeholders, especially with city council.

Douglas Domingues stated he was glad to be here and looks forward to being on the board.

William Leitch stated that he has resided in Freeport for over 20 years and has heavily invested into his building downtown. Additionally, he expressed that the redevelopment of Freeport is vital because communities either redevelop, grow and advance or die.

Ronnie Martin expressed the importance of having conversations with business owners and that he is glad to be on the board. He stated Freeport Main Street can make a difference if we work together to bring about change—if not we will fall down.

BUSINESS- REGULAR SESSION

Consideration and possible action to approve meeting minutes from January 12, 2023.

On a motion made by Irene Ocañas, seconded by Ronnie Martin, with all present voting “Aye”, the Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board **unanimously approved** the meeting minutes from January 12, 2023.

Consideration and possible action to select a board member for the Sign Ordinance Committee.

After the Joint Workshop between Planning & Zoning Commission, Freeport Economic Development Corporation and Freeport Main Street on January 26, 2023, there was discussion on the creation of a Sign Ordinance Committee with representatives from each respective board to review the current sign ordinance. Ronnie Martin expressed his interest due to his experience as a business owner, as did William Leitch. On a motion made by Irene Ocañas, seconded by David McGinty, with all present voting “Aye”, the Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board **unanimously approved** to select Ronnie Martin to serve as the Freeport Main Street representative for the Sign Ordinance Committee.

Consideration and possible action to approve 2023 Freeport Main Street Strategic Plan.

In order to have a strategic workplan for Freeport Main Street, Main Street Coordinator Ana Silbas laid out the 2023 strategic priorities, which included the creation of a historic district, wayfinding signage system, development of Friends of Freeport Main Street, creation of a downtown building inventory and the continuation of building partnerships with community stakeholders.

On a motion made by Douglas Domingues, seconded by Keith Stumbaugh, with all present voting “Aye”, the Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board **unanimously approved** the 2023 Strategic Plan with the option to amended as deemed necessary by the board.

Discussion on the establishment of a Historic District.

The purpose for the establishment of a Historic District is centered around the protection and the enhancement of historical and cultural characteristics of a designated area to promote economic, cultural, education and general welfare of the public. Main Street Coordinator Ana Silbas presented the board with a map of the current Main Street boundaries on file with Texas Main Street Program and an example of a drawn-out Historic District map from previous years. Silbas explained the process for establishing a Historic District.

Discussion on upcoming Freeport Main Street Events.

Main Street Coordinator Ana Silbas gave an overview of upcoming Main Street events. There was discussion about the number of events held annually and William Leitch mentioned that the Blues Fest was an event which brought in a lot of foot traffic downtown.

WORK SESSION

Chair Margaret McMahan gave her Design subcommittee report to the board and spoke of action items the Design subcommittee is looking to pursue which included securing a computerized building inventory, gathering formation to seek an allotted portion of hotel occupancy tax funds and Chapter 380 funds for a modest brick and mortar budget and establish and present design guidelines to city council.

Organization subcommittee Chair Olivia Kloss was not in attendance due to work schedule. Patty Richardson will now serve as the Chair for this subcommittee.

Promotion subcommittee Chair Sandra Barbree was not in attendance.

Economic Vitality subcommittee Chair Irene Ocañas stated that the Economic Vitality subcommittee has not met and she is actively recruiting.

Main Street Coordinator Ana Silbas informed the board of the upcoming Cinco de Mayo Celebration scheduled for May 5, 2023 from 5pm to 8pm in Historic Downtown. Additionally, Silbas mentioned that Texas Main Street quarter one reports are due April 10, 2023 and asked subcommittee chairs to submit reports no later than 5pm on April 5, 2023. Lastly, Silbas notified the board of an upcoming free educational opportunity “Bringing Back Main Street Roundtable and Workshop” to be hosted by the Houston-Galveston Area Council on April 25, 2023. The event will begin at 10am and take place at Ol’ Railroad Café in Rosenberg, TX.

Museum Manager Wade Dillon informed the board of an upcoming opportunity – “Museum on Main Street (MoMS)”, which is a traveling exhibition program of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) division in partnership with the Texas Historical Commission’s Heritage Tourism Program. The application deadline is May 15, 2023.

Upcoming Events

The upcoming events for the Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board include the following: Cinco de Mayo Celebration (May 5, 2023), Fort Velasco Day (June 24, 2023), Shark Exhibit (June & July 2023) and KidFest (August 2023).

Items for Future Discussion-Next Scheduled Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is set for April 20, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Irene Ocañas, seconded by Ronnie Martin, with all present voting “Aye”, the Freeport Historical Commission & Main Street Advisory Board Chair Margaret McMahan adjourned the meeting at 6:24 pm.



Ana Silbas, Main Street Coordinator
City of Freeport, Texas