

**STATE OF TEXAS  
COUNTY OF HIDALGO  
CITY OF MCALLEN**

The Historic Preservation Council convened in a meeting on Wednesday, September 18, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. at the McAllen Development Center – 311 N. 15<sup>th</sup> Street – Executive Conference

<b>Present:</b>	Dr. Jaclyn Miller	Chairperson
	Danny Boultinghouse	Vice-Chairperson
	Carolina Civarolo	Member
	Melissa S. Knerr	Member
	Marc Millis	Member
	Daniel Padilla	Member
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Martin Canales	Assistant City Attorney III
	Omar Sotelo	Planning Director
	Hilda Tovar	Planner II
	Carmen White	Administrative Assistant

**CALL TO ORDER – Dr. Jaclyn Miller - Chairperson**

**1. Minutes**

- a) Approval or Disapproval of Minutes held on May 21, 2025 and May 28, 2025.

The minutes will be Approved or Disapproved at the next meeting.

**2. Public Hearing**

- a) Las Palmas Historic District Design Standards—Fencing and Walls

Ms. Tovar stated the goal of a Certificate of Appropriateness is to preserve historic, architectural, and cultural heritage by protecting character-defining features of the Las Palmas Historic District.

The design review process for the Certificate of Appropriateness is critical within a designated historic district to ensure that the unique and defining characteristics of the area are maintained according to McAllen’s design standards.

**LAS PALMAS HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN STANDARDS - CHAPTER 6**

**GENERAL NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN PRINCIPLES:** Compatible design is described as design that is sensitive to the existing historic fabric and is designed using similar size, scale, and massing. Chapter 6 outlines considerations for architects, designers, and property owners when considering the construction of a new residence within the Las Palmas Local Landmark District.

Consistency of Style: New construction should not try to mimic the architectural styles of the past but should look to them for guidance on fenestration patterns, façade organization, level and extent of detailing, massing, roof forms and height, and materials used. New construction

should reflect modern design but be sensitive to the historical architectural styles of the past that are represented within the Las Palmas historic district.

Scale: New construction should maintain a scale that mirrors and respects the scale of adjacent construction.

Materials: Primary exterior materials used within the historic district include stucco and brick or stone masonry. New construction should maintain the palette of existing exterior materials.

**SITE FEATURES:** It is important to maintain the character-defining features of the district when planning a construction project on existing vacant lots. These features contribute significantly to the overall sense of place.

Fencing: The low walls maintained the visual continuity between each adjacent lot and did not obstruct sight lines from one point in the neighborhood to another. Walls shall not be located along the front yard, abutting the existing sidewalk. They shall not be located adjacent to the street at corner lots. Privacy fencing shall be isolated to the rear yard – fencing shall not be constructed at the front yard.

Legal counsel stated that today's meeting was to discuss where we go with these guidelines for design standards. There will be another case next week where they were asking for a fence.

Ms. Tovar stated she that most of the customers recently that wanted to put fences on their property. It was not complying with the guidelines but they had concerns. Ms. Tovar will finish with the presentation.

#### **LAS PALMAS HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN STANDARDS - CHAPTER 7**

**FENCING AND WALLS:** Historically, low stone or brick masonry walls were designed along property lines and exterior patios within the neighborhood. These walls do not obstruct the sightlines to the property, and new fence or wall construction should similarly maintain the open character of the site. The construction of new fencing should be limited to the rear yard. Fencing and low-lying walls are not recommended along the front yard, abutting the sidewalk, or along the side property line that meets the street for corner lots

Ms. Tovar showed examples of what is existing. She stated she has had a few customers that have used this fence as an example. They liked the look, landscaping, size and design. Ms. Tovar stated there was one located on 612 North 15<sup>th</sup> Street. Another one on April 2022 located on 400 North 15<sup>th</sup> Street. At that, time there was no fence. 408 North 15<sup>th</sup> Street in 2011 there was a different type of fence, 417 North 15<sup>th</sup> Street back then no fence but received their Certificate of Appropriateness to build the fence in front of the property and along the sidewalk. A 521 North 15<sup>th</sup> Street complied with the guidelines not along the sidewalk. It did maintain the open view of the site. A 602 North 15<sup>th</sup> Street used to be an empty lot. There is currently a house with a 4-foot fence on the side corner lot.

Legal counsel went over the design standard guidelines with the Board. He mentioned that there was a lot of debate of what type of fences should be allowed and design criteria. The last fence that was approved it was going to be based on the fence with the greenery growth. It was little

higher than the existing one. Is the scaling right? Should they go as far as specifying parameters? Half walls should be maximum a certain height. Pillars should be maximum dimensions of a certain height. Materials and construction should match the existing of the house.

Chairperson Miller stated to be more specific particularly if they move in the future to designate another District. It could run into a problem with homeowners not wanting to be a Historic District especially if there is many of these restrictions are being enforced. Dr. Miller asked if they could get a proposal a revision of this design standard to vote on for the next meeting.

Staff member Forghanparast stated the reason setting up this meeting was so the Board members discuss to get a better understanding of what is the Board's intent or vision.

Board member Millis stated that the guidelines would need to be revised. He questioned what the character of Las Palmas. Does the counsel want to define going forward or for potential future districts? Need to step back and see what we want to do in McAllen. How much to preserve and what it should look like.

Legal counsel stated first, there would be requests for fences and two, there was a new home built. There may some empty lots and it so there will be a house or two will be built or possible renovations.

Board member Millis asked legal counsel does approval of guidelines require City Commission. Legal counsel he would have to research it.

Board member Boultinghouse stated that making a decision now would be difficult.

Planning Director Sotelo stated they mentioned the 24 inches but forgot to look at the elevation of the two houses. The elevations is what was thrown off because the newer houses are set higher up.

Board member Civarolo asked staff how many houses in the District have already have fences. Ms. Tovar stated she would have to go back and research.

Board member Knerr asked staff if they had a rough draft what the person next week will be asking for. Staff stated they could not discuss at this meeting but will be sending out a packet prior to the next meeting.

Ms. Tovar stated as far as parameters, have customers asking which permits I need for a fence with the Historic District. I inform them for them not to seek with what is existing in the neighborhood to match the materials of the existing structure in that same site. For example, if the house is brick match with brick as well. The location of the fence not be along the sidewalk. In addition, for corner lots as well to not obstruct view. Ms. Tovar stated she provided a copy of fences in the Historic District to show what they are doing in San Antonio.

Chairperson Miller asked the Board to form a subcommittee.

Ms. Melissa Knerr made a motion to form a subcommittee of three members to review and to make revisions of guidelines and design standards. Mr. Mark Millis seconded the motion. The Board voted with six members present and voting.

Chairperson Miller asked if there was a proposal to do a 60-year moratorium on all properties of any changes. To go back to idea of doing a survey to find specific properties of interest as the next goal.

Board member Millis asked if they go around and conduct a survey to identify properties that are of historical significance. Would that be an approval through this counsel that identifies them as such and any modifications or go through City Commission? Deputy City Manager Rivera said it would have to go before the City Commission and the property owner has to be in agreement. The way the Ordinance was laid out, the Board could identify properties and maintain a database but that does not mean that they are automatically declared part of this District where they would have to go through the extra scrutiny of coming to this Board. Members could identify neighborhoods by block walking, talk to the residents, and see if they would to be a part of the Historic District. It would then be brought back in a package and staff would do the groundwork and bring it before the Board for future consideration.

Board member Millis asked if staff could look into the City of Brownsville Historic Preservation Ordinance. They have an over 50 moratorium, anything over it had to go you before their counsel.

Ms. Rivera stated Ms. Julie Lash was present. She was the CBDG Director and the Grants Director and was from Brownsville. She did a lot of Historic Preservation work there.

Chairperson Miller asked if Ms. Civarolo, Mr. Millis and Mr. Padilla if they would like to be on the subcommittee. They all agreed.

### 3. Adjournment

Following discussion, Ms. Melissa Knerr made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Carolina Civarolo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with five members present and voting. The meeting was adjourned at 12.58 p.m.

ATTEST Carmen White  
Carmen White

Carolina Civarolo for  
Dr. Jaclyn Miller  
Chairperson