



Economic & International Development Department

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

1st FLOOR, COUNCIL CHAMBERS

CITY 1 BUILDING, 300 N. CAMPBELL STREET

JUNE 1, 2015, 4:00 P.M.

The El Paso Historic Landmark Commission held a public hearing in the First Floor Council Chambers, City 1 Building, 300 N. Campbell Street, June 1, 2015, 4:00 p.m.

The following commissioners were present:

- Commissioner Beatriz Lucero
- Commissioner Randy Brock
- Vice-Chairman Edgar Lopez
- Chairman William Helm
- Commissioner Cesar Gomez
- Commissioner George Cordova
- Commissioner Melinda Becker Skillern

The following City staff members were present:

- Ms. Providencia Velázquez, Historic Preservation Officer, Economic & International Development
- Mr. Adam Train, Planner, Historic Preservation Office, Economic & International Development
- Ms. Kristen Hamilton-Karam, Assistant City Attorney, City Attorney's Office

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Helm called the meeting to order at 4:11 p.m., quorum present.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

None.

I. CALL TO THE PUBLIC – PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

II. REGULAR AGENDA – DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Certificate of Appropriateness

1. **PHAP15-00014:** Being 130 Government Hill 1 To 19, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
 - Location: 4700 Leeds Avenue
 - Historic District: Austin Terrace
 - Property Owner: Cross of Grace Church, Inc.
 - Representative: Jose Navarro
 - Representative District: 2

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Existing Zoning:	R-4/H (Residential/Historic)
Year Built:	2000
Historic Status:	Non-contributing
Request:	Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a 75'-0" high telecommunications facility
Application Filed:	5/18/15
45 Day Expiration:	7/2/15

Ms. Velázquez gave a presentation and stated the property owner is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a 75'-0" high telecommunications facility. She notified commissioners the property is located at the very, northernmost edge of the historic district. Currently a church occupies this property; the church is a small, two-story stucco building that is surrounding by empty, bare land.

The proposal, located within the historic district, is to construct a communications tower. The tower would not be attached to the church but will be located several feet away. For visual effect, Ms. Velázquez showed the site elevation plan and enhanced photos of the property before and after installation of the communication tower. The proposed 75' tower equates to approximately six or seven stories in high. To camouflage the communication tower, the church requested the cross at the top.

Per the presentation, photos of surrounding properties were displayed. Ms. Velázquez contacted some of the property owners in the area to inform them of the possible construction of the communication tower. Staff contacting property owners is a courtesy; it is not mandatory. Ms. Velázquez contacted Mr. Jim Fashing, Austin Terrace Historic District resident, and included a copy of the proposal. Mr. Fashing responded as follows:

"I looked at the information you provided. I think it is a clever camouflage idea. I sent out notice to our neighborhood group and did not hear back from anyone, hence I cannot tell you that we have issue with this installation. I will forward the information back to my group and let them know that the hearing will be on Monday should they want to attend. Thank you for including us."

Ms. Velázquez has not received any telephone calls, emails or letters from anyone in the neighborhood group.

Chairman Helm asked if anyone from the neighborhood group was present in the audience.

Ms. Velázquez responded no one is here to represent Austin Terrace.



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Ms. Velázquez read the following recommendations into the record:

The Historic Preservation Office recommends *DENIAL* of the proposed scope of work based on the following recommendations:

The Design Guidelines for El Paso's Historic Districts, Sites, and Properties recommend the following:

- *The installation of mechanical equipment, such as air conditioning units, television, radio antennae, satellite dishes, and solar panels often results in a visually cluttered appearance to a building's exterior. Mechanical equipment should be installed in the least-visibly obtrusive location on the building, preferably at the rear of the building*
- *In no case should mechanical equipment be installed on a visually-prominent point on a roof or where it becomes the most noticeable component of the building.*
- *If a new mechanical system is needed, install it so that it causes the least amount of alteration to the building's exterior facades, historic building fabric, and site features*
- *All new construction (including detached infill and additions to existing structures) should preserve and enhance the streetscape by appropriately addressing the elements of the historic streetscape. This does not mean that the new structure should appear historic but it should appear aesthetically and architecturally compatible and reinforce the historic properties of the adjacent buildings.*

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation recommend the following:

- *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
- *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*
- *Retaining the historic relationship between buildings and the landscape.*

Ms. Velázquez had asked the contractor why the need to place the communication tower inside the historic district, why not outside the historic district and skip having to come before the Commission, etc. The contractor explained he tried using other sites but encountered great difficulties, obstacles, roadblocks, etc. The contractor then asked if the church would allow a communication tower on their property, they said okay. The contractor then stated he would construct the tower to be compatible with the existing building.

Mr. Jose Navarro, T-Mobile West authorized site location agent, has been working for over a year to fill in this gap for T-Mobile. This gap is hindering communication efforts in this area and into Fort Bliss. He commented he has spent quite a bit of time and effort trying to negotiate other locations for this communication tower, without any luck. Mr. Navarro explained he chose this particular site for the communications tower to avoid the existing underground, soft water, natural spring running through the church property.

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Mr. Navarro explained it is necessary for the communication tower to be 75' in height to reach an area of 3,900 feet; additionally, Fort Bliss sits at a higher elevation. T-Mobile submits the design of a tower that would be permitted; however, we are open to your suggestions and recommendations. For example, the church likes the structure; however, asked that the cross design be changed.

City Council

District 1

Ann Morgan Lilly

Vice-Chairman Lopez asked Mr. Navarro what material would be used to construct the tower.

Mr. Navarro responded we're looking at a steel structure.

District 2

Larry Romero

Vice-Chairman Lopez asked Ms. Velázquez if the church was in use and when was it constructed.

District 3

Emma Acosta

Ms. Velázquez responded yes, the church is being used currently and it was constructed around 2000. She noted that the northern part of the district has relatively new housing. The property owners requested this designation in order to have some control over the development in the area.

District 4

Carl L. Robinson

Vice-Chairman Lopez noticed the property has no landscaping.

District 5

Dr. Michiel R. Noe

Ms. Velázquez replied it is very bare.

District 6

Claudia Ordaz

Mr. Navarro explained T-Mobile is aware that landscape is very important and are ready and willing to provide that.

District 7

Lily Limón

Discussion amongst Ms. Velázquez and commissioners regarding the front and rear of the church and boundaries of the district. Per the presentation, Ms. Velázquez explained the proposed tower would be located in the rear of the church.

District 8

Cortney C. Niland

Vice-Chairman Lopez agreed the tower would be located in the back and would be hidden somewhat.

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Mr. Navarro clarified the parking lot for the church is off Leeds Avenue; however, the entrance to the church is from the west.

Per the presentation photos, Vice-Chairman Lopez asked Mr. Navarro if the small, meandering road was the right-of-way to service the antennae.

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Mr. Navarro agreed; however, the location of the antennae apron has not yet been determined by the church or permitting. He commented on the location of the existing fence and the location of the proposed enclosure to house equipment.

City Council

Vice-Chairman Lopez wondered what the time lapse on the property lease would be if the church no longer existed next year.

District 1
Ann Morgan Lilly

Mr. Navarro explained typically, the agreement is a 25-year lease with a 5-year option to renew; T-Mobile has the option to continue renewing the agreement up to five, 5-year terms. There is a clause in the agreement whereby should T-Mobile not renew the agreement, T-Mobile will remove the communication tower and restore the landscape to its previous state or better.

District 2
Larry Romero

Commissioner Cordova asked why the structure was not enclosed.

District 3
Emma Acosta

Mr. Navarro explained T-Mobile uses outdoor equipment that does not require any type of shelter or building.

District 4
Carl L. Robinson

Commissioner Gomez asked what the height of the existing building is.

District 5
Dr. Michiel R. Noe

Mr. Navarro estimated 30 feet; he also noted the proposed wall would be six feet in height.

District 6
Claudia Ordaz

To provide limited access to the antennae, Vice-Chairman Lopez confirmed, fencing would be installed around the base.

District 7
Lily Limón

Mr. Navarro agreed.

District 8
Cortney C. Niland

Vice-Chairman Lopez wondered about lighting for the cell tower.

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Mr. Navarro explained there would be security lights outside, not for the structure specifically, unless that is required for the permit. Mr. Navarro noted he has been working with Mr. Todd Peterson, church representative, and how enthusiastic and excited Mr. Peterson is about the proposed design. However, Mr. Peterson was concerned about the surrounding property owner's thoughts and feelings about the project. Mr. Navarro informed Mr. Peterson should anyone have a concern or issue, T-Mobile is more than happy to meet with them.

Vice-Chairman Lopez felt the project would enhance the existing building; however, he was concerned with the lack of landscaping to conceal the bottom portion of the wall.



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Mr. Navarro responded the enclosure would be a CMU wall to match the stucco on the existing building; furthermore, there is an existing rock wall around the outside.

Vice-Chairman Lopez clarified the cell tower would be 30 feet higher than the existing building.

Mr. Navarro replied yes, to reach T-Mobile customers in the Fort Bliss area.

Vice-Chairman Lopez advised Mr. Navarro to create a landscape plan with trees or shrubs to conceal the base, and perhaps, a trail of trees along the access road. Vice-Chairman Lopez noted his concern with the lease, for example, should the church not exist next year and perhaps the building is converted into office space; the cell tower would remain per the previous agreement with the church.

Mr. Navarro agreed, yes, the cell tower would remain per the agreement with the church. He suggested adding a condition in the agreement whereby T-Mobile would remove the cross design and replace with something more compatible. He would convey Vice-Chairman Lopez's concern to his supervisors.

Vice-Chairman Lopez asked if the antennae would be visible from below.

Mr. Navarro explained he usually works with concealing cell towers with fake palm trees and other tree types; this was his first attempt using this unique design. With this design, the antennae is built inside the pole with some type of screen and painted over.

Chairman Helm asked what the proposed material would be for the panels with the cross design on them.

Mr. Navarro believed it was steel, steel plates connected to the poles.

Vice-Chairman Lopez asked if the structure would produce sound, like a bell tower, and it could be annoying to surrounding property owners.

Mr. Navarro replied no, no sound; the bells are decorative only. It was the church's suggestion that the tower have a cross design, as the name of the church is "Cross of Grace."

Chairman Helm asked if a representative from the church was present.



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Ms. Velázquez explained Mr. Navarro is representing the church.

Unfortunately, Mr. Navarro explained, he meant to forward the HLC meeting email notice to Mr. Peterson.

Commissioner Brock thought beautifying the property with landscaping would enhance this project greatly.

Vice-Chairman Lopez thanked Mr. Navarro for placing the antennae in the back of the property.

Due to the height of the tower, Chairman Helm wondered if lighting for airplanes would be required.

Mr. Navarro responded no, currently the plan does not show lighting for airplanes but he would look into that.

Commissioner Lucero stated she was comfortable with this only because the building is non-contributing located within the historic district; however, the building is not historic.

Mr. Navarro asked Ms. Velázquez to explain non-contributing and contributing.

Ms. Velázquez explained *contributing properties are the reason you have a district and are the properties you want to save*. The best example would be in the Manhattan Heights Historic District where there are a number of Mabel Welch buildings, designed and constructed in the 1920s, 30s and 40s. These buildings are located throughout this area; therefore, a boundary was created to save as many historic buildings as possible. *Non-contributing properties are not the reason for a historic district*. These properties were constructed later, after the period of significance for the district was established.

To the audience, Chairman Helm asked if anyone resided in this historic district and what their opinion of the project was.

A member of the audience gave the project two thumbs up and noted the church building was built in 1985.

Chairman Helm asked when Austin Terrace Historic District was formed.



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Ms. Velázquez replied this district was formed in the late 1980s/early 1990s; the Manhattan Heights Historic District was formed in 1981 and the Magoffin Historic District was formed in 1982. The last historic district formed was the Downtown Historic District in 1992. Ms. Velázquez explained many properties within the northern portion of the Austin Terrace Historic District were constructed after the historic district was formed. Furthermore, properties in the northern portion of the district are actually suburban compared to the rest of the properties in the district.

Vice-Chairman Lopez asked Mr. Navarro when he would have an answer for commissioners regarding airplane lighting for the tower.

Mr. Navarro responded within one week; however, should lighting be required, T-Mobile would not object.

MOTION:

Motion made by Vice-Chairman Lopez TO APPROVE WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. **LANDSCAPING, AROUND THE SCREEN WALL AND ON BOTH SIDES OF THE SERVICE ROAD THAT ACCESSES THE ANTENNAE, WITH TREES 25 FEET ON CENTER, CITY STANDARD;**
2. **LANDSCAPING AROUND THE BASE OF THE TOWER;**
3. **IF REQUIRED, FAA LIGHTING**

Chairman Helm suggested wording the motion language “approval contingent on FAA not required.”

Vice-Chairman Lopez agreed.

MOTION LANGUAGE RESTATED:

Motion made by Commissioner Lucero, seconded by Vice-Chairman Lopez AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE ANTENNAE THE WAY IT IS EXCEPT WITH LANDSCAPING ON THE SERVICE ROAD WITH TREES AT EVERY 25 FEET ON CENTER, ON EACH SIDE OF THE ROAD AND LANDSCAPING AT THE ANTENNAE BASE; ADDITIONALLY, WITH THE CONDITION TO BE DENIED IF FAA REQUIRES THE LIGHT ON TOP OF THE ANTENNAE.

Chairman Helm clarified the motion language as “approval contingent upon FAA not requiring ...”

Ms. Velázquez requested Mr. Navarro provide the answer regarding the FAA lighting concern within the next 15 days.



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Chairman Helm suggested perhaps tabling the request for two weeks.

Mr. Navarro asked commissioners to table his item to allow him time to research the request. He clarified the service road is actually a sidewalk with gravel on each side. He proposed landscaping immediately adjacent to the parking and continuing on the eastside all the way to the tower. Additionally, in the parking lot west of the building we could put trees around the parking lot.

To Mr. Navarro, Vice-Chairman Lopez explained, because you are removing some grass additional landscape is required.

Chairman Helm suggested Mr. Navarro bring a landscaping plan with him. He suggested, minimally, trees be planted on the back half of the area and around the enclosure.

To Mr. Navarro, Ms. Velázquez explained the request would be postponed to the next HLC meeting to allow you time to answer the FAA concern and provide a landscape plan that will soften, not necessarily camouflage, the structure.

REQUEST WAS TABLED TO THE NEXT HLC MEETING.

- 2. **PHAP15-00015:** Being 109 Government Hill 5 & 6 & W ½ of 7 (7500 sq. ft.), City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
 - Location: 4607 Hastings Drive
 - Historic District: Austin Terrace
 - Property Owner: Maureen Murphy
 - Representative: Maureen Murphy
 - Representative District: 2
 - Existing Zoning: R-4/H (Residential/Historic)
 - Year Built: 1938
 - Historic Status: Non-contributing
 - Request: Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of ramps, walkway, paving, parking pad, planters, fences, painting, and the modification of a garage door into a French door after-the-fact
 - Application Filed: 5/18/15
 - 45 Day Expiration: 7/2/15

Ms. Velázquez gave a presentation and stated the property owner is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of ramps, walkway, paving, parking pad, planters, fences, painting, and the modification of a garage door into a French door after-the-fact.



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In 2013, Ms. Velázquez explained the property owner came before commissioners requesting a circular driveway. At the time, commissioners took no action, the request was neither approved nor denied; however, commissioners did ask the property owner to consider some options. At the time, the Guidelines had just been approved with language *stating circular driveways are not considered appropriate*. Since then work on the property has occurred.

While driving through the Austin Terrace Historic District on her way to review property for a code violation, Ms. Velázquez noticed work being done on this property. She then turned her vehicle around, spoke with the contractor and requested he stop work. Due to health issues, the property owner hired this contractor to do the work; however, the contractor failed to apply for proper permits.

Photos of the property under construction and prior to construction were shown; Ms. Velázquez noted the newly constructed property has more paving now. The walkway is wider, with steps and ramps on either side of the walkway. The following items were added: a new parking pad, fencing, French doors on the garage and the walkway down to the property line, and paving with stamped concrete. Finally, a planting plan was submitted to include three, tree walls. Ms. Velázquez noted although it looks like quite a bit of paving was added, the total amount of paving is under the 50% rule.

Ms. Velázquez read the following recommendations into the record:
The Historic Preservation Office recommends ***APPROVAL WITH MODIFICATIONS** of the proposed scope of work based on the following recommendations:

- The Design Guidelines for El Paso’s Historic Districts, Sites, and Properties recommend the following:*
- *Most of the older structures in El Paso have parking provided at the rear of the property in a garage or carport structure. Every effort should be taken to maintain the use of the original parking areas.*
 - *Where additional parking is necessary it should be located to the rear of the property as well. It is against the city ordinance to park in the parkway. Proposals for secondary driveways shall be reviewed and considered by the Historic Landmark Commission for approval.*
 - *New and replacement portions of sidewalks and driveways shall be constructed in material, finish, color, scoring, grid pattern, and control joints to match existing or the surrounding original paving.*
 - *Retain historic driveways and walkways, including steps and sidewalks, in their original locations.*
 - *When deteriorated, repair with materials that match or are compatible to the original.*
 - *Select appropriate paving materials for new walkways, including concrete, brick, and stone.*
 - *Introduce new driveways and walkways (when there are none) that are compatible with existing driveways and walkways in terms of width (maximum 12’ wide), location, materials, and design. Double width and circular driveways are not appropriate and require approval from the Historic Landmark Commission.*



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- *Select appropriate materials for new driveways including concrete tracks (narrow strips) and brick. Conceal edging materials using for gravel driveways. Keep new driveway aprons and curb cuts to the minimum width possible.*
- *Parking areas in front yards are not appropriate. New parking areas should be designed to have a minimal effect on the neighborhood environment.*
- *Landscaping is an inherent part of the building's siting and design. Good landscaping reinforces the architectural qualities of a structure and its context. When new landscaping is planned, it should be designed to complement the structure and the streetscape.*
- *Maintain the property's natural topography, and avoid grading that adversely affects drainage and soil stability or could negatively impact existing trees. Slopes shall not be paved.*
- *Grass and sod may be removed from front yards, side yards on a corner provided not more than 50% of the area is covered with gravel or other masonry. The remaining 50% must be covered with trees and living plants that provide ground cover.*
- *Construction of new fences, stairs, or sidewalk rails and replacement of older existing fences is allowed on historic properties provided that the proposed site feature is a compatible material and scale.*
- *Rock, brick, wood and wrought iron are acceptable materials but each case is decided individually.*
- *The height of the proposed fence should complement the structure (primarily as viewed from the street) and should not obstruct the public's view of the building.*
- *Place non-traditional site features such as swimming pools, playground equipment, concrete pads and basketball goals, tree houses, dumpsters, and trash receptacles only in areas such as rear yards, where they are not visible from the street.*
- *Introduce new fences and walls compatible in material, design, scale, location, and size with original fences and walls in the historic district.*
- *The height of the proposed fence should complement the structure and should not obstruct the public's view of the building.*
- *It is appropriate to paint wood, but not stucco or spray texture it.*
- *Neutral tones and muted earth colors are strongly recommended for the main body of the structure. Trim color may be a darker or contrasting color than the body of the building. Paint colors must be of the period, times, architectural style of the building, and geographic location because what works for a color palette for a home in California does not necessarily fit with paint colors in El Paso.*
- *When repainting, select paint colors that are compatible with the historic building and district. Enhance the features of a building through appropriate selection and placement of paint color consistent with its architectural style.*
- *Doors and windows are considered important character-defining features because of significant detailing.*
- *Secondary buildings are structures which are detached from the primary structure. They were traditionally used as garages, stables, kitchens, caretaker cottages and privies. These structures were usually built at the same time and therefore are very important to the architectural character of the property.*

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- Retain the original materials and features of historic garages and outbuildings including windows, doors, siding, trim, and latticework. If replacement of an element is necessary, match the original in design, and, if possible, materials.
- Introduce fire exits, stairs, landings, and ramps on rear or inconspicuous side locations
- Construct fire exits stairs, landings and ramps in such a manner that they do not damage historic materials and features. Construct them so that they can be removed in the future with minimal damage to the historic structure.
- Design and construct new fire exits, stairs, and landings to be compatible with the scale, materials, details, and finish of the historic structure.
- Features added to assist persons with disabilities should be designed and constructed so that the original design of the entrance or porch is not diminished and historic materials or features are not damaged.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation recommend the following:

- The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
- New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
- Retaining the historic relationship between buildings and the landscape.

***THE MODIFICATIONS ARE THAT THE WOODEN FENCES BE PAINTED TO MATCH THE BUILDING; THAT THE PARKING PAD BE RELOCATED TO THE WEST SIDE OF THE PROPERTY; AND THAT THE RAMP ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE BE RELOCATED TO INSIDE THE PORCH.**

Chairman Helm wondered where the ramp on the left side ended up.

Ms. Velázquez believed the ramp would have connected with the sidewalk.

Chairman Helm assumed the CMU planters would have the same stone finish as the others.

Ms. Velázquez agreed.



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Vice-Chairman Lopez asked if the existing tree was removed.

Ms. Maureen Murphy, property owner, explained the tree was removed because it was dead.

Ms. Velázquez noted the tree was removed, however, the property owner intends to plant three new ones.

Ms. Velázquez reiterated the property owner has health issues and wants to access and exit her property with ease.

Vice-Chairman Lopez clarified the property owner requested the proper permits for the circular driveway; however, for these improvements, the proper permits were not obtained.

Ms. Velázquez agreed and stated the property owner hired a contractor and was under the impression the contractor had applied for and received the proper permits.

Commissioner Gomez asked if the property owner would be required to fill in the existing driveway and curb cut.

Ms. Velázquez replied no, they would not have to fill that one in. Ms. Velázquez explained part of the guidelines do not recommend filling that in with cement. If it was to be filled in, she would recommend gravel of some type or grass.

Chairman Helm asked Ms. Velázquez if she was referring to the area between the wheel tracks.

Ms. Velázquez replied yes.

Commissioner Gomez reiterated the wheel tracks would remain as well.

Ms. Velázquez replied yes.

Vice-Chairman Lopez wondered if the driveway she was proposing was the two-wheel track type.

Ms. Velázquez explained if having a larger driveway would be helpful that would be okay too, the property owner would still be under the 50% paving rule.

Vice-Chairman Lopez clarified with the removal of the existing driveway.

Ms. Velázquez responded yes.



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Vice-Chairman Lopez wondered if there was a fence or a gate connected to the porch.

Ms. Velázquez explained behind the planting yes, there is a metal fence and metal fencing on the side too.

Vice-Chairman Lopez noted so that fencing would be removed.

Ms. Velázquez agreed.

Vice-Chairman Lopez asked what size the proposed new trees would be, for example, do they have a 1" trunk.

Ms. Velázquez explained the trees are just saplings now; however, according to the planting plan these will be pistachio trees.

Vice-Chairman Lopez was unhappy the existing tree was removed. He asked if removing the stamped concrete driveway would be replaced with landscaping, the proposed driveway to be relocated to the west side.

Ms. Velázquez replied yes, the driveway on the east side could be replaced with landscaping. She suggested relocating the landscaping on the left hand side of the planting plan to the area where the driveway would be removed.

Vice-Chairman Lopez clarified the contractor had not applied for the proper permits nor approvals the Historic Preservation Office.

Ms. Velázquez stated no, the contractor did not apply for the proper permits until after he had been cited.

Ms. Maureen Murphy, property owner, purchased this home seven years ago. At that time, it was briefly mentioned the property was located in a historic district; however, she would not have any problems, she could remodel as she pleased. She explained to the landscape contractor that he would have to submit a request to the Historic Landmark Commission and then went out of town for the summer. When she returned, she encountered all these problems. The reason for all the cement is the house is sinking because it was built on sand. The one corner, where the driveway is, the contractor dug underneath, put pillars then covered it all with concrete to keep that corner from sinking.

After she purchased the home, because of cracks in the walls she redid the plaster and sheetrock; however, those walls have cracks again. The other corner, where the ramp is, the contractor had to dig underneath and cover that with concrete to prevent the home from sinking further. The

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tree was removed due to disease and branches were breaking off and going onto neighbors properties. She did not enclose the ribbon driveway because she was told she could not enclose the ribbon driveway. Yet, if you look around the district, hers is the only ribbon driveway.

Previously, when she was before the commission for the circular driveway request, she was told she could not have it. The solution was to demolish the rock wall in the rear, remove the existing trees and under trees, so she could park her vehicle. The side ramp was created so that she can easily bring the trash cans to and from the street, the ribbon driveway is too small for the trash cans, invariably she would have to drag the trash cans across the gravel.

As for the fences, the fences were always there; as for the wrought iron gate, she posted placards to prevent people from accessing the alley from her property.

Vice-Chairman Lopez asked if Ms. Murphy was in the process of painting her house and noted the porch in the rear was painted yellow

Ms. Murphy replied, the house is gray, it was just painted. The yellow was supposed to have been painted gray to match the house. She would paint the porch to match the house. She asked commissioners if she removed the parking pad could she keep the ramps.

Chairman Helm asked Ms. Velázquez when the property was cited.

Ms. Murphy replied, last summer. She added she has more than 50% landscaping which is more than the houses on either side of her have. She was willing to remove the bricks from the front walkway and add landscape.

Ms. Velázquez added approximately a year ago.

Chairman Helm asked Ms. Murphy if she would remove the bricks on the parkway between the sidewalk and the curb ...

Ms. Murphy noted those were ugly bricks. For safety reasons, she could install wrought iron along the sidewalk.

Vice-Chairman Lopez asked Ms. Murphy to clarify where the side ramp was going.

Ms. Murphy explained there is a tree stump there currently. The contractor wants to combine the ramp with the side; however, we have to wait for the tree stump to die some more.

Vice-Chairman Lopez clarified the contractor was making changes to the side yard and the garage in the rear without proper permits.

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Ms. Murphy replied yes, without proper permits. Because she uses the garage in the rear as an art room, the contractor hung French doors because the garage door was bent, rusted and falling apart. She was under the impression she could do whatever she wanted to the backyard without having to apply for permits. Ms. Murphy explained if she redoes the ramp, as suggested by Ms. Velázquez; that would wipe out the whole porch. Because if could put the ramp there and then go to the porch, the wrought iron is gone; furthermore, that corner of the house was dug under so the contractor could put in the pillars to keep the house from sinking further.

Chairman Helm explained most of the porch would be demolished to build the ramp.

Ms. Murphy agreed.

Chairman Helm asked Ms. Velázquez to clarify her modification recommendation regarding the porch.

Per the guidelines, Ms. Velázquez explained, if the installation of a ramp is called for, ideally, you construct it so that the ramp goes into the porch and is hidden from view.

Vice-Chairman Lopez suggested raising the driveway to match the level of the porch.

Commissioner Cordova asked how high would the elevation be, about six or eight inches or higher. He wondered if the driveway elevation would start at the mid-front yard just to get up to that level. If that happens, then the sidewall must be raised also.

Ms. Velázquez commented on the three existing steps and explained the elevation would probably be higher than six or eight inches. She did not think the wall would have to be raised; however, it may require a railing. The railing can be made of metal.

Ms. Murphy stated she brought pictures of the railing she is proposing for commissioners to review; additionally, she brought the letter from her physician explaining her health issues.

For commissioners, Chairman Helm asked Ms. Murphy to state her proposals once more.

Ms. Murphy stated she is proposing to let her finish but it sounds as though there is an issue with the parking pad. So, if she removed the parking pad could she leave the rest of the cement in because she would still be under the 50% landscaping rule.

Vice-Chairman Lopez responded yes. He clarified although the contractor did not apply for the proper permits, ultimately, the responsibility lies with the property owner.

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Ms. Murphy was aware of that and she was present here today to remedy the situation. She stated she probably could not afford an elevated driveway.

Commissioner Gomez asked if Ms. Murphy had a rendering showing all the railing, she noted the wrought iron would match the existing.

Ms. Murphy gave her rendering to Ms. Velázquez for commissioners to review.

Vice-Chairman Lopez commented on the shutters on the sides of the windows and the many changes to the house. He stated the drawing was more obtrusive than what exists currently.

Vice-Chairman Lopez agrees with Ms. Velázquez. He added a raised driveway on the side would be the best solution, easy access to the house, no steps onto the porch, completely accessible; furthermore, those railings would not be necessary anymore. Vice-Chairman Lopez stated the following concerns:

1. Ms. Murphy knew the property was located in a historic district;
 - a. The circular driveway request was not approved pending another solution;
 - b. Making changes, not only to the landscaping but the structure as well, without prior approval from the Commission

To conclude, Vice-Chairman Lopez suggested Ms. Murphy follow Ms. Velázquez recommendations.

For the driveway, Commissioner Gomez noted only one of the existing trees would be removed.

A ramp inside the porch would be required, Vice-Chairman Lopez explained, if the driveway is at ground level; however, if the driveway is raised, there is no need to place a ramp inside the porch.

Ms. Murphy explained if she were to drive her car to the garage in the rear, she would not have access to her home if the ramp was removed.

Vice-Chairman Lopez clarified commissioners are requesting the removal of the ramp on the west side.

Per the drawing, Ms. Velázquez clarified the ramp on the left would be removed.

Ms. Murphy explained if the ramp was removed then most of her porch would be removed.

Technically, the façade of the porch still existed, Ms. Velázquez explained, Ms. Murphy would access her home by going through the porch.



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Ms. Murphy proposed leaving one ramp, removing the other ramp and not have to put a new driveway in.

MOTION:

Motion made by Chairman Helm, seconded by Commissioner Lucero AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE WITH THE FOLLOWING MODIFICATIONS:

1. **REMOVE ALL THE PARKING PAD FROM THE RAMP BACK TO THE SIDEWALK, THE 24 FOOT DISTANCE;**
 2. **REMOVE THE DEAD END RAMP ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE MAIN SIDEWALK;**
 3. **COMPLETION OF THE PAINTING OF THE GARAGE AND THE ARCHWAY, GRAY;**
 4. **COMPLETION OF AT LEAST ONE HANDRAIL ON THE RAMP, PROPERTY OWNER'S DISCRETION;**
 5. **COMPLETION OF THE LANDSCAPING**
3. Addresses of property HLC commissioners have requested that HLC staff review or investigate and provide a report to the HLC. If no addresses are submitted in advance and listed under this agenda item, commissioners may announce such addresses under this agenda item. Discussion on property announced at this meeting will take place during the next regularly scheduled meeting. June 1, 2015 deadline for HLC members to request for agenda items to be scheduled for the June 15, 2015 meeting. June 15, 2015 deadline for HLC members to request for agenda items to be schedule for the July 6, 2015 meeting.

No requests from commissioners or staff.

HLC Staff Report

4. Update on Administrative Review Cases since the last HLC meeting for the properties listed on the attachment posted with this agenda. (See Attachment "A")

Commissioner Helm commented on **PHHR15-00075-301 Texas Avenue, Bassett Partners EP LLC (owners)** request to install antennae on the fourteenth floor roof and screen them from view.

Ms. Velázquez explained yes, antennae can be installed on the Bassett Tower roof as long as it is not visible.

MOTION:

Motion made by Commissioner Lucero, seconded by Commissioner Brock AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE HLC STAFF REPORT.



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Other Business – Discussion and Action

- Introduction of Adam Train, Planner with the Historic Preservation Office

Ms. Velázquez proudly proclaimed the Historic Preservation Office has doubled in size. She then introduced Mr. Adam Train, ASU graduate, Urban Studies with a passion for revitalization.

Chairman Helm asked Adam what brought him to El Paso.

Adam explained he spent his high school years in Las Cruces, New Mexico, his family lives. He would like to help the region that he spent his formative years in.

Ms. Velázquez noted that this was Adam's first day on the job.

- Discussion on Downtown survey and map (per 11.24.2014 meeting discussion) including discussion of Certified Local Government (CLG) grant.

Chairman Helm noted this item seems to be on and off the City Council agenda.

Ms. Velázquez agreed. She explained the Texas Historical Commission (THC) generously awarded the City of El Paso a \$56,000 grant, when the initial request was for \$50,000. The problem is the award amount requires City Council approval. Before the request is heard at City Council meeting, staff met with property owners in the Downtown Management District (DMD), who wanted more information. The property owners did not understand fully what it meant to have the survey and National Register nomination. Jessica Herrera, Redevelopment Manager, met with the property owners individually and at the DMD Board meeting.

Chairman Helm asked when the Board meeting was held.

Ms. Velázquez replied last week. When the contract was awarded, the first week of April, it stated the contract must be returned within 60 days, the project must be completed by September 16, 2015. We felt 60 days was not enough time due to the volume of properties being considered. The THC has extended the return of the contract; however, that extension cuts into the term of the project resulting in a shorter completion time. We do expect to have this project up and running by September, at the latest.

Ms. Velázquez explained the first step is to have the contract approved by City Council; the next step is to send out an RFQ, Request for Quotation, to several firms qualified to accomplish the task. The third step is to select the most qualified firm, not necessarily the lowest bidder. The fourth step will be to have the firm begin work on the survey, part of which is to contact

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the property owners and inform them of the National Register nomination award and ask if they would like to be part of this nomination. When nominating properties to the National Register, property owner consent is required. Within a historic district, it is required that a majority of the property owners must give their consent.

Commissioner Gomez asked what the reaction was from property owners at the DMD Board meeting.

Ms. Velázquez responded relief; there was a lot of misconception out there. One person thought a firm from Tucson was already doing the survey; no firm from Tucson, or otherwise, has been conducting a survey of downtown El Paso. There were a number of individuals who did not understand what it meant to be listed on the National Register. It comes down to two words: Free Money. As the owner of a contributing, commercial property listed on the National Register, you are entitled to apply for state and federal credits which are 25% and 20%, which means you receive 45% of your costs back.

For example, the Trost designed Gateway Hotel is one of three in the southwest. The Gateway Hotel is not designated so it could be demolished which is a horrifying thought. The property owner is considering renovating the hotel; the hotel was actually condemned by the City. Should the property owner install a new roof, paint, restore the windows, etc. costs could run close to \$1 million dollars; however, \$450,000 would be given back to the property owner. The City is in no way, shape or form prepared to give that kind of money to anybody. We need as many people as possible to take advantage of this opportunity.

Chairman Helm wondered when a district is formed, would property owners have been given the choice of being either a contributing or non-contributing property.

Ms. Velázquez replied no, actually, contributing is usually decided by the individual writing the nomination and is based on significance - architectural, cultural or historic.

Chairman Helm explained, as a district, a threshold of 50% approval of property owners must be attained.

Ms. Velázquez agreed.

Chairman Helm reiterated the THC had extended the grant. He asked if staff had started writing the RFQ.

Ms. Velázquez clarified no, the THC had extended the contract. Regarding the RFQ, no, staff has not begun writing it yet because we need to get the contract approved from City Council

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7. Preservation Month 2015 – <http://www.elpasotexas.gov/economic-development/historic-preservation>

Ms. Velázquez stated Preservation Month was in May, a great success, several activities were offered the last of which was the tour of Downtown with Dr. Max Grossman. Next year, Preservation Month 2016, we want to focus on Mission Trail Historic District.

8. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes for May18, 2015

No comments from commissioners.

MOTION:

Motion made by Commissioner Lucero, seconded by Chairman Helm AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE MEETING MINUTES FOR MAY 18TH

ABSTAIN: *Commissioner Skillern*

MOTION:

Motion made by Commissioner Brock, seconded by Chairman Helm AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:56 P.M.