



**EL PASO HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 3, 2010  
4:00 P.M.**

The El Paso Historic Landmark Commission held a public hearing in Council Chambers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall Building, February 3, 2010, 4:00 p.m., with the following members present:

**Commission Members Present:**

Joseph Riccillo, Chair  
Hugo Gardea, Vice-Chair  
Randy Brock  
Ricardo D. Gonzalez (left at 6:00 p.m.)  
Elizabeth Leal  
Jim Booher (4:09)

**Others Present:**

Dr. Troy Ainsworth, Historic Preservation Officer  
Tony De La Cruz, Planner  
Cynthia Osborn, Assistant City Attorney  
Tom Maguire, Development Services Department,  
Chief Building Inspector

Chair Riccillo called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

**AGENDA**

**I. CALL TO THE PUBLIC – PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Jesus Ochoa, El Paso resident and designated spokesperson, El Paso Committee for the Preservation of the Segundo Barrio, Ellis Island of the Southwest. Mr. Ochoa noted Committee Members are all college graduates and have distinguished themselves in politics, military, education and the arts. El Segundo Barrio is also home to three highly decorated veterans, two of whom gave their lives. At the 2010 National Latino Congreso held in El Paso, Mr. Ochoa explained, a Resolution was passed (Resolution 10.33 (Floor Resolution) – Preservation of Ellis Island of the Southwest). He noted a letter and map were hand-delivered to members of City Council outlining the proposed jurisdictional district, ultimately listing El Segundo Barrio in the National Registry. (Copies of the Resolution were distributed to Commissioners)

Chair Riccillo asked Staff if there were any changes to the agenda.

Dr. Ainsworth responded the agenda stands as presented; however, the order of the agenda items may be changed to accommodate members of the public.

**MOTION:**

Motion made by Commissioner Gardea, seconded by Commissioner Brock and unanimously carried **TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.**

No further discussion from the Commissioners. The vote was taken.

**AYES:** Commissioners Brock, Gonzalez, Gardea, Leal and Booher

**NAYS:** N/A

Motion passed. (5-0)

## II. REGULAR AGENDA – DISCUSSION AND ACTION

### Certificate of Demolition

1. **HPC9-00202** Tract 14-A, Block 47, Ysleta Grant, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
- Location: 9392 Socorro Road  
Historic District: Mission Trail  
Property Owner: Michael Carbajal  
Representative: Michael Carbajal  
Representative District: #6  
Existing Zoning: R-F/H (Ranch and Farm/Historic)  
Year Built: 1959  
Historic Status: Contributing  
Request: Certificate of Demolition for existing structure  
Application Filed: 12/23/2009  
45 Day Expiration: 02/06/2010  
60 Day Expiration: 02/21/2010

Dr. Ainsworth gave a PowerPoint presentation and noted the actual construction date of the structure was unknown. Regarding Staff Recommendations, Dr. Ainsworth explained, Staff recommends, with reluctance, the Certificate of Demolition with the following conditions:

1. The property owner respond, in writing, to the Building Standards and Permits Division, Development Services Department, regarding the code violations identified in the letter (copy of letter on file) addressed to Eddie & Elvira Mc Vay (grandparents of property owner) that the violations were addressed: and
2. Have the property owner explain what he intends to do with the property, should the Commission approve the Certificate of Demolition,

Commissioner Leal wondered if the adobe brick could be saved.

Mr. Michael Carbajal, property owner, was unsure if the adobe brick could be saved as the structure is corroding and falling apart. He explained he had recently acquired the property from his grandparents and intends to build a home on the property.

Mr. De La Cruz noted the property is currently zoned R-F (Ranch and Farm) which allows single-family residential and elaborated on legal non-conforming, setback and variance requirements.

Dr. Ainsworth explained zoning changes do not require Historic Landmark Commission review; however, the proposed new home construction will be presented to Commissioners.

Mr. Tom Maguire, Development Services Department, Chief Building Inspector, commented on the stability of the structure and felt it was not habitable or useful for any human occupation. He added it may be difficult to try and save the adobe brick due to the condition and age of the structure.

Per Staff recommendation conditions, Ms. Osborn asked if the property owner had complied with condition number one.

Dr. Ainsworth responded yes.

**FOR THE RECORD –** Dr. Ainsworth stated he is uncomfortable recommending demolition under any circumstance; however, through discussions with Mr. Maguire regarding public safety and structural stability, he is recommending demolition of the structure.

**MOTION:**

Motion made by Commissioner Leal, seconded by Commissioner Brock to **APPROVE THE CERTIFICATE OF DEMOLITION.**

Regarding the motion language, Ms. Osborn requested Commissioners include the Staff recommendation conditions, for clarification.

Prior to the vote, Chair Riccillo commented on the condition of the structure, demolition versus restoration and felt it would be cost prohibitive to rebuild.

Vice-Chair Gardea stated not all structures should be preserved and requested, as a condition of approval, the property owner document the condition of the building as built, photos and provide sketch plan, as an archive of what previously stood there.

Dr. Ainsworth responded the demolition permit cannot be issued prior to February 21, 2010. He suggested adding a condition to the motion whereby prior to February 21<sup>st</sup> Staff would photo document the interior and exterior of the structure, as a visual record, of what once stood there.

Commissioner Gonzalez wondered if research had been done concerning the history of the site and stated it could be a very significant piece of property.

Dr. Ainsworth responded not this particular home.

**FOR THE RECORD –** Dr. Ainsworth stated it is a dangerous precedent to set to approve demolition. However, it is a very dangerous precedent to set, if demolition is approved, regardless of the condition of any given building. It should be very clear that the examination of this application is very specific and not a blanket endorsement of neglected, poorly maintained property and does not in any way suggest that the Historic Landmark Commission will approve demolition.

Chair Riccillo reiterated the previous Motion language and stated Commissioners have requested the following amendments:

1. photograph documentation of the property prior to February 21<sup>st</sup>; and
2. written explanation as to the future intent of the property

Chair Riccillo asked Commissioners if there was any further discussion.

Ms. Osborn gave legal advice regarding motions.

**AMENDED MOTION:**

Motion made by Chair Riccillo, seconded by Commissioner Leal and unanimously carried **TO AMEND THE PREVIOUS MOTION TO APPROVE THE CERTIFICATE OF DEMOLITION WITH TWO CAVEATS:**

1. **PRIOR TO FEBRUARY 21<sup>ST</sup>, TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PROPERTY; AND**
2. **A WRITTEN DOCUMENT REGARDING THE INTENT OF THE FUTURE USE OF THE PROPERTY**

Chair Riccillo asked if Commissioners had any further questions of Staff or property owner.

Ms. Osborn gave legal advice regarding the written document from the property owner.

Vice-Chair Gardea asked if floor plans would be included in the documentation of the property.

Dr. Ainsworth responded Staff would measure the interior and exterior and prepare a set of drawings. During the discussion, Dr. Ainsworth asked Mr. Carbajal if he would permit Staff access to the property/structure to take photos and measurements. Mr. Carbajal said it was fine with him.

No further discussion from the Commissioners. The vote was taken.

**AYES:** Commissioners Brock, Gonzalez, Gardea, Leal and Booher

**NAYS:** N/A

Motion passed. (5-0)

### **Certificate of Appropriateness**

2. **HPC10-00010** Block 8, Lots 5 and 6, Second Revised map of Mundy Heights, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
- Location: 1510 Upson Avenue  
Historic District: Sunset Heights  
Property Owner: John S. Wiebe  
Representative: John S. Wiebe  
Representative District: #8  
Existing Zoning: R-4/H (Residential/Historic)  
Year Built: 1910  
Historic Status: Contributing  
Request: Applicant proposes to demolish existing non-contributing, detached garage and rebuild a new 18' x 20' detached garage.  
Application Filed: 1/20/2010  
45 Day Expiration: 3/6/2010

Mr. De La Cruz gave a PowerPoint presentation and explained the applicant will remove the existing shed and rebuild a new shed that meets side and rear setbacks and detached garage requirements. He noted the new shed colors would match the colors of the existing home; additionally, due to the location of the proposed garage, some trees will be removed to allow the five foot side setback. Staff recommends approval of the request.

Commissioner Gonzalez asked if Commissioners would be approving a Certificate of Demolition, in addition to, the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Dr. Ainsworth responded, for minor demolition projects, Certificates of Demolition can be reviewed and approved administratively.

Ms. Osborn asked if Staff had intended to approve the demolition administratively.

Dr. Ainsworth responded yes.

Commissioner Gonzalez asked what materials would be used for the new structure.

Mr. De La Cruz explained wood siding façade for the exterior walls, the roof will match the existing roof of the home in color and the trim will be red.

Chair Riccillo asked if Commissioners had any further questions of Staff or property owner.

**MOTION:**

Motion made by Commissioner Gonzalez, seconded by Commissioner Leal and unanimously carried **TO APPROVE THE CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS ON THE CONDITION THAT THE MATERIALS USED ARE THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN SPECIFIED TODAY AND THAT STAFF ENSURES THAT THOSE MATERIALS ARE INDEED USED IN THIS PROJECT.**

No further discussion from the Commissioners. The vote was taken.

**AYES:** Commissioners Brock, Gonzalez, Gardea, Leal and Booher

**NAYS:** N/A

Motion passed. (5-0)

*Dr. Ainsworth requested item 7D., Discussion and update regarding El Segundo Barrio Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy final draft as prepared by the Department of Community Development be discussed prior to the following agenda item. See page \_\_\_\_\_*

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. February 3, 2010 deadline for HLC members to request for agenda items to be scheduled for the February 17, 2010 meeting. February 17, 2010 deadline for HLC members to request for agenda items to be scheduled for the March 3, 2010 meeting.

Chair Riccillo read the agenda item into the record.

**A. 2731 Portland Avenue**

Dr. Ainsworth commended the El Paso Preservation Alliance on their effort; and noted Mr. Ray Rutledge, Manhattan Heights Historic District resident, had provided Staff a color schematic for the exterior. He estimated the project was 40% complete and the home is becoming a show piece for Portland Avenue. He encouraged Commissioners to visit the property.

**B. Alamo Elementary School**

Dr. Ainsworth explained he received a copy of the EPISD staff architect's assessment outlining a list of relevant and necessary reasons for the demolition of Alamo Elementary School. EPISD Bond election language stated bond monies would be used for the reconstruction of Alamo Elementary School. At a meeting with EPISD officials last year, Dr. Ainsworth was informed the building was unsafe and should be demolished to allow construction of a new school, there is no alternative. As a preservationist, Dr. Ainsworth does not believe in demolishing buildings and does not see the structural loss of integrity in this building. He believed this was a good opportunity to work collaboratively with EPISD official, after all this is our city and it's very important we take care of our heritage.

Chair Riccillo wondered the letters from Commissioners to EPISD Trustees regarding the potential and irrevocable loss of the school had been mailed and if EPISD officials have authorized Staff to tour the building so that a valid assessment.

Dr. Ainsworth responded letters were mailed to the Trustee's home address; however, Staff has not received a response to the request for an interior inspection, as of yet.

Commissioner Leal reiterated Commissioners are requesting the original building, the 109 year-old structure, remain in tact; however, we are not opposed to the demolition of the additions.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

1. Mr. Omar Silva, Sunset Heights resident, read a prepared statement into the record and thanked Commissioners for their advocacy to preserve this icon of Segundo Barrio.
2. Mr. Jesus Ochoa, El Paso resident and designated spokesperson, El Paso Committee for the Preservation of the Segundo Barrio, Ellis Island of the Southwest, stated there is great community support to keep the school. Mr. Ochoa felt that, working together through the political process, EPISD officials will retain Alamo Elementary School. In conclusion, Mr. Ochoa stated, the El Paso Committee for the Preservation of the Segundo Barrio, Ellis Island of the Southwest and the Bowie Alumni Association, will draft a letter to EPISD Trustees asking them when they would be discussing Alamo Elementary School again and encouraging Trustees to listen to the Historic Landmark Commission.

Chair Riccillo was curious why Commissioners have not been able to obtain any information from the architect of record for the project why the historic portion would not be maintained. He stated the only recourse Commissioners have is to initiate the H-Overlay designation process, prior to demolition.

Commissioner Leal asked how long it takes to process an H-Overlay request. She asked what happened to contacting the media for publicity and to assist taxpayers and area residents in understanding the Bond election language and the intentions of the school district.

Dr. Ainsworth responded the timeframe is based on many factors; owner consent, favorable recommendation by Historic Landmark Commissioners, City Plan Commission and City Council approval, etc.. He explained there are entities at City Hall who have a vested interest in the area. The direction provided to Staff, Mr. De La Cruz and himself, was to provide information to the public not to advocate old action. Dr. Ainsworth then explained the H-Overlay approval process.

Regarding the approval process as explained by Dr. Ainsworth, Commissioner Gonzalez stated he was incorrect. Commissioner Gonzalez explained H-Overlay requests come before the City Plan Commission, no matter the outcome the request will be heard at City Council.

**FOR THE RECORD –** Dr. Ainsworth stated he was incorrect regarding the H-Overlay approval process. The approval process explained by Commissioner Gonzalez was correct.

Chair Riccillo asked Dr. Ainsworth, in your professional opinion, you have no doubt this building has historical significance.

Dr. Ainsworth responded it is his professional opinion Alamo Elementary School is one of the most compelling and significant structures, not just in Segundo Barrio, but in El Paso. His opinion is based on an assessment of the architectural design and character and the architect who designed it, Mr. Edward Kneezell. He noted most of Mr. Kneezell's work is now gone, Alamo Elementary School is one of the few remaining designs created by Mr. Kneezell.

### **MOTION:**

Motion made by Commissioner Leal, seconded by Chair Riccillo and unanimously carried **TO INITIATE THE H-OVERLAY PROCESS ON THE WHOLE PROPERTY OF ALAMO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.**

Per the ordinance, Commissioner Gardea noted, documentation of the property must be submitted in conjunction with the H-Overlay application request. He suggested Staff document the history of the property, the existing conditions and why the property is significant. He advised Staff to follow the National Register criteria when researching the property and reiterated it is imperative that Staff tie the historic significance of the property to the ordinance criteria.

No further discussion from the Commissioners. The vote was taken.

**AYES:** Commissioners Brock, Gonzalez, Gardea, Leal and Booher

**NAYS:** N/A

Motion passed. (5-0)

After the vote, Chair Riccillo asked if Staff could work diligently in collecting the documentation so that at the next HLC meeting Commissioners could move the request forward.

Dr. Ainsworth clarified the motion language is to initiate the H-Overlay process and, per Commissioner Gardea's recommendation, Staff will prepare the written history of the original building and alterations to the property over time, based upon the National Register recommendations.

**C.** Magoffin Villas at 915, 917 and 1001 Magoffin Avenue and 1000, 1008 and 1010 Myrtle Avenue

Mr. De La Cruz explained Commissioners were notified at November 13, 2009, meeting that plans were ready to be issued; however, since that time, revisions were submitted to Building Permits & Inspections for review. He was unaware what the revisions were; the plans were not routed to the Historic Preservation Division. He stated the plans were failed, Staff was unable to determine what revisions were made, BP&I Staff notified the architects January 13, 2010. Mr. De La Cruz will review the plans tomorrow to determine what modifications to the construction plans were made. If the modifications affect the exterior, he will ensure the revised plans come before the Commission.

**D.** 906 North Mesa Street

Dr. Ainsworth gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the poor structural condition, interior and exterior, of the building. City officials and the property owner have been discussing what can be done with the building. Staff is bringing this to the attention of the Commission for informational purposes only. The building was constructed in 1917 at a cost of \$25,000.00 for the entire project.

Mr. Tom Maguire, Development Services Department, Chief Building Inspector, explained he has been working on this building for the last 10 or 12 years. He commented on the condition of the interior and exterior of the building and explained the building is being occupied by vagrants. Due to the cold weather the vagrants may start a fire to keep warm; Mr. Maguire is concerned that the building may catch fire. He explained the property is currently in receivership. He was unsure if the building had been condemned and noted the property has been boarded and secured. Mr. Maguire explained the two types of condemnation.

Commissioner Booher commented on the recess and stated the building was beautiful and worth saving.

HLC members requested the following properties be discussed at the February 17, 2010 meeting.

1. Commissioner Gonzalez requested Staff provide Commissioners an update on the status of the Magoffin Villas.
2. Chair Riccillo requested Staff provide Commissioners an update on the status of the property located at 1701 N Texas and submit a copy of that discussion to Mr. Maguire.
3. Chair Riccillo requested Mr. Maguire provide a periodic update on the property located at 906 N Mesa
4. Chair Riccillo requested Alamo Elementary School continue to be posted on future HLC agendas.

#### **HLC Staff Reports**

**4. A. Administrative Review Design Guidelines – Protected Interiors**

Dr. Ainsworth requested the agenda item be postponed to the February 17, 2010 meeting.

**B. Discussion and training regarding Secretary of Interior Standards**

Dr. Ainsworth requested the agenda item be postponed to the February 17, 2010 meeting.

**C. Update on inventory of El Paso Street**

Dr. Ainsworth requested the agenda item be postponed to the February 17, 2010 meeting.

#### **Development Services Department Report**

**5. Antiquities Code of Texas**

Dr. Ainsworth requested the agenda item be postponed to the February 17, 2010 meeting.

#### **Visionaries in Preservation Report**

**6. A. VIP Manager Presentation**

Dr. Ainsworth explained the City Plan Commission will hear the discussion regarding the Visionaries in Preservation Plan at the February 11, CPC meeting. Pending the outcome, Staff will schedule an agenda item for City Council.

**B. Discussion and action regarding VIP issues**

See above.

#### **Other Business**

**7. A. Approval of Historic Landmark Commission Meeting Minutes.  
January 6, 2010**

Chair Riccillo asked Commissioners if there were any corrections and/or revisions.

No discussion from the Commissioners. The vote was taken.

**MOTION:**

Motion made by Commissioner Leal, seconded by Chair Riccillo and unanimously carried **TO APPROVE THE HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSIONER MEETING MINUTES FOR JANUARY 6, 2010.**

**AYES:** Commissioners Brock, Gardea, Leal and Booher  
**NAYS:** N/A  
**NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE:** Commissioner Gonzalez

Motion passed. (4-0)

- B.** Discussion and action regarding creating a sub-committee to further explore the details and possibilities of the photography project of historic districts to promote historic awareness

Mr. Steve Burns, retired Associated Press professional photographer, moved to El Paso two years ago and discovered the project via Mr. Ben Leal's posting on craigslist. He is in favor of the proposed project and volunteered to help create, publish whatever is necessary. He provided his contact information to Dr. Ainsworth.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Burns for attending the meeting and volunteering his services for this worthwhile project.

- C.** Discussion and action regarding minimum requirements for Certificate of Appropriateness applications

Chair Riccillo requested the agenda item be postponed to the February 17, 2010 meeting.

***Dr. Ainsworth requested the following agenda item be discussed prior item 3.***

- D.** Discussion and update regarding the El Segundo Barrio Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy final draft as prepared by the Department of Community Development

Mr. Mark Alvarado, Neighborhood Services Coordinator, Department of Community and Human Development, distributed copies of "El Segundo Barrio, Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy, Summary Version". (copy on file) Mr. Alvarado provided a synopsis of the "El Segundo Barrio, Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy, Summary Version" and noted the Resolution will be presented to City Council at the February 9<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.  
*(Council did approve the Resolution with a vote of 7-0, Representative Robinson was not present for the vote.)*

Dr. Ainsworth referred to page 4, ***Neighborhood Appearance, Goal 6: Preserve and enhance the historical, cultural and aesthetic value in the neighborhood, Objective 6.1: To identify and preserve cultural and historic elements in the neighborhood.*** He noted El Segundo Barrio is the oldest barrio in El Paso with many buildings having good architectural integrity, character and eligible for historic designation. Furthermore; the goal was added to ensure buildings with architectural and historic significance within this area could be recognized.

Mr. Alvarado responded, in addition to the specific task and strategy at hand and preserving the cultural and historic integrity of the neighborhood, is to inventory all buildings in the neighborhood with the potential of historic recognition. Community and Human Development Staff are ready to work with Dr. Ainsworth to ensure the inventory is done and recommendations are made to Commissioners. He explained since September 2008, over 13 public meetings have been held with property owners, residents and business owners in the area. This is a very walkable neighborhood with lots of amenities are in place, Community and Human Development wants to make El Segundo Barrio a better place to live for residents.

Dr. Ainsworth noted the photographic walking tour inventory of El Paso Street is the first step. He and Mr. De La Cruz have taken photographs of streets on the western side of the subject area, work will continue as time permits.

Chair Riccillo responded Commissioners had previously discussed possibly creating an historic district. He referred to the Wright & Dalbin report and added instead of waiting for community participation, Commissioners could start nominating buildings for H-Overlay designation.

Regarding rehab improvements for single-family housing, Mr. Alvarado noted, there are three levels, local, state and federal whereby applicants must meet these requirements.

Dr. Ainsworth clarified single properties may be designated H-Overlay zoning, in addition to the property zoning, i.e., Residential, Commercial, etc.; however, Historic Districts encompass neighborhoods. He elaborated on the process/requirements to create an historic district/

**E. Discussion and action 2010 Historic Landmark Commission meeting schedule**

Chair Riccillo requested the agenda item be postponed to the February 17, 2010 meeting.

**MOTION:**

Motion made by Chair Riccillo, seconded by Commissioner Leal and unanimously carried **TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 6:20 P.M.**

No further discussion from the Commissioners. The vote was taken.

**AYES:** Commissioners Brock, Gardea, Leal and Booher

**NAYS:** N/A

**NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE:** Commissioner Gonzalez

Motion passed. (4-0)