

CITY OF LAREDO

HISTORIC DISTRICT/LANDMARK BOARD

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF MAY 14, 2026

The Historic District/Landmark Board of the City of Laredo convened in a regular meeting on Thursday, May 14, 2026 at 12:00 noon, at the City Council Chambers at City Hall at 1110 Houston St., in Laredo, Texas 78040, to consider the following:

1. CALL TO ORDER

Marc Gonzalez, called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director, called roll and verified **no quorum** existed. She informed the Board Members present that Vice Chair Barrientos had confirmed his attendance. Ms. Guerra further explained the item scheduled for discussion was for informational purposes only and did not require Board action. Therefore, the meeting could proceed despite the lack of a quorum; however, no action could be taken on the approval of the meeting minutes.

Members present: Jorge Santana
Marc Gonzalez

Members absent: Chair Johnny Narvaez
Vice Chair Francisco Barrientos
Sara V. Garza
Teresa Barker
Wayne Nance
Council District IV (Vacant)
Priscilla Iglesias

Staff present: Charles Graves
Vanessa Guerra
Deidre Garcia
Vanessa Fresnillo
Alejandra Martinez

Others present:

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director, informed those in attendance that the recitation of the Texas Pledge is now required at all meetings.

4. TEXAS PLEDGE

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Regular Meeting of March 12, 2026.

6. CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

7. STAFF REPORT (NO ACTION REQUIRED)

A. Staff report on the issuance of a demolition permit for the property on the north ½ of Lot 1 and 2 and the south 4.3 varas of Lot 10, Block 26, Western Division, located at 305 San Bernardo Avenue. This property is within the San Agustin de Laredo Historic District.

Alejandra Martinez, Certified Building Official, informed the Board that the subject structure, an old brick building with no roof and in a severely deteriorated condition, had been determined to be an imminent danger to public safety. She explained that the City received a complaint through 311 regarding a substandard structure reportedly occupied by homeless individuals. Following an inspection, a Notice of Violation was issued to the property owner and the structure was subsequently tagged as unsafe.

Ms. Martinez stated that the property owner later informed City staff that the structure was considered historic and that a demolition permit had previously been denied. The owner was advised to coordinate with the Historic District/Landmark Board regarding the matter. After additional inspections were conducted, a demolition permit application was submitted and reviewed. Based on the condition of the structure and applicable codes and regulations, Ms. Martinez determined that immediate action was necessary and recommended demolition of the building.

Board Member Gonzalez requested clarification regarding the approval process for the demolition.

Planning Director Vanessa Guerra explained that permits for alterations, construction, renovation, or demolition within a historic district generally require Historic District/Landmark Board approval unless exempted under the code. However, due to the Building Official's determination that the structure posed an imminent danger to public safety, staff determined that the demolition permit could be issued without Board approval. No action by the Board was required.

Executive Planning Director Charles Graves stated that staff believed it was important to inform the Board of the situation, given the significance of the structure's condition and the need for immediate action.

Board Member Santana commented that while he understood the justification for demolition, he believed the structure may have had restoration potential. He expressed concern regarding similar deteriorated buildings throughout the historic districts and questioned what additional measures could be taken to encourage restoration and prevent demolition by neglect.

Vice Chair Barrientos arrived at 12:10 p.m.

Ms. Guerra acknowledged Mr. Santana's concerns and discussed the City's efforts to promote preservation and reinvestment within historic areas. She noted that City ordinances require property owners to maintain their structures and that staff actively identifies substandard buildings and works with property owners to bring them into compliance. She also highlighted various incentive programs available to property owners, including Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ) tax abatements, permit fee waivers, façade improvement programs, grant opportunities, and infrastructure improvements through the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) program.

Mr. Graves added that fines and penalties may be imposed on neglected properties, although such measures are not always effective in achieving compliance.

Board Member Gonzalez requested information regarding how interested property owners could access the available incentive programs.

Ms. Guerra advised that members of the public may contact the Community Development Department's Economic Development Division for information regarding the Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ) Program, Façade Improvement Program, and other available assistance programs.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director adjourned the meeting at 12:24 p.m.

Vanessa Guerra,
City Planning Director

Johnny Narvaez
HDLB Chair