

City of Socorro, Texas
Historical Landmark Commission
Updated: November 7, 2022

Article 1: Name, Boundary, Mission, Purpose & Duties

- **Section 1: Name**
 - The name of this organization shall be listed, referred to, and be entitled as the City of Socorro Texas' Historic Landmarks Commission or "HLC " in short.
- **Section 2: Boundary**
 - The HLC shall review, rule, and decide on cases specifically within the City of Socorro, Texas, and only in the historical districts nominated by the HLC and formally approved and designated by the City of Socorro City Council.
- **Section 3: Mission**
 - The HLC shall specifically promote, protect, and educate the public on the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places of historical significance to the City or the architecture of such buildings and places and through the maintenance and improvement of settings for such buildings and places and the encouragement of design compatible therewithin
- **Section 4: Purpose & Duties**
 - This organization shall foster a community effort aimed at preserving, protecting, and promoting the historic and cultural resources of the City of Socorro, Texas. Specifically, by preparing, proposing, or periodically:
 - Prevising policy and procedure in development, infill, and use for historic preservation
 - Review requests to establish or remove a historic designation
 - Amendments to City Code relating to historic preservation.
 - Advise the Council on matters relating to historic preservation.
 - Performs other duties prescribed by the City Code or other ordinances.

Article 2: Membership, Residency, & Appointment

- **Section 1: Membership**
 - The HLC shall be composed of one (1) appointed member from each District Representative and At Large Representative. However, the Mayor will appoint two (2) members.
 - The HLC shall have representation from individuals in the fields of education, architecture, history, planning, archeology, real estate, or anthropology.
- **Section 2: Residency**
 - The HLC shall be composed of individuals who hold a primary place of residence in Socorro, Texas or someone residing in the county who can demonstrate strong ties to the City's history. However, no more than (3) three commissioners may reside outside the City of Socorro at one time.
 - Should a member move out of the City of Socorro City limits, that person must report the residency change within 30 calendar days. Should a member fail to notify and no vacancies are available for non-Socorro resident seats, that commissioner shall vacate their seat.

- **Section 3: Appointment**
 - Interested parties shall submit an HLC Application to the City Clerk
 - The HLC shall review new applications for consideration in a regular meeting to meet the candidate and outline & manage expectations.
 - The HLC shall present the results of the candidate's interview to the City Council, and the Council shall rule on the nomination for swearing-in.
 - Commissioners may be replaced at the will of the City by way of a formal vote in a City Council Meeting.

Article 3: Conflict of Interest, Violation

- **Section 1: Terms**
 - A Conflict of Interest occurs when:
 - A person has a conflict of interest when it is reasonably foreseeable that a municipal decision's outcome will significantly impact their interests. That impact is distinguishable from its effect on the public generally.
 - Members are prohibited from holding more than one position in public office or commission in which competes with this commission for funding or which holds similar goals/objectives.
- **Section 2: Violation**
 - A violation shall occur should a member of the Commission fail to notify the members of the HLC before they vote on any item in which they have a conflict of interest.
 - All violations shall be sent to the proper investigative channels such as the Ethics Commission or their equivalent and follow the investigative process of such body.

Article 4: Terms, Vacating of Position, Resignation, Removal

- **Section 1: Terms**
 - The HLC serves at the pleasure of the City Council and shall serve two (2) year terms beginning at the time of appointment.
- **Section 2: Vacating of Position**
 - Any commissioner absent for three consecutive regular meetings shall vacate their seat on the Commission by lack of attendance and shall be removed from the Commission on the third meeting during the line item to excuse absent commission members.
- **Section 3: Resignation**
 - Any commissioner resigning from the Commission shall do so by written correspondence to the City Liaison assigned to their Commission and the City Clerk.
- **Section 4: Removal**
 - A Commission Member may be removed from the Commission for the following reasons:
 - Failure to attend three consecutive regular meetings.
 - Term Expiration
 - Determined a conflict of interest exists.
 - Replacement by City Council with or without cause.

Article 5: Officers, Appointment, Terms, & Duties

- **Section 1: Officers**
 - The Officers of the Commissioners shall consist of:

- Chair – a member of the Commission elected by the Commission
- Vice Chair – a member of the Commission elected by the Commission
- Secretary – a member of the City of Socorro staff elected by the Commission
- HPO (HPO) - a member of the City of Socorro staff, assigned by the Commission, appointed by the City Council

- **Section 2: Officer's Appointment**

- Officers shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the Commission at the first regular meeting of the new year.
- In the event a current officer becomes ineligible to serve as an officer, the Board may hold an emergency election as needed

- **Section 3: Officer's Terms**

- The term of officers shall be one year by way of the calendar year
- An officer may continue to serve until a successor is elected.
- A person may not serve as an officer in a designated board position for more than (2) two consecutive one-year terms.
- An officer of the HLC may not serve as an officer of another City of Socorro board or Commission at one time.

- **Section 4: Officer's Duties**

- The Chair shall preside over all HLC meetings, including:
 - Calling the meeting to order
 - Holds the same voting privilege as the other commissioners
 - Holding order of the meeting
 - Allowing Commissioners to have the floor for comment
 - Adjourning the meeting.
 - In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall perform the Chair's duties.
- The Vice Chair shall:
 - Step in when the Chair is not present, perform the duties mentioned above.
- The Secretary shall:
 - Prepare all HLC Agendas & Agenda Packets
 - Post required public notices associated with the HLC
 - Report all HLC activity to the City Clerk & Texas Historical Commission
 - Take adequate minutes of all HLC meetings (The minutes of each HLC meeting must include the vote of each member on each item before the Commission and indicate whether a member is absent or failed to vote on an item).

Article 6: Agendas, Meetings, Quorum

- **Section 1: Agendas**

- The HLC Secretary shall post the meeting agendas as the City requires and send a copy to all members of the HLC .
- HLC Meeting Agendas shall be posted no less than 72 hours before the meeting to follow the Open Meetings Act.
- Commission members may place an item on the agenda by a written request with one other commission member seconding their item. Agenda requests must be received eight (8) days before the meeting. Upon receipt, City staff shall review and

provide a consult on the item.

- **Section 2: Meetings:**

- HLC Meetings shall comply with the Texas Open Meetings Act
- Robert's Rules of Order shall govern HLC Meetings
- Any HLC Meetings requiring executive sessions shall do so under the direct recommendation of the City's legal representation
- Regular HLC Meetings shall meet on the second Wednesday of every month at 6:00 PM MST unless changed by formal vote and updated to the HLC Bylaws
- The Chair may call for a special meeting with the support of two other commissioners, or the HPO may do so directly as work requires with a predetermined quorum of the commissioners.
- Special meetings must be disclosed as a special meeting on the agenda
- The Board shall allow citizens to address the board on agenda items or in general public comment at the beginning of the meeting.
 - Public Comment shall not go past thirty minutes into the meeting; each speaker shall receive three minutes, or the Commission may vote to suspend the rules.
 - For agenda-item specific commentary, the public shall receive a minute and a half unless the Commission votes to suspend the rules.

- **Section 3: Quorum**

- For the HLC, a quorum shall consist of (3) three members physically in the room. Anyone joining virtually must keep their microphone & video camera on in order to record their vote.
- The HLC may convene within one-half hour of the posted time for the meeting to begin there after the meeting may not be held.
- Should there be a lack of quorum, the Secretary shall post the meeting status accordingly online and with the City Clerk and the THC.
- A Walking Quorum exists when three or more commissioners are assembled simultaneously in the same place discussing city business without having posted accordingly, violating the Open Meetings Act. Please consult the City Staff or City Attorney if a commissioner has questions on possible violations.

Article 7: Ethics

- **Section 1: Ethics**

- Any member of the Commission who has a professional or financial interest in any specific matter presented before the Commission shall:
 - Inform the Commission before the commencement of the discussion
 - Excuse themselves from the commission vote
 - Shall be treated without favor and as a member of the general public
- No discussion shall be held by a member or members of this Commission with the applicant, appellant, or opposition concerning any application or other HLC matter before the Commission meeting either in person, by telephone, or by electronic correspondence. All such discussions shall be held at the public hearing called for that purpose so that all members can benefit from such discussion.

- Any applicant found to violate the open meetings act shall not have their item heard by the HLC until a review by the ethics commission. In addition, any commissioners suspected of violating this policy shall face review by the Ethics Commission. Any guilty party shall have their application denied and commission membership revoked.

Article 8: Historic Preservation Officer :

• **Section 1: Requirements:**

- The Historic Preservation Officer or HPO shall be a staff member of the City of Socorro.
- The Historical Preservation Department shall be responsible for the performance of all administrative functions assigned to or connected with the HLC and under the direction of the City Manager.
- The HPO shall be accredited or certified by an educational or professional degree in Historic Preservation and shall acquire yearly continuing education credit hours from the Texas Historical Commission, Preservation Texas, National Trust for Historic Preservation, or other industry-related conferences.

• **Section 2: Duties & Responsibilities**

- The HPO shall be responsible for:
 - Overseeing the applications of Certificates of Appropriateness
 - Ensuring applications are correct and complete
 - The custody of all historical items in the City's Historical Inventory
 - Ensure proper treatment applications to the City's Historic Buildings
 - Offer technical insight & expertise on the history of the City, its architecture, and heritage as needed.
 - Promote, protect, educate, and preserve the City's history.

Article 9: Amendments:

• **Section 1: Amendments**

- A majority of the HLC may amend these bylaws at a regular meeting, provided the amendments are submitted in writing, reviewed by the City's legal counsel, and adopted according to the law.

Approved March 16, 2023




Ivy Avalos, Mayor

ATTEST:



Olivia Navarro, City Clerk