

**Mobile Historic Development Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 6, 2026**  
**Richards-DAR House Museum**  
**256 N Joachim Street**  
**5:30 P.M.**

**Call to Order**

The meeting commenced at 5:43 p.m.

**Present:**

Jaime Betbeze, Ann Forbes, Alison Henry, Tim Maness, Joan Hoffman and Jean Dodge

**Absent:**

Steven McNair, Ivy Thompson, Peters Drey, Virginia Eddington, Virginia Behlen, Jessica Fairley, and John Ruzic

**City Staff:**

Kimberly Branch-Thomas and Meredith Wilson

QUORUM WAS NOT REACHED, SO NO FORMAL BUSINESS COULD BE CONDUCTED, AND NOT VOTES TAKEN. This has got to be corrected. Everyone's time is wasted when business can't be conducted.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Postponed until May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026 meeting.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Mr. Betbeze, on behalf of Treasurer Virginia Eddington, reported that \$1,800.00 had been transferred to Friends of MHDC for Banner and Shields. There hasn't been any new activity on the balance of the Easement account. It currently has a balance of \$2,900.00 with \$25,000.00 in a CD. Mrs. Henry informed everyone that the Friends of MHDC had \$2,900.00 sitting in Square from Banner and Shields.

**New Business**

**1. Recommendations for ARB Vacancies**

While quorum was not met, this had to be decided to meet the city's deadline. (7) ARB members will be rolling off, due to term limits. (6) of those wish to be reappointed. However, Catarine Echols wishes to step down and will need to be replaced. Mrs. Henry stated that our list of proposed candidates would need to be to the city by April 16<sup>th</sup>. A motion was made that the (6) members wishing to stay would be proposed and an email would be sent out by Mrs. Henry to the full commission regarding this.

**2. Church Street Graveyard Preservation Efforts**

Alison Henry spoke on the ongoing initiatives to address the deteriorating cemetery walls. There are safety concerns including loitering, finding needles on the ground, as well as personal garments. Mrs. Henry informed the commission that the wall dates back to 1830 but have had many extensive repairs and have walls have shifted. There are concerns due to the wall leaning, as well as theft of bricks. Mrs. Henry is currently in discussions with several engineering companies to see if anyone is willing

to assist with design, salvaging bricks, helping reconstruct the walls around the cemetery. According to Ms. Wilson, from the Historic Development office, work on historic cemeteries requires state approval. Once plans are in place, there will be plans to start fundraising.

**3. Historic Preservation Month Activities for May 2026**

Per Mrs. Henry, Magnolia Cemetery approved a tombstone cleaning workshop on May 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am. It will be a free (1) hour session. The Friends of MHDC will provide D-2 cleaning solution. The city is providing sprayers and water. The volunteers are to priorities the cleaning of keystone monuments around the angel. There will be a brief instruction gathering and then everyone will break out into small groups for cleaning.

**4. Banner and Shield Applications for June 2026**

Alison Henry informed everyone that there was a total of 25 applications received by the April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. Any submitted applications after April 1<sup>st</sup> will roll over to December. Mrs. Henry stated that majority of the applications came through the new online portal and it is making it an easier process. There was a reminder that the banner and shield with operated through the Friends of MHDC with the help of the commission and the need for volunteers to learn the process was very valuable. Research includes deed searches, office file reviews, searching city directories, as well as researching Sanborn maps. All applications from outside of the (7) locally recognized historic districts would require the homeowner to produce their own research. Mrs. Henry stated that the slate of applications would be presented to the full commission for vote on May 4<sup>th</sup> and that the award ceremony would be June 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Bragg Mitchell Mansion. Doors to open at 5:30 and event to start at 6:00. Mr. Maness informed everyone that new shields would need to be ordered.

**5. Rehabilitation of Easement Property 307 N Jackson St**

Ms. Wilson informed the commission that there were new owners for 307 N Jackson St. They are investors and have learned that the property has a façade easement with the MHDC. This requires extra steps when doing any work on the exterior of the building. Jaime Betbeze and Ms. Wilson agreed to the importance of this building and the importance of maintaining the character and ornamentation of the building. It was suggested by Mr. Betbeze that the owners be informed that all ornamentation must remain and any replacement material must be an exact match.

**6. Workforce Development and Trades Education**

Ann Forbes discussed her outreach to the county public school system regarding career-track programs, including the newly added brick masonry program. She went on to state that this would create great opportunities for speakers and hands-on demonstrations. This could help cultivate skilled workers that could specialize in historic preservation of windows, masonry, and other preservation trades.

There being no additional business, the meeting was concluded at 6:15 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Tim Maness, Secretary*