Mobile Historic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2026
Richards-DAR House Museum
256 N Joachim Street
5:30 P.M.

Call to Order
The meeting commenced at 5:31 p.m.

Present:
Virginia Behlen, Weathers Bolt, Sydney Cramer, Ann Forbes, Alison Henry, Joan Hoffman, Stephen McNair, John Ruzic, and David Thomas

Absent:
Josh Comingore, Peters Drey, Jessica Fairley, and Ivy Thompson,

City Staff:
Annie Sawyer Allen, Kimberly Branch-Thomas, and Meredith Wilson

Approval of Minutes:
Minutes from the August 3rd meeting were approved. Stephen McNair made the motion, and Anne Forbes seconded. All were in favor.

Treasurer's Report:
Alison Henry, acting President, gave the Treasurer's Report, reporting the current balances in the two checking accounts. Ms. Henry explained to new members that a significant portion of the Commission's funds had been placed in a CD account with Regions.

Mr. McNair moved that the Commission accept the report given by Ms. Henry. Joan Hoffman seconded, and all were in favor.

<u>New Business</u>

1. **Introduction of New Commissioners**
   Ms. Henry acknowledged the three new Commissioners who were in attendance. New and returning Commissioners made brief introductions. Ms. Henry thanked all for volunteering their time and efforts.

2. **Discussion of Mission, Duties, & Responsibilities**
   Bruce McGowin, attorney for the Commission, gave a brief history of the Commission and recent changes to the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance. Mr. McGowin explained that one explicit duty of the Commission is to approve updates to the Design Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts, which the Architectural Review Board must follow when reviewing projects in the local historic districts. Mr. McGowin briefly explained the duties and process of the Board. Mr. McGowin explained that the Commission has great latitude in what other activities and projects it can undertake, including applying for grants and awarding the Banner and Shield to local properties. Mr. McGowin also explained the purpose of the Friends of the MHDC as the non-profit / fundraising arm of the Commission. Ms. Henry briefly summarized several recent initiatives, including sponsoring historic

markers dedicated to the Pelican Girls and the Mystic Stripers. Meredith Wilson introduced herself as the staff liaison between the Commission and the City department. Ms. Wilson explained that she was the point of contact for Commissioners to request technical assistance or guidance with Commission-led initiatives.

3. **Discussion of Elections for Executive Committee**
   Mr. McGowin explained that the typical process for electing officers as laid out in the MHDC bylaws. Mr. McGowin explained that this process had been underway when the new Commissioner appointments were approved by City Council. Given that two members of the selected nominating committee were no longer serving as Commissioners, Mr. McGowin recommended that the Commission vote to elect a new nominating committee to be made up of two individuals selected by the Commission and one selected by the acting President. John Ruzic volunteered himself and nominated Stephen McNair, who accepted. Ms. Henry volunteered to serve on the committee. A motion was made to bypass the regular nominating procedures, which would require presentation of the slate of officers at the next scheduled meeting (October) with election to follow at the meeting after that (November). Instead, the nominating committee will propose the slate at the October meeting, followed by any open nominations, and then a vote to install officers. Mr. McNair moved to go forward with process described above. Ms. Forbes seconded, and all approved.

There being no additional business, the meeting was concluded at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Meredith Wilson, City Staff