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

Call to Order:
The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m.

Present:
Virginia Behlen, Josh Comingore, Sydney Cramer, Peters Drey, Jessica Fairley, Ann Forbes, Alison Henry, Joan Hoffman, Stephen McNair, John Ruzic, David Thomas, and Ivy Thompson

Absent:
Weathers Bolt

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

Administrative Items:

1. Approval of minutes from the September 14, 2026, meeting
    - Joan Hoffman made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 14th meeting.
    - Ann Forbes seconded.
    - **Motion carried unanimously.**
2. Treasurer's report
    - Stephen McNair made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report.
    - Ann Forbes seconded.
    - **Motion carried unanimously.**

New Business:

1. Election of Officers
    - Stephen McNair presented the nominations of the ad hoc committee for the following positions:
        - President: Ivy Thompson
        - Vice President: Jessica Fairley
        - Treasurer: John Ruzic
        - Secretary: Sydney Cramer
    - **David Thomas made a motion that the Commission approve the slate of nominees. Ann Forbes seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**
2. Commissioner Training Presentation
    - Staff conducted a training session for commissioners using a PowerPoint presentation.
    - The MHDC should receive updated guidelines once staff receives final approval to distribute them.
3. MHDC Easement Discussion
    - Stephen McNair presented on the MHDC's responsibility to monitor existing easements and discussed the need to reform the current easement review and monitoring process.
        - The Easement Committee is in need of additional members.

    - The committee discussed the duplication that can occur when a property is located within a historic district and is therefore already subject to Architectural Review Board (ARB) review. Currently, some properties are required to go through both ARB and MHDC review.
    - The committee discussed developing an inventory of the **105 properties with easements** to determine which properties are located within historic districts and whether property owners should be directed to the ARB or MHDC.
    - The committee discussed the need for a process to adequately flag properties internally within the City of Mobile based on whether they are located within a historic district.
    - A check with the Probate Office may be necessary to determine whether easements can be flagged and whether any properties may already be in violation of their easement requirements.
    - Easement properties located outside of current historic districts are not currently being monitored, and it is unclear how long this has been the case.
    - Stephen proposed that committee members assist by visiting the Probate Office to research the status of easement properties. The properties could potentially be divided among committee volunteers, with approximately 10 properties assigned to each volunteer.
- A motion was made and seconded to delegate responsibility for out-of-district easement properties to the ARB. **Motion carried unanimously.**
- A motion was made and seconded for the committee to assist in identifying easement properties so that the City can properly flag them. **Motion carried unanimously.**
    - Bruce will provide an instruction manual to committee members.
- David Thomas joined the Properties Committee.

4. Church Street Graveyard
    - Allison and a student from the University of South Alabama conducted a photographic survey of Church Street Graveyard to document the current condition of the site.
    - Before restoration or other updates can begin, ground-penetrating radar (GPR) must be conducted to assess conditions beneath the site.
    - The final quote from the University of South Alabama's archaeology program for the GPR survey is **$6,500**.
    - Allison volunteered to assist with fundraising efforts for the GPR survey.
    - The GPR survey will also include the Bayou Street side of the graveyard.
    - The ultimate goal is to work toward restoration of the graveyard walls.

Announcements/Comments:

- John proposed that, at the next meeting, the committee discuss potential initiatives for consideration and identify approximately **three initiatives per year** that could help increase public awareness and understanding of the MHDC and its work.
- A portion of the next meeting could be dedicated to a **"blue-sky" brainstorming session** to generate potential initiatives.

Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 6:31p.m.