Mobile Historic Development Commission
Meeting Agenda
November 3, 2025
Richards-DAR House Museum
256 N Joachim Street
5:30 P.M.

Call to Order
The meeting commenced at 5:30 p.m.

Present:
Jaime Betbeze, Virginia Behlen, Peters Drey, Virginia Edington, Jessica Fairly, Ann Forbes, Alison Henry, Joan Hoffman, Tim Maness, John Ruzic, and Ivy Thompson

Absent:
Jean Dodge and Stephen McNair

City Staff:
Annie Allen, Kimberly Branch-Thomas, Bruce McGowin, Matthew Sanford, and Meredith Wilson

Approval of Minutes:
Virginia Edington moved to approve the minutes from the October 6 meeting. Ann Forbes seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report:
Mr. Betbeze, on behalf of Treasurer Virginia Eddington, reported that there were no Commissioners listed as signatories on the MHDC Regions bank accounts. Staff member Meredith Wilson explained that Commissioners had been listed on the account in the past but that these Commissioners were no longer active. Ms. Allen and Ms. Wilson stated that they would meet whenever convenient to add the Executive Committee members as signatories on both Regions accounts.

Mr. Betbeze requested that the MHDC put $25,000 of their available funds into a CD to earn a better interest rate.

Mr. Ruzic asked if the MHDC had the discretion to spend any of this money on initiatives other than the easement program. Bruce McGowin, attorney for the City, stated that he would investigate that and report back. Mr. Betbeze reminded the commission that the easements do not expire and the money in the easement account would be needed if the commission ever needed to hire legal aid in the future. Mr. Ruzic then asked if we would be able to use the money made from the CD for things other than easements. That discussion was tabled until funds were available.

Ms. Hoffman moved to approve Mr. Betbeze's recommendation that the MHDC place $25,000 into a CD with Regions Bank. Ms. Forbes seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

<u>New Business</u>

1. **Commissioner Lapel Pins**
   Ms. Henry presented the current MHDC commissioners with a shield pin to designate the commissioners. Pins were donated by an anonymous donor.

2. **Banner and Shield Presentation**
   Ms. Henry presented the properties applying for a Banner and/or Shield for the December awards ceremony.

   During the presentation there was a Mr. Maness introduced discussion regarding approval of two additional properties in the Africatown district based on historical significance: Union Missionary Baptist Church & Africatown Cemetery. Jessica Fairley commented on the importance of the church to the Africatown community. Based on the information provided, both properties were approved.

   Mr. Ruzic requested that we make an exception at the Chighizola House located at 6 South Franklin Street. Alison Henry explained that the Commission would mark the property once work was complete to avoid setting a precedent of marking properties undergoing renovations.

   Mr. Betbeze moved to approve the slate of properties as presented. Ms. Edington seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Old Business

1. **Update on Pelican Girl Memorial**
   Ms. Henry presented information to the commission regarding the December 7th memorial unveiling and reception. Invitations are required for reception

2. **Update on ARB Lawsuit**
   Mr. McGowin provided an update on the lawsuit dealing with the corner lot at Government and Broad. Mr. McGowin reported that 8 ARB members had given depositions. The judge should determine if the ARB acted on the rules set out in the ordinance. Mr. McGowin stated that the judge would decide as to whether it will go to trial.

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

Respectfully submitted by Tim Maness, Secretary