

**UNOFFICIAL MINUTES
OF THE
SALINAS HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD**

December 1, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 12 p.m. in the City Hall Rotunda

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Chairperson Mazgai, Vice Chairperson Shim, Board Members Hirahara, Munoz, Callender

ABSENT: Wadsworth

STAFF: Planning Manager, Grant Leonard, Administrative Aid, Brisa Salcedo, and Assistant Planner, Yesenia Segovia

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Chair Mazgai: With no public comments offered, he moves the meeting forward to approval of the minutes.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: ID#25-520 November 3, 2025, Historic Resources Board Minutes:

Chair Mazgai: States that the correct address for Sal's comment on the activity for the list on historic resource is 124 West San Luis Street, not 124 Clay Street. On page five, he notes that the minutes reference a Berkeley version of "Rehab Right," which does not exist, and requests that this be removed. He also asks for an update on the salvaged architectural elements from the demolished Soledad Street buildings.

Board Member Hirahara: Remarks that the program mentioned was from Oakland, not Berkeley.

Grant Leonard: He explains that design work is still in progress with the architects and confirms that several elements, including the metal railing and the Airs Pool Hall sign, were salvaged and are now stored at the Republic Café.

Chair Mazgai: He acknowledges the information and concludes his comments before asking for a motion.

Board Member Munoz: Motioned to approve the minutes

Board member Callender: Seconded the motion.

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

This motion passed with a 5-0 vote

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

ID#25-537 Audit and Flagging of Historic Resources

Yesenia Segovia: Explains that she uses TrackIt to monitor permit activity for historic resource properties. She has flagged all properties from the 1989 and 2017 surveys so that any related permits are routed to her first. When a flagged property appears, she verifies its survey status, leaves a comment noting its eligibility for historic designation, informs the applicant about the Mills Act program, and advises them to maintain the

building's historic characteristics to ease future registration. She presents a screenshot showing her initials marking the flagged entries and asks if there are any questions.

Board Member Hirahara: Asks whether the registry can reflect when an owner agrees to pursue historic-property registration.

Board Member Hirahara: Asks whether owners make the final decision on becoming officially registered and whether Yesenia has contacted them.

Grant Leonard: Clarifies that many properties are on the survey but not formally designated, and staff must determine whether a property is simply listed or officially recognized during review.

Board Member Hirahara: Suggests that Yesenia has already contacted property owners.

Chair Mazgai: Notes that he did not hear her say that.

Yesenia Segovia: Explains that she does not contact owners; she only leaves comments in the review process before the permit moves on to the next reviewer.

Chair Mazgai: Adds that properties in the 1989 survey were identified for their historic merit without involving property owners. He explains that official historic districts require homeowner support a threshold Salinas has not yet met for any district.

Board Member Munoz: States that owners cannot control whether their property is historic; its historic status is based on its inherent significance. Owners may receive preservation benefits, but any alterations still require review by the board.

Chair Mazgai: Responds that some cases do come before the board, but much relies on staff guidance. He poses a hypothetical scenario in which an owner wants to add inappropriate Victorian features to a 1920s Spanish-style house and asks what steps the owner must take and how staff prevents such changes.

Yesenia Segovia: Explains that staff can advise but cannot enforce preservation choices. Any addition requires a permit, and because the property is flagged, the application would come to her first. She can note that the proposed work is not in keeping with the historic character, but ultimately, staff can only provide guidance.

Board Member Munoz: Reiterates that the HRB's role is advisory helping protect historic properties but not making final decisions. Buildings over 50 years old may qualify as historic, and the board advises the Planning and Building Departments on preservation when alterations are proposed. The city ultimately decides, and the board's purpose is to help safeguard local historic sites.

Chair Mazgai: Suggests that Page & Turnbull's upcoming survey may clarify how the board should guide owners. Under Ordinance 2505, the HRB must advise on restoration and alteration of historic resources. Minor changes can be handled by staff, but major alterations require board review to ensure adequate protection of significant properties, such as the Steinbeck House.

Board Member Munoz: Adds that the Permit Center should ideally have a preservation-knowledgeable planner to determine when HRB review is needed. Minor work done in kind may bypass the board, but substantial changes that could harm a building's historic

character should come before it. He notes that other jurisdictions use expert review committees and cites the Spreckels design guidelines as a strong example.

Board Member Shim: Raises the central question of what rights and restrictions homeowners have when their property is identified as a historic resource. She asks whether owners can make drastic stylistic changes—using a hypothetical example of replacing the Steinbeck House’s Victorian style with a geodesic dome—and whether the board has the authority to stop such alterations.

Board Member Munoz: Responds that owners who wish complete freedom could relocate the structure, as was done with the first mayor’s house. But if they keep the building in place, they must follow local, state, and national preservation guidelines.

Chair Mazgai: Says the board needs clearer guidance from the city and from Page & Turnbull on what is legally expected. He notes similar homeowner concerns from other cities and emphasizes that the board’s role is both advisory and protective. He then returns to a hypothetical owner wanting to transform a 1920s Spanish-style house into a Victorian and asks Yesenia what she would tell the owner and what the process is.

Yesenia Segovia: Explains she would inform the owner that the property is on the 1989 survey, is eligible for programs such as the Mills Act, and that major alterations could complicate future historic registration.

Chair Mazgai: Asks what happens next if the owner still wants a permit—specifically whether they must submit plans through an architect or designer or proceed on their own.

Yesenia Segovia: Explains that property owners provide a description of planned alterations, and staff can only advise them to stay within the property’s historic character.

Chair Mazgai: Asks whether, for listed historic properties, plans must be formally reviewed or if a verbal description is sufficient, and what the next steps are.

Grant Leonard: Clarifies that minor permits, like a water heater replacement, pass through without issue, but more complex projects require full plans submitted through the Building Department. He notes the distinction between designated and non-designated properties: advisory comments are provided for non-designated properties on the survey, but the HRB’s authority is limited until a property is officially designated. Applicants can choose to work with staff on historic elements, but otherwise, standard permitting applies.

Board Member Munoz: Adds that architects must follow local planning guidelines, the California Historical Code, and the Secretary of the Interior standards. Major alterations that violate these regulations are not allowed, and permitting ensures compliance.

Chair Mazgai: Emphasizes two categories: designated landmarks/historic properties, which are legally protected, and survey-listed properties, which are not. For the latter, good guidance and qualified architects help preserve historic features, but owners are not restricted. He recommends further guidance from the city and Page & Turnbull to clarify best practices for both categories.

Board Member Munoz: Suggests that the board’s consultants updating the historical resources survey provide training or guidelines for the board and property owners. He

envisions clear, graphical step-by-step instructions—similar to past city diagrams—to guide owners through permitting and preservation processes, including how to handle extreme alteration requests.

Chair Mazgai: Agrees and asks if a similar step-by-step diagram exists for Salinas, noting that it would help board members and homeowners understand the process.

Grant Leonard: Confirms that Page & Turnbull will provide guidance and updated materials, as previously discussed using the Spreckels example, and that this is in progress.

Board Member Hirahara: Seeks clarification on which properties have restrictions. He notes that non-designated properties are advisory only—owners can choose whether to register as historic, and the board cannot enforce preservation. National Register properties are different. He requests a report from Page & Turnbull clarifying why the city invests in the survey and what authority or enforcement, if any, accompanies it.

Chair Mazgai: Acknowledges the comments and states the board will continue discussing these issues with city staff and Page & Turnbull at future meetings.

ID#25-540 Review of 2025 Certificates of Appreciation Process and Categories

Grant Leonard: He introduces the Certificate of Appreciation Program, noting it was approved by city council with guidelines and an application form. The first application period has concluded, and he presents a PowerPoint of submissions and approvals. He highlights that the next application period will be in spring 2026, aligned with Historic Preservation Month, allowing time to refine guidelines. He opens the discussion for board input.

Chair Mazgai: Discusses the possibility of broadening award categories to recognize contributions to historic properties beyond traditional vintage homes or artifacts. He cites examples: a new gate at the Jorgensen House that complements the historic property, the Monterey County Historic Society Library which is newly built but architecturally impressive, and the rebuilt Salinas Arch, which has become a community focal point. He questions whether the current criteria are too narrow and whether such contributions should be recognized.

Board Member Shim: Notes that some of these, like the Arch and the library, are relatively new structures.

Chair Mazgai: Agrees, emphasizing that while the library is a new and plain building, the Arch stands out for its cultural significance.

Board Member Munoz: Explains that the Salinas Arch is not historically qualified because it is a new structure and only carries the original name. It could eventually qualify once it reaches 50 years of age. He suggests it can still be recognized for its identity and community significance, and a commemorative plaque could highlight the original versus the current Arch.

Chair Mazgai: Notes that photos of the original sign could have been used for replication.

Board Member Callender: Emphasizes that each item should be considered individually to determine if it meets historical significance for the appreciation program.

Chair Mazgai: Asks if the 50-year rule applies to the location, building, or artifact.

Board Member Munoz: He confirms that 50 years is the threshold.

Chair Mazgai: Notes that while current awards are recognized, newer efforts may not qualify until 50 years later. He asks for other suggestions regarding the Certificates of Appreciation.

Board Member Callender: Explains that the library qualifies because it was built using materials from a historic building, emphasizing that each case should be considered individually.

Board Member Munoz: Suggests plaques could commemorate the original buildings for visitors. He also notes that other cities collaborate with owners and associations to display plaques on historic buildings.

Chair Mazgai: Acknowledges there's more work to do on the Certificates of Appreciation, including materials for plaques and the process, and reminds the board that nominations should be submitted by May for Historic Preservation Month.

Grant Leonard: He outlines the timeline: call for nominations in March, review in April, and present awards in May.

Board Member Munoz: Suggests following San Juan Bautista's approach for identifying historic buildings, which includes construction date, owner, use, and linked background history, noting it's more sophisticated than their previous Art Deco self-guided tour.

Chair Mazgai: Agrees, noting HRB could use survey information to create a more affordable architectural tour brochure to promote heritage tourism.

Board Member Hirahara: States the Certificate of Appreciation program met its purpose of recognition with excellent recipients. He supports starting a separate historic recognition plaque program but raises questions about funding and budgeting, suggesting it could be phased over time with city support.

Chair Mazgai: Mentions grant writing as a potential funding source and references existing survey funds.

Grant Leonard: Confirms the current survey was funded through general plan maintenance fees.

ID#25-542 Reconnaissance Survey Subcommittee

Grant Leonard: Introduces the topic, noting Page and Turnbull are conducting a historic resources survey. A subcommittee of Board Member Shim and Chair Mazgai was formed to vet the initial windshield survey and identify additional properties.

Board Member Shim: Reports she visited five of the proposed new districts, taking 52 photos of buildings with intact architectural styles. She also researched the El-Salsal Rancho, spoke with Eugene Sherwood's great-granddaughter, and reviewed ranch-style houses in the Chaucer area, noting Cliff May's influence in nearby regions.

Chair Mazgai: Explains that with many properties eligible due to age, reviewing the seven new districts and existing ones was time-consuming. The subcommittee suggested over 220 additional properties. Page and Turnbull also recommended reviewing another 106 potentially eligible properties.

Grant Leonard: Explains that Page and Turnbull are reviewing the properties recommended by Board Member Shim and the subcommittee. Once reviewed, they will schedule an in-depth survey this winter and spring for properties most likely to be historic, including detailed write-ups.

Chair Mazgai: Asks if the subcommittee will receive feedback on the properties they suggested.

Grant Leonard: Confirms the subcommittee will be updated.

Board Member Munoz: Requests a link to review the proposed properties to assist further.

Grant Leonard: Notes the next review period will occur once Page and Turnbull finalize their list, following the initial windshield survey and the subcommittee's contributions.

BOARD MEMBERS REPORTS & COMMENTS

Board Member Hirahara: Asks who is responsible for completing the HRB resolution and consulting report for the historic district, and whether questions should be directed to Grant Leonard or city staff.

Grant Leonard: Confirms that he, Yesenia Segovia, and the Community Development Director are working on the memorandum in partnership with the Assistant City Manager for property management.

Board Member Shim: Shares that she attended a California Preservation Foundation seminar on rehabilitation, covering rules, processes, and examples from San Francisco and the Cooper House. Notes the webinar is available on YouTube for public viewing and was very informative on architectural and preservation procedures.

Board Member Munoz: Mentions that as members of the California Preservation Foundation, they have access to previous webinars and resources on identifying, financing, and restoring historic homes, including incentives like the Mills Act.

Board Member Shim: Adds that participants can request certificates for attending the seminar, useful for architects or students needing training or continuing education hours.

ADJOURNMENT

Conformation of attendance for next regular meeting on January 5, 2026

The Meeting was adjourned at 1:10 PM

Michael Mazgai

Chairperson

Grant Leonard

Executive Secretary

