

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

September 8, 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 and Wadsworth

ABSENT:

STAFF: Planning Manager, Grant Leonard, Community Outreach Assistant, Bianca Arizmendi, and Assistant Planner, Yesenia Segovia

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Opened for public comment at 12:01 p.m.

Board Member Hirahara: Acknowledged reading the original ITC master plan but had forgotten. Mentioned making a public comment at the Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors meeting on the Redmond-Hirahara building's delisting, which passed 5-1. Noted Board Member Shim participated via Zoom.

Closed for public comment at 12:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: ID#25-387 August 4, 25

Chair Mazgai: Moved to approve the August 4th minutes, clarifying the Field Guide to American Houses would be kept at the Development Permit Center for public access.

Board Member Callender: Requested correction of his name spelling

Board Member Hirahara: Noted gender misidentification and misspelling of his name on pages 5 and 6, and would provide a copy for correction.

Board Member Shim: Requested correction of Etan Rosenblum's name and clarified lectures on Southern California landmarks and landscape architecture are available on the California Preservation Foundation's YouTube.

Board Member Munoz: Moved to approve the minutes with corrections

AYES: Chair Mazgai, Vice Chairperson Shim, Board Members Callender, Munoz, and Hirahara

NOES:

ABSTAIN: Board Member Wadsworth

This motion passed with a 5-0-1 vote

CONSIDERATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

ID#25-388 Spreckles Design Guidelines for Historic Properties

Board Member Munoz: Explained the 1999 guidelines cover various building types and design review processes, following state and federal standards. Recommended board members review the electronic copy, noting hope for similar clarity in Salinas' updated guidelines.

Board Member Wadsworth: Mentioned the Monterey County Historical Resource Review Board's subcommittee works with architects and designers to ensure guidelines are followed, saving time and money for owners.

Board Member Munoz: Emphasized that the guidelines aim to preserve the historic appearance of structures, allowing alterations to be hidden from street view to maintain the historical image.

Chair Mazgai: Noted that Salinas lacks a formal historic district and clear guidelines. Expressed hope that new survey data will enable Salinas to adopt more precise historic preservation measures in the future.

Board Member Munoz: Noted it includes an easy-to-follow permit application process with graphics showing the steps, including discretionary permits. Highlighted the value of a subcommittee meeting with owners and designers before formal review.

Chair Mazgai: Noted the late-1990s report is available in print at the county office. Appreciated the visuals on additions but wished for more detail. Emphasized the need for accessible, do it yourself friendly resources like Oakland's guide to support public education and the board's mission.

Board Member Munoz: Added that the permit application guidelines in the report are straightforward and help guide applicants through the process before plans are submitted to the board.

Grant Leonard: Clarified the report refers to Monterey County, noting the City of Salinas has updated its permit process recently to a paperless system and referred to the Permit Center Annual Report for details.

Chair Mazgai: Asked if Salinas offers a clear, accessible permit guide like the county's flowcharts and if it's available online. Hoped city staff will present the permit and historic property flagging process at a future meeting.

Board Member Wadsworth: Requested a future explanation from the city attorney on how properties are designated historic, how owners are notified, and the legal implications, stressing the importance due to potential owner concerns over rights and property values.

Chair Mazgai: Suggested Salinas notify new owners of historic properties with information links, as some cities do. Noted Salinas uses the 1989 survey for flagging, despite lacking a formal historic district. Requested a future overview of the flagging and notification process and asked for final comments on the Spreckels info.

Board Member Shim: Praised the 70-page guidelines as a clear, accessible resource with helpful visuals and examples, like double-hung windows and unsuitable materials (e.g., stucco, aluminum siding), stressing the importance of using appropriate, high-quality materials.

Chair Mazgai: Noted the appendix at the end of the guidelines defines key terms and provides reference materials, which aids public education.

Board Member Munoz: Suggested hiring Ken Seavey to advise on applying guidelines and protecting historic buildings. Emphasized working with the planning department to understand permits and implement protections.

Chair Mazgai: Agreed that existing guidelines, like those from Spreckels and Oakland, set a solid standard for restoration and materials, so there's no need to reinvent them.

Board Member Munoz: Added that an expert guiding the board through the guidelines would clarify their purpose and help preserve Salinas' historic buildings.

Chair Mazgai: Asked if the former city preservation officer would have handled the role now discussed.

Board Member Munoz: Clarified the Historic Resources Board must actively collaborate with planning and building departments to review projects and apply guidelines.

Chair Mazgai: Asked Grant Leonard about the process, noting no historic districts but a 1989 flagging system. Queried who has final approval authority and the HRB's role.

Board Member Munoz: Emphasized teamwork starting from the planning department's flagging system, followed by HRB subcommittee meetings to guide owners through the process using established guidelines.

Chair Mazgai: Recalled the Heirloom Pizza project as an example where HRB input was given during design review, indicating a process is already in place.

Grant Leonard: Confirmed the historic review process is outlined in the city's ordinance. Offered to provide additional training for the board and support the subcommittee in creating Salinas-specific guidelines, especially with the upcoming new survey data.

Chair Mazgai: Asked what the proposed training would involve.

Board Member Munoz: Explained training ensures the board can review projects by historical guidelines and advise city council, while planning and building handle code compliance.

Chair Mazgai: Summarized the board will study city codes and review flagged property changes, joining the permit process beyond major projects.

Board Member Munoz: Stated that any project involving flagged properties—those 50 years or older—should be reviewed.

Chair Mazgai: Noted the current 1989 survey flags properties, and the forthcoming 2026 survey will expand that list, underscoring the need for comprehensive study and review.

Board Member Shim: Suggested adding a checklist to the historic permit process post-survey to clarify steps and ease concerns about complexity, cost, and time.

Board Member Munoz: Supported the idea, emphasizing the importance of a clear flowchart showing the entire process from start to finish.

Board Member Callender: Warned that HRB reviewing all modifications would cause delays; suggested staff flag only key concerns for HRB review.

Chair Mazgai: Agreed that planning should catch issues first and involve HRB mainly on appeals or concerns, noting that additional delays could be unfair to homeowners.

Board Member Hirahara: Said the main challenge is flagging historic properties, not the permit process, which mostly exists. Noted the flowchart could help and stressed HRB's advisory role.

Chair Mazgai: Highlighted the Spreckels report as a public resource and noted HRB's future role in refining the flagging process post-2026 survey. Encouraged identifying more public resources.

Board Member Wadsworth: Asked if Salinas currently has a design review board and how HRB interacts with it.

Grant Leonard: Confirmed Salinas does not have a design review board; only a planning commission, HRB, and city council.

Board Member Munoz: Stressed the need for HRB training and a subcommittee to guide minor changes early, ensuring historic integrity in materials and appearance.

Chair Mazgai: Suggested starting training soon, using existing design guidelines for study before the new survey is released.

Grant Leonard: Agreed to coordinate training and include it as an agenda item with resources attached.

ID#25-389 Chinatown Redevelopment Update

Grant Leonard: Gave a Chinatown pre-development update, noting testing and design at 34–38 Soledad. Shared photos from a field inspection of 37 (Republic Cafe) and 39 Soledad (Mi Cantina), including Republic Cafe remediation.

Chair Mazgai: Asked about the condition of the Republic Cafe roof, specifically if the roof was open to the sky.

Board Member Hirahara: Confirmed the question referred to the Republic Cafe.

Grant Leonard: Described fire damage visible in photos, affecting the connecting wall and second story roofline between Republic Cafe and 39 Soledad.

Board Member Hirahara: Noted that the use of redwood likely limited fire damage, preserving much of the structure, and that despite the front appearance, much of the building remains structurally sound.

Grant Leonard: Reported the Republic Cafe's second floor is mostly in good condition, with concrete walls, framing, and light wells. Shared a photo of the kitchen with stainless steel basins and six woks.

Board Member Shim: Asked about sunlight coming through eaves shown in a photo.

Grant Leonard: Confirmed the light was coming through windows.

Grant Leonard: Shifted focus to 39 Mi Cantina's interior, showing the main bar and dining area where stucco and plaster had fallen due to water damage or the 2022 fire.

Board Member Hirahara: Explained that water, not fire, likely caused the roof collapse due to its weight, noting little fire damage on rafters and boards.

Grant Leonard: Shared additional photos showing the first floor's peeling paint, dust, and overall structural soundness, including the staircase to the former motel upstairs and the hallway with 14 hotel rooms.

Board Member Hirahara: Noted that all rooms had sinks but shared common bathrooms down the hall.

Board Member Shim: Asked about visible sky through rafters in photos.

Grant Leonard: Explained bathrooms served 14 rooms in pairs for shared plumbing. Showed fire damage photos, noting worse roof damage at 39 Soledad (Mi Cantina) than 37 (Republic Cafe). Shared images of light wells, roof conditions, and repairs, including Republic Cafe's 2012–13 roof and sealed skylights.

Grant Leonard: Reported next steps include cleanup to remove debris and fire damage, securing buildings against intruders and animals, and making them temporarily weather-tight with tarping for winter protection.

Board Member Shim: Asked if cleanup and stabilization would cover all buildings or just Republic Cafe and Mi Cantina.

Grant Leonard: Confirmed it's for both 37 and 39 Soledad.

Board Member Shim: Inquired about the buildings' safety ratings and compliance with safety codes.

Grant Leonard: Explained buildings are currently boarded up and fenced for public safety; next steps include hazard removal and structural repairs to ensure soundness.

Chair Mazgai: Raised concerns about frequent fence damage and preventing future fires.

Board Member Hirahara: Noted discussions with the structural engineer and project lead aiming to secure the building by March, including weatherproofing, cleaning, and proper property securing; plans pending.

Chair Mazgai: Asked if 39 Soledad is still structurally solid despite fire damage.

Board Member Hirahara & Grant Leonard: Agreed the building is mostly structurally sound except the fire-damaged front portion; leaning walls will need work.

Board Member Hirahara: Highlighted quality original construction by Svend Trondhjem and hopes for restoration of both buildings.

Board Member Hirahara: Clarified that only 37 Soledad is currently on the National Historic Register, but registering 39 is being considered due to its significance.

Board Member Hirahara: Noted architect Buttner also designed 34 Soledad, a joint venture funded by gambling revenue paid in cash.

Board Member Shim: Asked about the cleanup and securing costs; referenced \$230,000 allocated in the Chinatown Neighborhood Improvement Project's 23-24 CDBG budget.

Board Member Hirahara: Clarified that amount is only CDBG funds.

Grant Leonard: Stated cleanup cost unknown yet, as requests for proposals (RFPs) have been issued but not returned.

Board Member Shim: Asked about timeline and any ballpark estimates.

Grant Leonard: No estimates or timeline available yet.

Board Member Hirahara: Confirmed structural engineer will also submit proposals on integrity and security.

Board Member Shim: Concerned RFP process could take six months, risking rain damage.

Board Member Hirahara: Explained some funding has spending deadlines, not CDBG funds but another source.

Board Member Hirahara: Stated cleanup must start by March 15 to meet funding deadlines.

Board Member Shim: Asked when cleanup and weatherproofing would start to prevent further rain damage.

Grant Leonard: Explained bids are due this month, after which contract will be awarded; work likely to start next month, but duration unknown.

Board Member Shim: Asked if cleanup would be done before the next meeting.

Grant Leonard: Expected to provide an update by next meeting but cleanup likely won't be complete.

ID#25-391 Salinas Historic Survey Update

Grant Leonard: The Historic Survey update is underway. Staff is reviewing a draft context statement and survey, to be presented at next month's HRB meeting. The city attorney can address next steps if needed.

Board Member Hirahara: Asked how much time the update would take.

Grant Leonard: Confirmed it would be a substantial discussion covering the context statement, survey findings, and possible district designations.

Board Member Shim: Asked if there would be more meetings like the one in Chinatown before the next HRB meeting.

Grant Leonard: Chinatown meeting was for the pre-development project, not the historic survey. Previous survey meeting was in the rotunda. Outreach continues through 2026; next major update at the next HRB meeting.

Board Member Shim: Confirmed understanding that the next meeting will cover the key survey updates.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

OTHER BUSINESS

Boronda Days

Board Member Munoz: Announced that *Boronda Days*, a historical event, will take place on September 27. Encouraged attendance, noting it is well organized and offers valuable historical resources about the city and county.

First Mayors House

Chair Mazgai: Announced a fundraiser at the First Mayor's House on Saturday, the 20th, starting at 9 a.m., featuring a sale of furnishings, antiques, and curiosities. The event aims to raise funds due to lack of city budget support. Donations can be dropped off this Saturday, September 13, between 12 and 2 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Conformation of attendance for next regular meeting on October 6, 2025

The Meeting was adjourned at 1:05 PM

Michael Mazgai

Chairperson

Grant Leonard

Executive Secretary