

HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MINUTES

A regular meeting of the City of Brenham's Historic Preservation Board was held on Tuesday, March 17, 2026, beginning at 5:15 p.m. in the Brenham City Hall, Council Chambers, at 200 West Vulcan Street, Brenham, Texas.

Board Members present:

Hal Moorman - Chair
Angelia Gerhard
Jennifer Hermann
Rachel Nordt
Tommy Upchurch

Board Members absent:

Becky Bosse
Brad Tegeler

City of Brenham Staff present:

Stephanie Doland, Historic Preservation Officer
Shauna Laauwe, City Planner
Leigh Linden, Main Street Manager
Kim Hodde, Planning Technician

Community/Media:

Blake Sawyer
Darren Heine
Pete Simpson

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Hal Moorman called the meeting to order at 5:17 pm.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Reports and Announcements

- Leigh Linden, Main Street Manager, informed the Board about various Main Street/downtown activities since November 20205 such as:
 - The Christmas Stroll and Parade was held in December and had approximately 10,000 visitors. A new crowd control fencing was used, and it seemed to work well so it will likely be used for future parades.

- The 15th annual Uptown Swirl was held on January 15th. The tickets sold out (600 tickets) and approximately \$24,000 was raised for Main Street grant funding opportunities.
 - The Spring Egg Artwork event is getting underway.
 - Recently, there have been two new downtown businesses open, and one relocated in the downtown area. Three properties in the downtown area have recently sold or changed ownership and two more are expected to sell soon. One business has expanded and two other businesses are expected to open soon.
 - Due to the construction work on the Washington County Courthouse, the Farmer's Market and the Hot Nights Cool Tunes were moved to the Commerce Street parking lot, and it seems to be working well.
 - The Main Street is updating their sign grant program since it was last updated in 2012. The current reimbursement rate is \$750; although, the last two signs that grants were received for cost over \$10,000 each.
 - Since January, Main Street has been working with Development Services on a Life Safety Grant program to assist with ADA accessibility and Fire Code requirements for downtown buildings. To date, there have been (6) applicants and two (2) grants issued. This is especially important since Gatesville recently lost a block of their downtown due to a fire.
 - The next Green Team Cleanup will be held on Friday from 4 – 6 pm. Approximately twenty (20) volunteers pick up trash, debris, clean benches, etc. in the downtown area.
- Stephanie Doland, Historic Preservation Officer, informed the Board that the Urn Project at the Barnhill Center continues to be a work in progress. A few weeks ago, several professors and faculty from Texas A&M came to Brenham and toured the facility and were able to see the urns that have been salvaged. They have resources to scan/image the urns and research alternative materials for replacement (other than concrete) as a potential class project. Updates will be presented as they are available. Future fundraising for the project will likely be required for the urn replacement.

REGULAR SESSION

4. Discuss and Possibly Act Upon the Election of a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for the 2026 Calendar Year.

Section 14 of the Brenham Policies and Procedures for Boards and Commissions reads in part "Each Board shall, in its first meeting of each calendar year, elect a Chair and Vice-Chair to serve for one (1)-year terms. The Chair of each board shall call the meeting to order and preside at the meetings. In the absence of the chair, the Vice-Chair shall preside." The individuals selected will serve terms that begin immediately upon their selection, and end December 31, 2026. Any board member can nominate, and any board member can be nominated. A board member may also nominate themselves.

A motion was made by Board member Gerhard and seconded by Board member Nordt to elect Hal Moorman as Chair for the Historic Preservation Board and Brad Tegeler as Vice Chair for the Historic Preservation Board for 2026.

Chairman Hal Moorman called for a vote. The motion passed with voting as follows:

Angelia Gerhard	Yes
Jennifer Hermann	Yes
Hal Moorman	Yes
Rachel Nordt	Yes
Tommy Upchurch	Yes
Becky Bosse	Absent
Brad Tegeler	Absent

5. Discuss and Possibly Act Upon Approval of Minutes from November 17, 2025, Historic Preservation Board Meeting.

A motion was made by Board Member Nordt and seconded by Board Member Hermann to approve the minutes from November 17, 2025, Board Meeting, as presented.

Chairman Hal Moorman called for a vote. The motion passed with voting as follows:

Angelia Gerhard	Yes
Jennifer Hermann	Yes
Hal Moorman	Yes
Rachel Nordt	Yes
Tommy Upchurch	Yes
Becky Bosse	Absent
Brad Tegeler	Absent

6. Discuss and Possibly Act Upon Case Number 2026-001 a Certificate of Appropriateness Application from Blake Sawyer for the property located at 111 South Saint Charles Street, Brenham, Texas.

Stephanie Doland, Historic Preservation Officer, presented the staff report for Case Number 2026-001, a request from Blake Sawyer for a certificate of appropriateness for an outdoor seating area and public park concept which includes a brick wall, landscaping and picnic tables, lighting, private parking and possible location for a food truck on the property located at 111 South Saint Charles Street. This is the first new construction project since adoption of the Historic Preservation Ordinance. The subject property is bounded by South Saint Charles, East Alamo, and South Market Streets. The subject property was vacant for over fifteen years following a structural fire in 2008 and was purchased in 2025, by Blake and Julie Sawyer. Since purchasing the property last year, the Sawyers have removed the concrete foundation that was on the property, relocated the overhead electric and the sanitary sewer in preparation for development of this site.

The subject property is located within the Downtown Historic District and is classified as a non-contributing property. To the northwest of the site is A-Freedom Bail Bonds; to the northeast is an optometrist's office; and further north is the Bassett Building, which is also owned by the applicant, Blake and Julie Sawyer. The applicant's primary residence does not have off-street parking so they rely on the downtown on-street parking. When the owners improve this property, they intend to dedicate two parking spaces for their use in addition to the park-like public space.

The proposed scope of work includes installation of a decorative brick and metal fence, brick pavers, landscaping, picnic tables, lighting, and concrete areas for private parking and space for a single food trailer. The Sawyers intend for the space to function as a public amenity for families and visitors to be able to enjoy the outdoor area—similar to Alamo Alley, Toubin Park, or Belle's Alley—during most hours. The plans also include swinging pedestrian gates, allowing the Sawyers to restrict public access when hosting private events or using the space for personal gatherings.

A certificate of appropriateness has been requested for the following scope of work/improvements:

- *Public Park Concept*

The proposed scope of work includes transforming the currently vacant infill lot into a publicly accessible, park-like outdoor space. Although the property will remain privately owned, its intended use is consistent with other successful public spaces in Downtown—such as Alamo Alley, Belle's Alley, and Toubin Park. The project includes new construction elements such as decorative brick pavers, outdoor picnic tables and seating, and enhanced landscaping. Public greenspaces in downtown environments are widely recognized as catalysts for economic vitality. Attractive, comfortable outdoor areas encourage visitors to stay longer, explore more, and spend more money at nearby businesses. By offering a shaded, inviting place to rest, enjoy a beverage, or gather with friends and family, the proposed greenspace will strengthen the sense of place in Downtown Brenham and contribute to a more vibrant pedestrian experience.

The design includes a designated area for a future food truck. The addition of a food truck would complement the park-like setting by expanding dining options and providing refreshments within the outdoor space, without limiting public enjoyment of the greenspace. The project also provides two private, dedicated parking spaces off South Market Street. The applicants own the adjacent Bassett Building to the northeast, which has no designated parking. The proposed design includes paving an existing driveway from South Market Street to serve both the food truck area and the private parking spaces. On-site signage and landscaping will clearly identify the private parking area.

- Brick Wall and Pedestrian Gates:

To define and enhance the park-like amenity, the applicant proposes installation of a combination of red brick and decorative metal fencing. The design will have a brick base, brick columns, and brick end caps, with a black decorative metal fence mounted above the brick. This will frame the space while maintaining visibility and openness. The two proposed pedestrian gates will allow the owners to temporarily close the area for private events, when necessary.

The decorative metal fencing also enables pedestrians and motorists to easily view the greenspace from across the street or further down the block. The Downtown Brenham Design Guidelines recommend the use of both masonry and architectural metals — materials that are incorporated here in this design. The proposed design complements the historic architectural character of surrounding properties while providing a fresh, high-quality enhancement to the district.

- Exterior lighting

The applicant proposes to install a gooseneck-style exterior light fixture along the exterior wall of the Bail Bonds building facing south, toward the proposed park. The light fixture is very similar to the Downtown Brenham Design Guidelines which encourages fully recessed down lights. The applicant is also urged to consider lighting along the fence columns or within the landscaping beds to encourage additional security lighting near the proposed outdoor seating.

- Mural

While it is not an architectural alteration which requires a Certificate of Appropriateness by the Board, it should be noted that the applicant has included in the scope of work a mural on the side of the Bail Bonds Building. The side building façade for the Bail Bonds property is located on the subject property and therefore the applicant proposes to relocate the lighted Bail Bonds sign, repaint the stucco surface a solid white façade in a temporary nature, with long-term plans to paint a mural on the facade. While the details of the mural are unknown, there appears to be plenty of available façade to utilize for a mural which will contribute positively to the overall park-like concept.

- Signage

Also included in the application and proposed new construction is the location of a “welcome sign” along the diagonal brick wall which is located at the intersection of South Market Street and East Alamo Street. The signage contents and materials are unknown at this time; however, the applicant has reviewed the design guidelines related to signage and intends to provide a sign that is compatible with the downtown Historic charm while welcoming visitors. The signage material is not a requirement of the Certificate of Appropriateness for review.

ANALYSIS OF CITY OF BRENHAM HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE:

The Historic Preservation Ordinance (Ordinance), Chapter 13 of the Brenham Code of Ordinances governs the process associated with obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for renovations to property within the Historic Preservation District. More specifically, Section 13-7 of the Ordinance further outlines when considering a COA, to “review all new construction plans within historic districts in order to ensure the exterior architectural features visually complement the surrounding buildings and environment in relation to design, height, scale, and setback.” Section 13-8 establishes as the Criteria for Approval of a COA the City of Brenham Adopted Design Guidelines for the Brenham Downtown Historic District as well as the Adopted Secretary of the Interior’s Standards. With respect to the criteria by which the Board is to be guided for approval of a COA application, Staff finds the following criteria applicable as stated in Section 13-8(b):

- (6) Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should reflect the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplication of features, substantiated by historical, physical or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.
- (9) Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural, or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.
- (10) Whenever possible, new additions or alterations to buildings, structures, objects, or sites shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the building, structure, object, or site would be unimpaired.

Staff recommends **approval** of the proposed Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted by the applicant finding that the scope of work, new construction of a primarily public park, with brick pavers, landscaping elements, outdoor seating, decorative brick and metal fence and outdoor lighting to be a significant improvement to the very visible downtown endcap and compatible with the adopted design guidelines.

Board member comments included:

- The lighting should be kept low so as not to create a nuisance for neighboring properties.
- There are substantial utilities located at the intersection of E. Alamo Street and S. Market Street; therefore, maneuverability needs to be a priority.

The applicant, Blake Sawyer, stated that downlighting is very important to him since his house is adjacent to this property. He asked if the planter at the corner intersection could be removed so that a sidewalk could be created. He further stated that he is working with TxDOT to clean

up this corner and make this end of town nicer. He stated that the project will meet ADA and accessibility code requirements. Mr. Sawyer stated that the Bail Bonds wall is located entirely on the 111 South Saint Charles Street property. The wall has a veneer on it that will be repainted for a future mural.

A motion was made by Board Member Gerhard and seconded by Board Member Hermann to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness request for Case Number 2026-001, from Blake Sawyer, for the property located at 111 South Saint Charles Street, as presented, and with the following comments: have the lighting be downcast and try to make the intersection as safe for pedestrian travel as possible.

Chairman Hal Moorman called for a vote. The motion passed with voting as follows:

Angelia Gerhard	Yes
Jennifer Hermann	Yes
Hal Moorman	Yes
Rachel Nordt	Yes
Tommy Upchurch	Yes
Becky Bosse	Absent
Brad Tegeler	Absent

7. Discuss and Possibly Act Upon Case Number 2026-002 a Certificate of Appropriateness Application from Rachel Beseda for the property located at 216 West Alamo Street, Brenham, Texas.

Stephanie Doland, Historic Preservation Officer, presented the staff report for Case Number 2026-002, a request from Rachel Beseda for a certificate of appropriateness for exterior alterations to the building located at 216 West Alamo Street. The subject property is owned by Rachel Beseda and is located on the corner at the intersection of West Alamo Street and South Austin Street. The building was originally constructed around 1950 and is listed as a non-contributing building in the Downtown Historical District. The property is listed by the National Register of Historic Places as a contemporary commercial building. The property is also home to the “Welcome to Brenham” mural located on the west building façade that is facing South Austin Street. The building was previously occupied by furniture and antique sales businesses.

The applicant and property owner has listed the property for lease for many years in hopes of securing a long-term tenant. Over time, the Development Services Department has held numerous pre-development meetings for a variety of proposed uses, including dividing the building into two storefronts, coffee shop, and a retail store. However, the building’s size of 4,431 square feet along with the associated fire-sprinkler requirements have proven cost-prohibitive for the potential tenants.

Ms. Beseda now plans to redevelop the space into Rally Room, a sports bar and grill featuring a full commercial kitchen, bar, and a second-floor mezzanine to host sports teams, parties or other large groups. As part of the renovation, exterior modifications will be minimal. On the front

façade facing West Alamo Street, the scope includes installing a new front entrance door to meet Texas Accessibility Standards and adding a mural to the existing painted CMU surface.

The nearest parking area is the City of Brenham lot located across West Main Street, behind the law offices of T. Russell Noe. It is anticipated that most patrons will enter the business from the north after parking in this lot. On the north (rear) façade, facing the alley, the applicant plans to replace the pedestrian walk-through door and the overhead garage door, as well as add a mural to the existing painted CMU block surface.

A certificate of appropriateness has been requested for the following scope of work/improvements:

- *Front Entrance Door*

The main entrance to the building is located on the West Alamo Street façade. However, the storefront does not currently have an ADA-compliant entrance. Compliance is further complicated by the fact that the public sidewalk adjacent to the building and the interior floor level are at different elevations. The sidewalk in front of the building is also relatively narrow, and there is a significant step down from the curb into the street, where a wide storm-sewer gutter is located. Also, the existing front door opening is substandard and does not meet the minimum 32-inch clear width required for accessibility. Reversing the door swing to open outward into the sidewalk is not feasible, since the building is at a busy corner near the “Welcome to Brenham” mural, and an outward-swinging door would create conflicts with pedestrian traffic. The CMU block façade is not reinforced, so enlarging the opening must be approached with caution. Therefore, the project architect evaluated options to provide an ADA-compliant entrance for the proposed sports bar and grill. The proposed design includes saw-cutting the CMU masonry to widen the opening to the required dimension. Because the CMU brick will be exposed, the applicant proposes installing a steel frame that wraps around the expanded opening and attaches to the door frame. This steel portal will protect and denote the entry. This portal will project slightly into the right-of-way—approximately 6 inches at the base and 1 foot 6 inches at the top—to provide a small canopy or drip line for rain protection. The applicant intends to paint it black to match the existing overhead door.

Inside the portal, the applicant proposes a sliding barn-style door with locking hardware, also painted black to match the overhead door. This sliding door will remain open during business hours and closed when the business is not operating. It will serve as the entrance to a recessed alcove designed to meet ADA requirements. The alcove provides space for an outward-swinging door that will serve as the true entrance into the sports bar and grill. The sliding door will be located at the front of the portal, while the primary entrance door will be recessed approximately eight feet, allowing adequate maneuvering space for accessible entry and exit.

The proposed front entrance portal and wrapped steel frame offer a creative solution that meets accessibility standards while clearly defining the building's entrance. The building is not a contributing structure within the downtown district and currently lacks façade articulation, with a predominantly flat CMU wall. The existing overhead garage door and the proposed entrance portal will provide the only variation on the front elevation, offering a defined entry point and modest architectural interest without impeding pedestrian traffic. The Design Standards encourage the use of architectural metals and canopies, and while the proposed design is more contemporary than other nearby downtown buildings, it does not remove any architecturally significant features. The proposed design introduces a distinctive entrance element that supports the new business. The applicant also proposes a sign that projects above the portal to further identify the main entrance for patrons and visitors.

- *Alley Facing Overhead Door Replacement*

The closest public parking lot to the subject property is across both the alley and West Main Street, located behind the law offices of T. Russell Noe. It is likely that most patrons will park in this lot and enter the sports bar from the alley side (north side) of the building. Because of this, the planned renovations include creating a more inviting entrance along the alley-facing façade. The north façade is primarily painted CMU block with a wood frame surrounding an existing overhead door and a pedestrian door. The applicant intends to replace the existing overhead door with a new overhead door with additional window openings.

The new door will have a black frame with a 4x3 window pattern. While the applicant intends to open the overhead door during business hours to bring natural light into this space. The additional windows will also allow natural light to enter during hot summer months and cold winter months when the door will remain closed. This added glazing aligns with the Brenham Design Guidelines, which encourage increased openings to promote a more walkable and pedestrian-friendly district.

- *Alley Facing Door*

In addition to the overhead door located within the wood-framed section of the north side, there is currently a windowless black pedestrian walk-through door. The applicant proposes replacing this solid wood door with a black-framed door featuring a single large rectangular window. Like the improvements planned for the overhead door, this modification will create a more defined and welcoming entrance for patrons approaching from the alley side of the building. The existing solid black frame and solid black door causes the entrance to blend into the wall and makes it difficult to see from a distance. Installation of a door with a large window will help identify the entry point and enhance the visual appeal of the north façade.

- Murals

The applicant intends to keep the existing gray paint on the CMU block along the north and south façades, with only minimal touchups planned. In addition, signage and murals are proposed for both sides to identify the building as a sports bar and grill and to enhance visual appearance of the façade. Since the CMU block is already painted and because signage is not part of the Certificate of Appropriateness review, the mural concepts and signage details are provided for merely reference.

Ms. Doland noted that this project received a life safety grant to assist with the fire sprinkler, fire alarm, and new front entry.

Comments from Board members included:

- Although the building is not a contributing building, it should maintain the historical elements.
- Concerns about visually impaired persons walking into the proposed entry portal.

ANALYSIS OF CITY OF BRENHAM HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE:

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- (1) Every reasonable effort shall be made to adapt the property in a manner which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure, object, or site and its environment.
- (4) Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, object, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.
- (9) Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural, or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.
- (10) Whenever possible, new additions or alterations to buildings, structures, objects, or sites shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the building, structure, object, or site would

be unimpaired.

Staff recommends **approval** of the proposed Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted by the applicant finding that the scope of work, that includes replacement of the front and back doors, replacement of the back alley-facing overhead door, and painting murals on the front and back façade that are compatible with the subject property and in line with the goals of the preservation of property in Downtown Brenham.

Comments from Board members included:

- Although the building is not a contributing building, it should maintain the historical elements.
- Concerns about visually impaired people walking into the projected portion of the door portal, although TDLR will be required to approve the design as part of the building permit and certificate of occupancy requirements.
- The proposed style seems a little too contemporary for the downtown area.

A motion was made by Board Member Hermann and seconded by Board Member Nordt to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness request for Case Number 2026-002, a Certificate of Appropriateness Application from Rachel Beseda for the building located at 216 West Alamo Street, as presented.

Chairman Hal Moorman called for a vote. The motion passed with voting as follows:

Angelia Gerhard	No
Jennifer Hermann	Yes
Hal Moorman	Yes
Rachel Nordt	Yes
Tommy Upchurch	Yes
Becky Bosse	Absent
Brad Tegeler	Absent

8. Discussion and Possible Direction to Staff Concerning the Development of a Local Preservation Plan for Submittal to the Texas Historical Commission in Preparation to Become a Certified Local Government Community.

During the Board training held on September 30, 2025, by Kelly Little and Ericca Espindola with the Texas Historical Commission, interest was expressed in pursuing CLG designation through the Certified Local Grant (CLG) program. The program is designed to promote preservation activity at the local level in coordination with state and national preservation efforts. Staff has been working to complete the required components of the CLG application for formal submittal later this year. One item that the City does not have is an adopted Preservation Plan. Ms. Doland presented and discussed a draft Preservation Plan that outlines goals, objectives, and strategic priorities to guide preservation initiatives in Brenham. She stated that she researched various cities and put together this document based on her research and applicability to the City of Brenham. Ms. Doland asked the Board to provide input such as revisions, additions or edits to the draft document. She further

stated that a subcommittee could be formed to revise the draft document or to draft a new document. Once the Board feels the draft plan accurately reflects local preservation initiatives, staff will place formal consideration of the Preservation Plan on a future agenda.

Chair Moorman and Board member Upchurch both stated that this document is a good start and can be refined. Chair Moorman stated that comments can be submitted to Ms. Doland via email.

9. Adjourn

A motion was made by Board Member Upchurch and seconded by Board Member Gerhard to adjourn the Historic Preservation Board meeting at 6:28 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Brad Tegeler

Brad Tegeler
Board Vice Chair

July 21, 2026

Date

ATTEST:

Kim Hodde

Kim Hodde
Planning Technician

July 21, 2026

Date