



MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING LA JUNTA HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION BOARD  
LA JUNTA, CO  
APRIL 13, 2026  
4:00 PM  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
601 COLORADO AVENUE

CALL TO ORDER

The Historic Preservation Advisory Board (CLG) held a regular meeting on Monday, April 13, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ben Mason.

ROLL CALL (City Clerk)

Board Members

Bennett  
Hill  
Lively  
Madrid  
Mason

Present: Aimee Hill  
Erika Lively — via phone call  
Ben Mason

Absent: Nancy Bennett  
Toni Madrid

Also Present: Cristian Estrada, Deputy City Clerk/HPAB Secretary  
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk/HPAB Director  
Robert Fowler, La Junta  
Maureen Rikhof, La Junta  
Diane Rikhof, La Junta

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

There was no citizen participation.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Chairperson)

A. Regular Meeting February 9, 2026

Chairperson Mason asked if there were any corrections or additions to be made to the February 9, 2026 minutes. Hearing no corrections or additions, a motion was made.

MOTION THAT THE FEBRUARY 9, 2026 CLG REGULAR MINUTES BE ACCEPTED AS PUBLISHED: Hill

SECOND: Lively

ABSENT: Bennett, Madrid

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion  
VOTE: The motion carried unanimously

#### FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Treasurer)

Cristian Estrada, CLG Secretary/Treasurer gave the financial statement.  
The financial statement for CLG is as follows:

1st QUARTER 2026

Balance Forward +\$ 7,000.00

2026 New Balance +\$ 7,000.00

Balance \$14,000.00

MOTION THAT THE FIRST QUARTER CLG FINANCIAL STATEMENT BE  
ACCEPTED AS PRESENTED: Hill

SECOND: Lively

ABSENT: Bennett, Madrid

DISCUSSION: Erika Lively — Inquired about the \$7,000.00 balance forward. The funds are forwarded from the 2025 balance. Also, asked the Board for suggestions on how to increase the budget.

Melanie Scofield — The funds are coming from the city budget; if the Board would like an increase, then a meeting with the City Manager during the next budget session would need to occur. Budget sessions happen yearly in August.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously

#### REPORTS

##### A. 2024 Northeast La Junta Cultural Resource Survey

Melanie Scofield — Received the final draft survey. Getting it ready to send out to the Board for review. Next steps towards finalization with any recommendations from the Board. Then the last public outreach meeting will happen. All recommendations are due by June 1st. Lindsey Flewelling will reach out for time and date suggestions.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### A. Board Member Letter of Interest (Chairman) (Action)

###### 1. Robert Fowler

Robert Fowler — Provided a letter of interest to serve on the Board. Family has lived in the area since 1875. He has deep, generational history here in the City. Historic Preservation is critical in every town.h

Erika Lively — Asked if Robert called himself an independent historian, or what would he call himself given his knowledge of the history of the area?

Robert Fowler — Considers himself a proud member of Otero County.

Erika Lively — Asked if Robert believed the youth of today could be encouraged and enhanced to be more interested in history? Any ideas that could be suggested to the Board now?

Robert Fowler — One of the big issues that has been discovered is that the area schools are not teaching local history. If kids don't understand history, even from their

own families, they will have no clue about the future. You have to know your past to know your future. All the local histories must be reeducated to the kids. All for public outreach and to help youth better understand what went on in the past.

MOTION TO ACCEPT BOB FOWLER TO SERVE ON THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD: Hill

SECOND: Lively

ABSENT: Bennett, Madrid

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously

## B. Historic Site Designation Applications (Chairman) (Action)

### 1. 322 Santa Fe Avenue

Erika Lively — Where do they stand, as far as construction?

Maureen Rikhof — The waste and vent plumbing is nearly done in the basement. The local contractors for that project are Valley Plumbing. There is finally electricity in the building. Fire suppression is coming in soon. Doors are in the process of being ordered. The garage at the back of the property is progressing somewhat slowly. The concrete is being poured for the steps going into the basement. ADA-compliant work has also begun for the ramp going into the basement.

Erika Lively — Inquiring about the work being done to the outside with the deck and the balconies (integrity of the structure).

Maureen Rikhof — The deck that was attached was completely rotted and is in the process of replacing it. The front porch is the same, just restored. Quite a lot of foundation work has been done underneath the porch to allow for usable space. There are balconies that are off of 3 (three) of the units facing the north side. These balconies are being placed on existing window spaces that have been enlarged.

Erika Lively — So it is an egress for those units?

Maureen Rikhof — It is an egress, but it is to a balcony. None of the architectural features have been changed.

Ben Mason — Question regarding doors — most of the openings have white stone above doors and windows — is that same white stone going to be placed back in?

Maureen Rikhof — If it was there originally, then it is still there. Nothing has been removed completely. It has been preserved. Doors that need to be widened for ADA accessibility, some brick was removed, but the same brick that was removed was used to frame the doors. It has been meticulously cared for when it comes to construction.

Conversations continued regarding the structural integrity of the Chestnut Apartments. Questions were asked regarding the front porch and stairs, and the original placement of stairs (as noted in the original architectural plans). It was also discussed that there is a total of 12 (twelve) units, 4 (four) of which will be ADA accessible.

Ben Mason — Nervous about the historical designation of a building that is currently under construction. Once it is designated, work ceases without plan review. Anything going on the outside of the building has to come before the board to be voted on and approved before moving forward. Nervous about slowing down the project.

Maureen Rikhof — In all the conversations that were had with History Colorado, they've seen all the plans and toured the building, as well as the National Register people have done the same and this is the first hearing that construction would have to go through approval.

Aimee Hill — Section 106 (Preservation Act) provides guidelines for any alternations to a building or structure.

Maureen Rikhof — The building needs to be designated for various reasons. If the goal is to encourage people to renovate buildings and honor them as historic landmarks in the town, and this building doesn't get designated, why would anybody bother with the process ever again? This is one of three buildings that was identified in the survey on buildings locally that were historically and architecturally significant. The architectural significance has remained the same. As far as making ADA accessible — nobody in their right mind would say, "Do not make this building accessible." Respectfully ask to pass this application and then schedule a work session to ensure review of plans. If landscaping can be done, and some work on the inside of the building can be done, that is fine. Surprised that this is still under discussion. This has been brought up since January. A work session must be scheduled.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE APPLICATION FOR HISTORICAL DESIGNATION FOR 322 SANTA FE AVE.: Hill

SECOND: Fowler

ABSENT: Bennett, Madrid

DISCUSSION: there was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously

## 2. 902 Belleview Avenue

Maureen Rikhof — This is a large two-story brick home with a turret. It was built by John H. Fisher of the John H. Fisher Hose Company and the first volunteer fire department. He also originally lived in it. His family ended up selling the home to the Mennonites to provide rooms for the nurses of the Mennonite Hospital. It served as that until the 70s, when Tom and Sallie Hibbs purchased the home and operated it as a truly international house here in La Junta. The Rikhof's are currently the fourth owners of the house.

Erika Lively — Asked what the plan is for the property? Is it a personal home? A rental property?

Maureen Rikhof — It has been converted into apartments after its expansion. It operated as the John H. Fisher Apartments. When the Hibbs owned it, it also operated in several units. Several of the units currently have renters.

Erika Lively — Is a gut renovation being done? Will the designation be for the inside or the outside? What has been done?

Maureen Rikhof — The inside has been completely renovated. All electrical and plumbing have been updated to meet the code. The application for historic designation has been submitted for the outside structure of the home. It is, in fact, for architectural features.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE APPLICATION FOR HISTORICAL DESIGNATION FOR 902 BELLEVIEW AVE.: Fowler

SECOND: Hill

ABSENT: Bennett, Madrid

DISCUSSION: there was no discussion  
VOTE: The motion carried unanimously

C. Public Outreach Budget - April 25, 2026 (Chairman) (Action)

Ben Mason — The Board had discussed setting a specific dollar amount of \$500.00 budget for the Public Outreach event. The event will be on April 25, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. at Santa Fe Plaza Park. Handouts need to be made, purchase some small snacks and water for participants; handbags will be made and handed to the first 50 attendees. There will also be a live broadcaster, and there will be his fee included in the budget.

MOTION TO SET AND APPROVE THE BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$500.00 FOR THE APRIL 25, 2026, OUTREACH EVENT: Hill

SECOND: Lively

ABSENT: Bennett, Madrid

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously

D. Director Comments

1. CLG Subgrant Program Fiscal Year 2026

Melanie Scofield — This is a \$25,000 grant that was applied for; recommended for funding and HPAB was accepted. At this moment, History Colorado has not received their funds, so more information will be released the first week in May. These funds will go towards the preservation plan for the City of La Junta. The total is \$30,000. (\$25,000 for the grant and \$5,000 will need to be encumbered for the cash match.)

2. Saving Places - The Case for Preservation

Melanie Scofield — Submitted the reimbursement for the scholarship in the amount of \$740.00 that will be returned to HPAB. The Board needs to discuss and share feedback or what was learned from this presentation, as a stipulation of the scholarship.

Aimee Hill — One thing is that doing this presentation Zoom-style was quite difficult; a lot of it was the presenters having issues on their end. I did learn a lot about the historic buildings and new energy codes. All energy codes still need to be followed, even if it is a historic building. Another learned thing was regarding vacant buildings — taking some of the vacant buildings and working on part of the vacant buildings at a time (ex. Rehab the front of the building, have a business move in and then work on the back part of the building while the business is operational). It does not all have to be done immediately.

Erika Lively — This way helps both people, those whom are renovating the building, and the business owners. As for the training, had similar issues to Aimee regarding Zoom. One thing learned is what young people feel is historically relevant, and they understand that there are older folks that know, but young people can learn or know more about a historic building that was passed down through stories by grandparents. That was an interesting fact that was learned.

Ben Mason - Liked the community outreach training; bringing in Bob's point from earlier and involving the local community youth with the outreach. It is important to involve the

community, especially the youth and teaching them about their history. Also had similar technical issues that Aimee reported.

3. CPI On the Road in Buena Vista - June 13 & 14, 2026

Melanie Scofield — This year's registration cost is \$270 per person and there wasn't any information on hotels or lodging.

Aimee Hill — Discovered the cheapest option for a hotel would be \$170. Would be interested in going, as I will be in Divide that day; can just drive there and stay for the event.

MOTION TO ALLOW MELANIE SCOFIELD TO USE HPAB FUNDS TO REGISTER ANYONE FROM THE BOARD FOR JUNE 13–14,2026 CPI ON THE ROAD IN BUENA VISTA: Fowler

SECOND: Hill

ABSENT: Bennett, Madrid

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously

E. Governing Body's Comments

Ben Mason — Working with Melanie on an attendance-style sheet because it is important to have an active Board attending at least 75% of the meetings and work sessions as required of the Board by the HPAB bylaws. As soon as it is figured out, Melanie will email it out once a month.

ADJOURN

Next Scheduled Meeting: May 11, 2026 (work session)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

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Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

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Joseph Ayala, Mayor