



Historic Preservation Board Regular Meeting Minutes

February 11, 2026 at 9:00 AM

City Hall Commission Chambers
401 S. Park Avenue

Present

John Skolfield, Kelsey Wolfe, Margie Bridges, Cynde Norris

Absent

Lee Rambeau, Rhett Delaney, Kim Burst Wood

Staff Present

Director of Planning and Zoning Allison McGillis, Planner I Corinna Lundgren,
Administrative Coordinator Mary Jean

1. Call to Order

Chairman Skolfield called the meeting to order.

2. Consent Agenda

- a. Approve the minutes of the January 14, 2026, regular meeting.

No one from the public wished to speak. The public hearing was closed.

Motion made by Kelsey Wolfe, seconded by Margie Bridges to approve the January 14, 2026, meeting minutes.

The motion carried unanimously by a 4-0 vote. (Rhett Delaney, Lee Rambeau, and Kim Burst Wood were absent from the meeting.)

3. Public Comments (for items not on the agenda): Three minutes allowed for each speaker

No one from the public wished to speak. The public hearing was closed.

4. Public Hearings (Public participation and comment on these matters must be in person.)

- a. COR 26-02. Request by Karen and Armando Martorelli for approval to construct a new one-story rear addition, make modifications to the front elevation of the residence including a minor front setback variance of one foot eight inches, and undertake minor alterations to the rear detached structure at the

property located at 1299 Harding Street, zoned R-1AA.

Mrs. McGillis provided a summary of the request. She reviewed the survey, elevations, and proposed site plan for the property. She indicated that the request was to construct a one-story rear addition, modify the front elevation of the home, and make minor updates to the detached rear structure. She also indicated that the front changes included relocating the off-center front door to a more central position and adding a small bump-out on the east side of the façade. The bump-out will extend 1 foot 8 inches into the required front setback, requiring a minor variance. Mrs. McGillis added that the rear of the home will have an existing porch and dining room area removed and replaced with a new addition that extends further back on the lot. She noted that the project otherwise complies with all zoning requirements, including floor area ratio, setbacks, and impervious surface coverage. Updates to the detached rear structure are limited to adding shake siding and a pergola-style overhang, with no expansion proposed. The only variance requested was for the small front setback encroachment.

Brief discussion ensued about whether the home had been designated historic, if there was any opposition from neighbors, clarification of the requested variance, how the front setback was determined, and who would rule on the variance request if the home was not designated historic.

The applicant's architect, Dirk Arace of Arace Designs at 3563 Terra Oaks Court, Longwood, FL 32779, addressed the Board. Mr. Arace explained the proposed minor front "bump-out" feature resembling a small bay window. He noted that the design includes minimal overhangs that comply with setback regulations, extending no more than three feet into the side and front setbacks. He added that a small metal roof accent will tie into the rear of the house. He then indicated that similar cantilevered elements have been approved in the past and that current guidelines allow such articulations to extend to the ground. He explained that the bump-out is intended to enhance the home's main entry, which currently resembles a side or service entrance and lacks architectural presence.

Discussion ensued about whether approving the proposed redesign of a voluntarily designated historic home was appropriate, given that the Board's primary responsibility is preserving historic facades. Concerns were brought up about substantial changes undermining the purpose of historic designation and that approving such a comprehensive alteration could create a slippery slope. In contrast, it was asserted that the Board has used its discretion to approve significant changes in the past and that designation prevents demolition or inappropriate redevelopment.

Mr. Arace explained that the roof ridge and overall structure would remain the same, but proportions, trim, window sizing, and the nonfunctional front entry would require correction. He indicated that the changes would improve usability, symmetry, and traditional proportions while preserving the home's intent, even if it results in a refined,

historically inspired replication rather than strict preservation of existing elements.

Ultimately, despite ongoing philosophical concerns about preservation standards and precedent, the Board voted to approve the project. The Board agreed that future discussions and possibly work sessions are needed to clarify how historic designations and facade changes should be handled going forward.

Motion made by Kelsey Wolfe, seconded by Cynde Norris, for approval to construct a new one-story rear addition, make modifications to the front elevation of the residence including a minor front setback variance of one foot eight inches, and undertake minor alterations to the rear detached structure at the property located at 1299 Harding Street, zoned R-1AA.

The motion carried by a 4-0 vote. (Rhett Delaney, Lee Rambeau, and Kim Burst Wood were absent from the meeting.)

5. Action Items

6. Non-Action Items

7. Staff Updates

8. Board Comments

Discussion focused on refining the board's criteria for historic designations and addressing a high-profile lakefront property that may seek demolition and a lot split. Inconsistencies in past designation decisions were acknowledged and conducting a case study review of previously approved changes—such as window replacements—to better guide future boards and improve clarity in their standards was discussed.

The Board also reviewed Sunshine Law requirements, emphasizing that members cannot discuss matters that may come before them outside of publicly noticed meetings. They were advised to avoid commenting on social media about properties that could potentially appear before the Board, even if not currently under review. Individual site visits are permissible with proper disclosure, but group walkthroughs would require public notice.

A significant portion of the remaining discussion centered on a large property at 1020 Palmer Avenue, which is listed on the Florida Master Site File but not individually designated. If a demolition permit is submitted, the Board would have the authority to delay demolition for up to 90 days. However, the Planning and Zoning Board is currently considering potential comprehensive plan policy changes related to lakefront lot splits, and the Historic Preservation Board has no direct control over lot splitting decisions. Various scenarios were explored during the discussion, including splitting the

lot in a way that preserves the historic home, potentially moving the structure, or allowing one large estate. While there was some expressed support for a lot split if it ensured preservation of the existing house, a primary role of advocating for saving the home in any feasible way was also emphasized. There was also recognition that community opinion may divide around the issue of preservation versus development intensity.

The Board requested to have a joint meeting with the Planning and Zoning Board, potentially in late March, to discuss the criteria for designations, better align perspectives and explore policy options that could support preservation efforts.

9. Upcoming Agenda Items

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:01 a.m.

Minutes approved by the Board on March 11, 2026.

ATTEST:

/s/ Mary Jean, Recording Secretary