



July 13, 2026 - Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes

**July 13, 2026 at 12:00 PM
598 Main Street, Bay St. Louis, MS 39520**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 PM on Monday, July 13, 2026, with a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT

Chairman Cliff Rabalais

Commissioner John Bezou

Commissioner Matt Stieffel

Commissioner Patricia Keating

Commissioner David Wessinger

ACTION ITEMS

1. Application by Corbitt Construction Group at 108 Court Street

Application submitted by Corbitt Construction Group to add a decorative fence or trellis with gate, install a sign on the fence, and make changes to the front porch and awnings at 108 Court Street.

There was no representative present for the application, so it was moved to the end of the agenda. Commissioner Patricia Keating attempted to contact someone associated with the application but was unsuccessful. Commissioner John Bezou noted that the application contained numerous photographs and drawings showing two different options, but did not clearly identify what was actually being proposed.

Commissioners Matt Stieffel, Patricia Keating, and John Bezou discussed the proposal, noting that the existing building is historically appropriate and that the apparent request was to expand the building and front lawn/porch area. Discussion also included concerns regarding the apparent installation of artificial turf, which is generally not approved in the Historic District,

and the possible use of artificial landscaping shown on the submitted drawings. Commissioner Keating noted that realistic artificial plants are commonly used in Europe due to their low maintenance.

The Commission determined that significant clarification and additional documentation would be required before the application could be properly evaluated.

Motion to table the application until the requested clarifications are provided was made by Chairman Cliff Rabalais and seconded by Commissioner Patricia Keating.

Motion was approved 5/0.

2. Application by Benfatti Construction for 115 Citizen Street

Application submitted by Benfatti Construction, on behalf of owner Clower Reno, for a rear addition and new rear porch at 115 Citizen Street.

Mr. Colt Lee represented Benfatti Construction and explained that the addition would match the existing house in materials and architectural design. Composite decking would be used on the porch, porch posts would be wrapped with Hardie material, and windows removed from the existing rear wall would be reused in the new rear wall. The front porch would only be repainted, with no changes to the front façade.

Following discussion and clarification of the scope of work, a motion to approve the application as submitted was made by Commissioner John Bezou and seconded by Commissioner Matt Stieffel.

Motion was approved 5/0.

3. Application by Stewart and Amy Heard at 149 Bay View Court

Application submitted by Stewart and Amy Heard for an expansion of the residence and construction of a single-car carport at 149 Bay View Court.

Mr. Stewart Heard appeared before the Commission and explained that the home would be elevated above base flood elevation, relocated slightly on the property, and expanded to increase interior living space. A new continuous chain wall foundation would be installed with concrete block piers, and visible piers would be finished with brick.

The existing front porch would be removed and reconstructed at the new elevation with traditional wood steps and railing. Horizontal slats would minimize visibility beneath the raised

structure. New Hardie siding would match the existing home, operational shutters would be reused where possible, and any new shutters would match the existing style.

The roof design would be modified, utilizing an approved low-profile R-panel metal roof rather than corrugated metal. A new open carport and storage area would be added to the left side of the home, with matching siding and roofing materials.

Following discussion and clarification, a motion to approve the application as presented was made by Commissioner David Wessinger and seconded by Commissioner John Bezou.

Motion was approved 5/0.

4. Application by Mary Thompson at 126 Sycamore Street

Application submitted by Mary Thompson for the installation of an 8-foot by 12-foot in-ground swimming pool at the residence under construction at 126 Sycamore Street.

The Commission noted that construction of the residence had previously been approved during the April 13, 2026 meeting and that a future swimming pool had been anticipated. Ms. Thompson appeared to answer questions regarding the proposal.

Motion to approve the application as presented was made by Commissioner David Wessinger and seconded by Commissioner Patricia Keating.

Motion was approved 5/0.

5. Conceptual Review by Benfatti Construction for 135 St. Charles Street

Application submitted by Benfatti Construction on behalf of owners Shaw Varma and Kimberly Ann Owen for conceptual review of a proposed new residence at 135 St. Charles Street.

Mr. Colt Lee represented the applicant. During review, the Commission requested several modifications, including coating or cladding the aluminum sliding doors, utilizing an approved low-profile R-panel metal roof, replacing the contemporary garage doors with carriage-style garage doors, and maintaining the proposed three-foot simulated wrought iron fencing.

Mr. Lee indicated that construction was expected to begin within approximately six months. The Commission agreed that if only minor changes were made to the submitted plans, final approval could be granted without requiring a new application.

Motion to approve the conceptual review, and authorize approval of final plans provided no significant changes are made and the noted clarifications are incorporated, was made by Commissioner Patricia Keating and seconded by Commissioner John Bezou.

Motion was approved 5/0.

OTHER DISCUSSION

The Commission reviewed the condition of the property located at 231 Sycamore Street, noting that it had previously appeared before the Historic Preservation Commission on multiple occasions due to deterioration. Members discussed the upcoming City Council public hearing regarding the property and agreed that the condition constituted "Demolition by Neglect" in violation of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Motion to declare the property at 231 Sycamore Street in violation of the Historic Preservation Ordinance due to Demolition by Neglect was made by Chairman Cliff Rabalais and seconded by Commissioner John Bezou.

Motion was approved 5/0.

Jeremy Burke reported that the owner of the residence on Third Street adjacent to the cabinet shop had agreed to replace the previously installed vinyl fence pickets with wooden pickets.

Commissioner David Wessinger noted that the unapproved vinyl fence on Caron Lane remained in place and that the residence in the 300 block of Tolume Street still had not installed the required exterior SDL window mullions.

Chairman Cliff Rabalais also reported that the Daiquiri Shack had installed an unapproved banner/sign on the rear wall facing the railroad tracks and Beach Boulevard.

Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes for June 8, 2026, were reviewed.

Motion to approve the meeting minutes as written was made by Commissioner John Bezou and seconded by Commissioner Matt Stieffel.

Motion was approved 5/0.

Adjournment

With no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:15 PM.