



MINUTES

The City of Douglas Mayor and Council met in a Special Meeting on Wednesday, April 15, 2026, at 5:30 p.m., at City Hall Council Chamber, 425 10th Street. The Honorable Mayor Jose Grijalva called the meeting to order.

- 1. **CALL TO ORDER.** 5:30 p.m.
- 2. **ROLL CALL.**

	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
MAYOR, JOSE GRIJALVA	X	
MAYOR PRO TEMPORE, RAY SHELTON	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, JOSE MONTANO	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, GUSTAVO DURAZO JR.	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, MARIA DILLMAN	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, RICHARD C. ACOSTA	X	
CITY MANAGER, ANA URQUIJO		X
CITY ATTORNEY, DENIS FITZGIBBONS	X	
CITY TREASURER, ALEJANDRO MARTINEZ	X	
CITY CLERK, ALMA ANDRADE	X	

3. PERSONS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL IN WRITING OR VERBALLY ON ANY ITEM NOT ON THE AGENDA.

Kathleen Gomez of 2350 East 12th Street, expressed support for Ida Pedrego as a candidate for the Ward 1 vacancy, citing Ms. Pedrego's consistent attendance at city council meetings, her broad community engagement across political lines, and her familiarity with local issues. Mayor Grijalva noted that Ms. Gomez's comments pertained to Item 4, but allowed them to stand.

Diana LaMar of 1303 F Avenue, addressed the Council regarding a follow-up on a prior presentation she had made concerning surveillance and license plate reader cameras. She inquired whether the matter would be brought forward as an agenda item for a vote. Mayor Grijalva indicated that the matter would appear as a future agenda item. Ms. LaMar also informed the Council of a diaper drive undertaken collaboratively by Douglas Indivisible and RAISE (Rural Arizona Engagement), noting that collected diapers would be distributed to community members in need, either at Douglas Days or later that week.

4. DISCUSSION with POSSIBLE DECISION on WARD 1 SEAT VACANCY.
A. COUNCIL MEMBER INTERVIEWS for WARD 1.

Alma Andrade provided background on the vacancy. She noted that pursuant to City Charter Article 2, Section 13(b), the remaining members of the Council, including the Mayor, are required to fill a council vacancy by majority vote within 31 days but not fewer than 15 days from the date of the vacancy. Former Council Member Melissa Rodriguez resigned on March 26, 2026. The Clerk's office issued a public notice, shared the notice on social media, and published it in the Herald Review on April 1, 2026, resulting in two letters of interest being received. Ms. Andrade further noted that because a primary election was scheduled for July 21 of that year, and the timeline for submitting nomination petitions had passed, the person appointed this evening would serve the remainder of the existing term.

Interview — Ida Ann Pedrego

Ms. Pedrego introduced herself as a long-time resident with deep roots in community involvement, including service as a Girl Scout leader, involvement in youth sports, and a career as a teacher and school counselor. She currently serves on the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) and the board of the Southeast Arizona Federal Credit Union. She stated her central motivation for seeking the appointment was a commitment to action over words, referencing her prior community organizing efforts, including a petition related to the downtown streetscape and earlier opposition to selling the municipal airport.

Council Member Montaño asked Ms. Pedrego to share her views on several major city projects. She expressed support for the downtown streetscape, though she noted reservations about widening sidewalks at the expense of narrowing traffic lanes. She supported golf course improvements as a revenue-generating and tourism-attracting asset, even noting she is not a golfer herself. She expressed strong support for the ports of entry development as a component of the city's long-term economic growth. Regarding the airport, she recounted her prior opposition to selling the airport itself, distinguishing that from the disposition of surrounding land, and described her efforts to engage a former El Paso attorney general who worked pro bono to assist the city in preserving the facility.

Council Member Durazo asked Ms. Pedrego to identify her top three priorities for Ward 1 over the next 12 to 18 months. She identified road and street conditions, cleanup of abandoned and neglected properties, and direct constituent engagement as her primary concerns. She expressed a desire to walk portions of the ward to ask residents directly what they needed, noting that community members had told her they had never been asked for their input. On the subject of airport support, she indicated she would advocate for better documentation of aircraft traffic and fuel usage, and for the continued development of hangars. Regarding city staffing, she acknowledged that many city employees perform admirably but expressed concern that some positions are filled by individuals who may lack the qualifications required to effectively carry out their responsibilities.

Council Member Dillman asked how Ms. Pedrego would handle decisions that are necessary but unpopular. Ms. Pedrego stated that throughout her professional career she had consistently made difficult decisions and was comfortable doing so, and that she was equally prepared to acknowledge mistakes and take responsibility when warranted.

Council Member Acosta asked about Ms. Pedrego's vision for the streetscape. She reiterated support for beautification, including trees, planters, and LED lighting, while opposing bump-outs she viewed as an inefficient use of funds. She emphasized the importance of maintaining improvements once installed, noting that previously planted trees had died due to lack of maintenance. She also underscored the need to hold building owners accountable for the condition of their properties along G Avenue and 10th Street, which she described as the city's main commercial corridors.

Council Member Acosta raised the issue of hotel capacity, noting the Gadsden Hotel had reportedly been booked through October. Ms. Pedrego expressed full support for attracting a new hotel, and stated her belief that the city needs to actively and personally sell itself to prospective investors and developers rather than relying on outreach by telephone or correspondence alone.

Mayor Grijalva directed pointed questions to Ms. Pedrego, acknowledging that she had previously called on the Council to engage more actively with the community. He asked whether she was prepared to hold herself to the same standard given her responsibilities as a business owner. Ms. Pedrego stated that she had discussed the commitment with her family before applying, had arranged employee coverage for her other civic obligations, and expressed confidence she could meet those standards. Mayor Grijalva also asked whether she was prepared to accept being one vote among seven, including on the streetscape, should the majority vote differently than she preferred. Ms. Pedrego acknowledged that she does not always prevail in group decisions on other boards she serves, and indicated she would accept the outcome while continuing to advocate for her positions.

Interview — Bruce Endres

Mr. Endres, introduced himself by noting this was his second time applying for a council vacancy. He candidly acknowledged at the outset that he had not fully considered the upcoming election schedule when applying, and that he was not prepared to run for office. He recommended the Council consider appointing Ms. Pedrego instead.

Mr. Endres described his background as a builder and contractor responsible for several visible downtown renovation projects, including restoration of the neon sign at the Grand Theater, the stucco redesign of the Jones Building, and work on numerous other commercial properties. He noted he had recently retired as of the prior July.

In response to Council Member Montaño's question on major city projects, Mr. Endres expressed qualified support for the golf course while questioning whether golf courses are generally profitable enterprises. On the airport land development, he responded positively once informed that the proposed use was hangar homes, calling it a viable concept. Regarding the commercial port of entry, he drew on his experience holding a commercial driver's license to note that truck traffic would likely not generate significant additional local business revenue. On the streetscape,

he drew a comparison to downtown redevelopment efforts in Santa Barbara, California, emphasizing the importance of securing property owner participation, bringing in businesses, and creating accessible rear-access parking to support a viable commercial district.

Council Member Durazo asked about Ward 1 priorities over the next 12 to 18 months. Mr. Endres identified paving of north-south streets, sidewalk repair, and general infrastructure maintenance, including improved crosswalk markings, as his primary focus areas.

Council Member Shelton inquired about Mr. Endres's view of the city's staff and how he would interact with them. Mr. Endres stated his understanding that, under a council-manager form of government, council members have no role in employee matters, and that he would limit his interactions with staff to social contexts rather than interfering in their work.

Council Member Dillman asked how he would stay connected with Ward 1 residents. Mr. Endres acknowledged the language barrier posed by the predominantly Spanish-speaking population in the ward and indicated he would need to walk the ward with a translator and distribute contact cards, as he was not aware of many current social activities in Ward 1 that would provide natural points of engagement.

Council Member Acosta asked what Mr. Endres would do to ensure the streetscape project moves forward and is completed on time. Mr. Endres stated the most critical first step would be determining whether building owners care about the improvements and are willing to participate, given that street improvements are typically assessed against adjacent property owners. He did not provide a specific implementation strategy, acknowledging the question was difficult to answer without knowing the level of owner engagement.

Mayor Grijalva asked about the language barrier in Ward 1, noting that both Ward 1 and Ward 6 are predominantly Spanish-speaking. Mr. Endres stated he would need to recruit a Spanish-speaking companion to assist in door-to-door outreach. Mayor Grijalva also asked about Mr. Endres's current level of community involvement. Mr. Endres acknowledged that, due to extensive work travel over the prior eight years, his active participation had been limited. He referenced past involvement including helping to reincorporate the Chamber of Commerce and contributing to Grand Theater restoration efforts, with most of that activity predating 2012.

B. COUNCIL MEMBER APPOINTMENT for WARD 1.

Motion by Mayor Jose Grijalva, second by Council Member Montaño to appoint Ida Pedrego as Ward 1 Council Member.

Roll call: Voted in Favor: Mayor Jose Grijalva, Council Members: Jose Montaño, Gustavo Durazo, Ray Shelton, Maria Dillman, and Richard Acosta. Voted Against: None.

C. POSSIBLE OATH of OFFICE to the NEW COUNCIL MEMBER.

The oath of office was administered by City Magistrate Alma Vildosola. Ms. Andrade presented a certificate of appointment and photos were taken.

D. POSSIBLE COMMENTS by NEWLY APPOINTED COUNCIL MEMBER.

Council Member Pedrego thanked the Mayor and Council for their support and acknowledged the responsibility she now bears to live up to the commitments she made during her interview. She also extended thanks to Mr. Endres for his candid remarks and generous comments during the proceedings, and expressed her hope to collaborate with him going forward.

5. ADJOURNMENT.

Motion by Council Member Pedrego, second by Council Member Montaño to adjourn the meeting at 6:23 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

