



Museums & Cultural Affairs Department

MAYOR
Renard U. Johnson

Museums & Cultural Affairs Advisory Board (MCAAB)

Thursday, April 16, 2026 at 4:00 PM

El Paso Museum of History

MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL

District 1
Alejandra Chávez

District 2
Dr. Josh Acevedo

District 3
Deanna M. Rocha

District 4
Cynthia Boyar Trejo

District 5
Ivan Niño

District 6
Art Fierro

District 7
Lily Limón

District 8
Chris Canales

CITY MANAGER
Dionne Mack

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 4:10 PM MST.

Roll Call: Done by Saul S. Flores

- **Members Present:** Valeria Contreras, Raul Garcia, Lucio Glenn, Dr. Christopher Olivares, and Isabel White.
- **Members Absent:** Bianca De Leon.
- **Members Tardy:** Isabel White in at 4:26 PM.
- **Early Departures:** None.
- **Consecutive Absences:** None.
- **Others Present:** Ben Fyffe, Claudia Cardoza, Saul S. Flores, Roberto Aguinaga, Rebecca Munoz, Erica Marin, Sebastian Ribas-Normand, Adrian Guzman, Michael Reyes, Brooke Thorson, and Mariana Briseño.

Public Comment: None at this time.

1. Approval of Minutes: March 19, 2026:

- Vanessa Tena made a motion to approve, and Lucio Glenn seconded the motion. All members voted in favor; no one opposed. Motion Passed.

2. Discussion and Action on El Paso Museum of History Accessions:

- Mariana Briseño presented a gift from Celia Berton: a Mexican Federal Army sword belonging to General Francisco Castro, 1889. She provided an overview of the sword's regional significance and how it aligns with the museum's collection goals.
- Board members were given the opportunity to view the piece up close.
- Members asked questions regarding the piece's regional origin and historical time period.
- Dr. Chris Olivares made a motion to approve, and Lucio Glenn seconded the motion. All members voted in favor; no one opposed. Motion Passed.

3. Discussion and Action on Public Art Deaccession of Art & Sol Project:

- Adrian Guzman presented the Art & Sol Project, commissioned in 2004, and provided background information on the initiative,





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including cost per piece, project completion, and its display as public art.

- Staff identified that the pieces meet the criteria for the deaccession process due to excessive maintenance requirements, limited display options, and no longer aligning with the program's vision.
- Photos were presented to the Board illustrating the condition of several pieces, including physical and chemical deterioration, weakened structural integrity, and damage beyond repair.
- Next steps were discussed; upon approval, the pieces will be donated for display at Keystone Heritage Park.
- Board members asked questions and engaged in discussion.
- Vanessa Tena made a motion to approve, and Dr. Chris Olivares seconded the motion. All members voted in favor; no one opposed. Motion Passed.

4. Discussion and Update on El Paso Museum of Art accreditation process:

- Ben Fyffe presented an update on the El Paso Museum of Art (EPMA) reaccreditation process.
- The purpose of the presentation was to inform the Board in advance of the final submission, which will be presented to City Council for review and approval.
- Mr. Fyffe explained that accreditation is granted by the American Alliance of Museums. Of approximately 33,000 museums in the United States, fewer than 4% are currently accredited. EPMA was first accredited in 1972, with its most recent reaccreditation in 2017.
- Staff outlined that the accreditation process ensures museums maintain high standards in operations, collections stewardship, governance, financial sustainability, and community engagement. The process includes a self-study, peer review site visit, and evaluation by an external accreditation commission.
- Core documents required for the application packet were presented, with some requiring Board and City Council approval.
- Staff also presented a timeline for the reaccreditation process, which includes staff listening sessions beginning this month.
- Board members engaged in discussion regarding the definition of a "community partner."
- A Board member requested that core documents be provided in advance of future meetings to allow adequate time for review prior to voting.
- No action was required for this item.

MCAD | 400 W San Antonio Ave., Suite A | El Paso, Texas 79901 | (915) 212-0110





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5. Discussion and Update on El Paso Museum of Archaeology Homeschool Program:

- Brooke Thorson presented on the Homeschool Program at the Museum of Archaeology.
- Staff provided an overview of the development of the program and the demographics served by the museum.
- The presentation highlighted the program structure, participation, and overall success.
- Staff also shared community feedback, including positive responses and areas of opportunity for future growth.
- No action was required for this item.

6. Museum Reports: Museum of Archaeology, Museum of Art, Museum of History and Mexican American Cultural Center:

- **Museum of Archaeology:**
 - i. Staff reported attendance of 21,000 for the month of March.
 - ii. Staff went over past events such as Poppies Fest continue to see an increase of visitors due to the late bloom of the poppies.
 - iii. Additional programming included homeschool days, workshops, lectures, and outreach opportunities.
 - iv. Upcoming events include the Voices of the Desert: Art, Memory & Healing.
 - v. Staff is planning a redo/renovation for the Permanent exhibits in the development phase.
- **Museum of Art:**
 - i. Staff presented the new exhibition From the Collection: Portraiture 1903–2021 in the Dede Rogers Gallery.
 - ii. Staff reported strong attendance for the Frida Kahlo exhibition with over 38,000 visitors during the fiscal year.
 - iii. Staff shared that weekend attendance has significantly increased due to the exhibition.
 - iv. Staff discussed future traveling exhibitions and partnerships with other museums
 - v. Staff announced upcoming loans from Art Bridges and a National Gallery traveling exhibition planned for November.
- **Museum of History:**
 - i. Staff reported attendance is nearing 30,000 year-to-date, reflecting a 24% increase over last year.
 - ii. The “Collecting Your History” program continues for adults focused on preserving personal histories.
 - iii. Hinamatsuri event highlighted strong community participation.



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- iv. Upcoming panel: “Deconstructing Fantasy Heritage” examining First Thanksgiving narratives.
- v. Austin Terrace opens April 30 as part of Neighborhoods and Shared Memories, featuring Loretto Academy and historic homes.
- vi. Kids Zone project opening in less than three weeks, featuring a “Chuco Urban” theme sponsored by Nusenda Credit Union.
- **Mexican American Cultural Center:**
 - i. Attendance year-to-date is at 54,769, impacted by Día de los Muertos attendance and Lunar New Year. March attendance a bit over 4,000.
 - ii. Revenue has exceeded the budgeted amount.
 - iii. Staff are archiving and scanning community feedback from gallery comment book; feedback reflects strong feelings of representation and connection to the MACC.
 - iv. A new culinary program coordinator is enhancing programming and available amenities.
 - v. The first culinary spring break camp had full attendance, led by the culinary coordinator, featuring hands-on activities such as making fideo, salads, and salsas.

Adjournment of Meeting: The meeting was adjourned at 5:24 PM MST.

Approved for content by:
Claudia Cardoza, Assistant Director
Respectfully submitted by:
Saul S. Flores, Administrative Assistant

Chair

June 2, 2026

Date

