

Historical Commission Minutes

City of Foley Council Chambers
407 E. Laurel Ave., Foley, Alabama

June 2, 2026

1:00 p.m.

I. Call to order

Chairman JaNay Dawson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

II. Roll call

Members present were: Tyler Higginbotham, Chad Watkins, Jerry Morrison, JaNay Dawson, Kathie LeDrew, Bill Swanson. Absent member was Kim Ward. Staff present were: Shawn Mitchell, Cory Rhodes, Eden Lapham, Jonathan Cottis, Nathan Smith and Melissa Ringler, Recording Secretary.

III. Approval of Minutes

- Approve April 7, 2026 minutes as published

Commissioner Morrison made a motion to approve the April 7, 2026 meeting minutes. Commissioner Watkins seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

Motion to approve the April 7, 2026 meeting minutes passes.

IV. Staff Approvals

- Ebert Agency
Charlie Ebert
222 W. Laurel Ave.
National District- Contributing
 - a. Request to repaint center front wall

Mr. Nathan Smith explained a staff approval was issued for the request to repaint the exterior center front wall of the front of the building. He stated the color choice Deep Caviar matches what is currently in place.

- Melissa's Kitchen
118 West Laurel LLC-Mark Wright
232 W. Laurel Ave.
National District- Contributing
 - a. Request to install ground signage

Mr. Smith explained a staff approval was issued for a ground sign for Melissa's Kitchen.

Commissioners had no questions or comments regarding the staff approvals.

V. Discussion Item

- Gift Horse Antique Center
118 West Laurel LLC-Mark Wright
215 W. Laurel Ave.
National District- Contributing

a. Discuss new building front façade

Mr. Mark Wright stated he is currently having a property survey being done for the property.

Ms. Jackie Strickland of McCullough Architect explained that the building's elevation is not at street level, creating challenges for the main entrance. She noted that the structure consists of two separate buildings with an air gap between them and a metal façade spanning the top.

Ms. Strickland stated that the west side of the building currently lacks an entrance and will require the addition of a door to serve one tenant space. The east side will have a single entrance door providing access to two tenant spaces.

She discussed challenges related to ADA accessibility due to limited available space. Potential solutions include removing the front wall and setting it back or adding parking at the rear of the building.

Ms. Strickland explained that the renderings presented are conceptual, as the design team does not know what exists behind the metal façade. There is a 3- to 4-foot height difference between the two buildings. The goal is to restore the original façade; however, the original appearance is currently unknown.

Chairman Dawson asked if there was a step up on the original building.

Mr. Wright responded that there was.

Ms. Strickland stated on the West side 25' building there is some collapsing in the front. She explained that they are hope to level the area but are uncertain at this time. She added that any modification would most likely be interior in nature, and the step would remain.

Mr. Wright state the buildings will have inset entry doors with a step up.

Ms. Strickland stated that they would like to request to approval to install an entry door on the front of the 25' building.

Staff provided older photograph of the buildings for reference.

The Commissioners agreed that they had no objections to the installation of an entry door, as the building originally had a door in that location.

Mr. Wright stated he would like to place the new door in its original location, as shown in the historic photograph. He explained that stucco had been added to the building at some point and that it would need to be removed to determine what remains beneath it. He added that he has explored options for using historically appropriate brick, and any such proposal would be brought before the Commission for review and approval.

Mr. Jonathan Cottis asked whether the Commissioners would be amendable to staff issuing a staff approval that would allow Mr. Wright to remove the façade to determine what exists beneath it.

Mr. Wright stated he would provide a timeline for the removal and replacement of the façade. He added that the awning would remain in place and would not be removed.

Chairman Dawson stated the issue is the item is not on the agenda for approval.

Mr. Cottis asked the applicant whether he would be willing to submit an application for the partial removal of the façade for exploratory demolition purposes. He noted that the application should include details regarding how the area would be properly secured and stabilized, and that the request could potentially be approved at the staff level.

Chairman Dawson asked whether demolition work would normally qualify for staff-level approval. She stated that, as a Chair, her concern is ensuring that all actions are conducted in accordance with established protocols and procedures.

Mr. Wright explained that the façade could not be designed until the existing façade is removed so the underlying structure could be evaluated.

Commissioner Higginbotham read from Section 15.5 of the Foley Historical Commission Design Guidelines which recommends evaluating the significance of historic resources, exhausting all attempts to reuse a historic resource prior to considering relocation or demolition including: stabilization, weatherproofing and securing, sale or transfer or property renovation or adaptive reuse.

Commissioner Watkins stated based on guidelines, an evaluation of the historical resources could be conducted and staff approval could be issued for that evaluation.

Mr. Wright stated the project would be under a timeline.

VI. Adjournment

Commissioner Watkins made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:38 p.m. Commissioner Higginbotham seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:38 p.m. passes.