

HIDALGO COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Summary of Proposed Changes to Bylaws (FACT SHEET)

Overview: These new bylaws are meant to replace the existing bylaws, last revised 2013, of the Hidalgo County Historical Commission (HCHC). The proposed changes are needed in order to better align the scope and purpose of the HCHC with the duties and expectations set forth by the Texas Historical Commission and Chapter 318 of the Texas Local Government Code (LGC). It also makes changes to the membership criteria, lowering the number of total appointees, in order to make quorum more manageable.

Article 1: Authority and Name. No change.

Article 2: Purpose. The purpose statement of the HCHC was clarified and the scope of its activities clearly delineated.

Article 3: Powers and Duties. This section was added and lists, verbatim, the six sections from the Texas Local Government Code that cover what a County Historical Commission is authorized to do.

Note: Sections 3.05 “Historic Site Tax Exemption” and 3.06 “Contracts for Lease or Management of Landmarks” are a restatement of what the LGC says a CHC “may establish.” In order to actually establish these programs, further action would need to be taken by Commissioners Court.

Article 4: Membership. Changes outlined below:

4.02 Term. Language copied from LCG that governs term start, end, and length, including the Texas Historical Commission’s oversight of appointments. Also clarifies member resignation and vacancy appointment procedure.

4.03 Membership. Language condensed. Most importantly, it amends the total number of appointed members from 25 to 15, lowering quorum from 13 to 8 members.

Note: The previous appointment procedure required each precinct to have 5 appointees with 5 at large appointees for 25 total. The LGC does not require, nor have I seen any other county’s CHC bylaws dictate, dividing members by precinct. However, in order to ensure equitable representation from each precinct, I have included the phrase “from which at least two (2) members shall be appointed from each precinct.”

Article 5: Attendance. Language was reworded and policies governing absences, excused absences, and removals due to absence has been clarified.

Article 6: Meetings. Reworded to better reflect the expectations outlined by the Texas Historical Commission and the standards outlined by the Texas Open Meetings Act.

Article 7: Officers. Slightly reworded but largely the same. A provision for Historic Preservation Officer was added in the case that Hidalgo County pursues Certified Local Government status.

Article 8: Committees. Largely the same, with the addition of standing committees already in operation.

Article 9: Financial Administration. Added sections 9.01 from the LGC; otherwise, the same.

Article 10: Parliamentary Procedure. Unchanged.

Article 11: Amendments. Unchanged.