

**MINUTES**  
**Commission Meeting**  
**San Luis Economic Development Commission**  
**San Luis Council Chamber**  
**1090 E. Union Street**  
**January 29, 2025**  
**4:00 p.m.**

**MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION WILL ATTEND EITHER IN PERSON, TELEPHONE, OR VIDEO CONFERENCE COMMUNICATION.**

1. **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL BY THE CLERK OF THE BOARD** Chairman Jesus Carrillo called the San Luis Economic Development Commission meeting to order at approximately 4:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Jesus Carrillo, Chairman  
Salma Marrufo, Vice Chair  
Abraham Andrade, Commission Member  
Oscar Franco, Commission Member  
Eric R. Jones, Commission Member  
Linda Padilla, Commission Member  
Mary Carmen Lopez, Commission Member (joined virtually)

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Armando Esparza, Director of Economic Dev. & Government Affairs  
Yigal Duarte, Economic Development Assistant  
Buna George, Executive Director of the Greater Yuma Port Authority  
Sonia Cornelio, City Clerk  
Melissa Lopez, Deputy City Clerk

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Jesus Carrillo led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **PRESENTATIONS**

- 3.A. Presentation by the Greater Yuma Port Authority on Cross-Border Trade and Commerce. **(Buna George, Executive Director)**

Armando Esparza introduced Buna George, Executive Director of the Greater Yuma Port Authority, to members of the Economic Development Commission.

Buna George provided a presentation to Commission Members on the history, board members, milestones, and current initiatives, from the Greater Yuma Port Authority organization. Ms. George further informed Commission Members of the organization's engagement with USMCA Review which involves the North American Free Trade Agreements, as far as tariffs and trade regulations, and how the coming 2026 review will

focus on which countries have been in compliance, whether any violations were recorded, and review accountability among the three countries. Ms. George also addressed the importance of their partnership with the land base Port Authorities of Nogales and Douglas, ADOT, and the Consulates from Mexico.

Mr. Esparza informed Commission Members about the partnership and collaboration with Ms. George to seek grant funding for initiatives focused on workforce development, mobility around Port of Entry I, downtown parking, and an additional grant to complete the design of the extension of County 25 from USDOT.

**3.B. Presentation by Economic Development Department of twelve (12) selected businesses for Fuerza Local Business Accelerator Program. (Armando Esparza, Director of Economic Development)**

Mr. Esparza described the implementation of a business development initiative in collaboration with Local First Arizona and their Fuerza Local Business Accelerator Program. Mr. Esparza informed Commission Members that out of 38 applications from local business owners, 12 candidates were selected through an interview process and admitted as the first generation of the program.

Mr. Esparza opened the floor so that the following candidates be able to present their business to Commission Members:

- Tortilleria Recien Salidas LLC, by Brenda Arreola and Sergio Esquivel
- Papantla Entertainment LLC, by Jose Antonio Maldonado
- Las Machas de la Heidy LLC, by Heidy Galindo
- Tortas Mexico LLC, by Liban Arce
- The Concept Shop LLC, by Lluvia Marquez
- Maximus Gym LLC, by Martha Alicia Ulloa
- Helados Fiesta, by Geronimo Quezada

Mr. Esparza mentioned that the program will start next month (February) and that both the City of San Luis and the Economic Development Department will promote the 12 businesses in addition to what they will be learning throughout the cohort, and that a graduation ceremony will take place during the month of July.

Commission Member Jones asked if the 12 businesses are currently open. Mr. Esparza replied that the program targets a mixture of both starting and existing businesses. Commission Member Jones concluded by suggesting reaching out to the Yuma County Chamber of Commerce to have assistance with opening and ribbon cutting ceremonies, and mixers.

**4. CONSENT AGENDA**

**4.A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

-Regular San Luis Economic Development Commission meeting held on October 16, 2024.

**MOTION: Chairman Jesus Carrillo/Commission Member Oscar Franco approved the consent agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.**

The vote was as follows:

Chairman Jesus Carrillo	Aye
Vice Chair Salma Marrufo	Aye
Commission Member Abraham Andrade	Aye
Commission Member Oscar Franco.	Aye
Commission Member Mary Carmen Lopez	Aye
Commission Member Eric R Jones	Aye
Commission Member Linda Padilla	Aye

## 5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

### 5.A. Discussion and possible action on any and all matters regarding the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Economic Development Efforts. **(Armando Esparza, Director of Economic Development and the SHPO)**

Mr. Esparza stated that in accordance with a policy recommendation found in the City of San Luis 2040 General Plan, the Economic Development Department is reviewing a strategy geared toward historic preservation to enhance economic activity within the community.

Mr. Esparza commented that the Economic Development Department engaged the SHPO a year ago to review the requirements for starting a historic preservation program in San Luis and was suggested to create a commission assigned to oversee the program. Mr. Esparza informed that "research on historic preservation allows for selected buildings or sites to stay the same and attracts outside investment to the community as there exist an industry of people who travel to see historical sites, therefore the department sees this as a strategy to increase the tax base bringing outside people to experience what San Luis has to offer, and increase civic pride for our residents".

Mr. Esparza introduced Arianna Urban, *Planner III* for the SHPO, to talk more about available programs, opportunities to enhance economic development, and to provide examples of statewide initiatives available through the SHPO.

Ms. Urban presented information about the tasks the SHPO manages in the state of Arizona such as administering the National Register of Historic Places program, maintaining an inventory of historic properties, reviewing federal undertakings and state actions, providing statewide preservation planning assistance, administering the Certified Local Government program, administering federal tax incentive programs, and providing assistance and education to the public. Additionally, Ms. Urban extended an invitation to attend the 2025 Historic Preservation Conference taking place in Phoenix, Arizona, from May 14 to May 17, 2025.

Ms. Urban proceeded to define the difference between heritage preservation and historic preservation and how both are used interchangeably as a tool to help inform and manage change to incorporate and preserve the important historical and culture aspects of a community. Ms. Urban detailed information about the Certified Local Government Program (CLG), a certification process that municipalities go through to make a public commitment to preserve their community's identity and make sure to meet the needs of their city. Ms. Urban stated that there are 30 CLGs in Arizona. Ms. Urban summarized the requirements for certification to involve an amendment to the City Code to address historic preservation and the creation of a historic preservation commission, and a list of properties with an

understanding of their significant value and visual/physical condition, and whether they have been recognized or received an honorary designation, that can apply for consideration and receive funding. Upon obtaining certification as a CLG, the municipality is given access to grant funding for preservation planning projects, technical assistance in planning/zoning and preservation, training for staff, commissioners, neighborhoods, and public, observe improvements in economic development, tourism, and quality of life, and access to partnerships in regional and statewide preservation networks. Ms. Urban discussed the amounts and process followed with CLG “pass-through” grants. Ms. Urban briefly added information on the National Register of Historic Places and federal income tax incentives.

Ms. Urban concluded her presentation with an example of an economic development success with a historical preservation program and related to the “Goal E-14” section of the City of San Luis 2040 General Plan and the Downtown Redevelopment Project to suggest areas where SHPO can assist with preservation and restoration of buildings and properties.

Ms. Urban added that as seen on information provided to Commission Members, there are federal incentive programs available through USDA’s Arizona Branch for Rural Development to low-income seniors for home improvements and low-interest loans for non-seniors. Mr. Esparza mentioned that the City will work to connect with property owners who would like to access such incentives as neither the City nor the state have incentives available at this time to incentivize development.

Commission Member Jones suggested contacting the remaining founders of San Luis to address historical places that were not listed and supported the creation of the “San Luis Historical Society” with the establishing an historical downtown similar to what was made for Downtown Yuma.

Commission Member Franco stated gratitude for Ms. Urban’s presentation and his interest and support moving forward with the heritage/historic preservation program for San Luis.

Mr. Esparza informed Chairman Carrillo that the bylaws for the San Luis Economic Development Commission allow for the Chairman to propose a motion to create a committee with the current commission members and some from the community to begin work on the economic development strategy mentioned above.

**MOTION: Chairman Carrillo/Commission Member Jones, Commission Member Franco** to create a committee designated to oversee the heritage/historic preservation program for San Luis. Motion passed unanimously.

The vote was as follows:

Chairman Jesus Carrillo	Aye
Vice Chair Salma Marrufo	Aye
Commission Member Abraham Andrade	Aye
Commission Member Oscar Franco.	Aye
Commission Member Mary Carmen Lopez	Aye
Commission Member Eric R Jones	Aye
Commission Member Linda Padilla	Aye

**5.B. Discussion on any and all matters regarding the Economic Development Marketing Brochure Development. (Armando Esparza, Director of Economic Development)**

Mr. Esparza informed that the Economic Development Department, the City's Communication Staff, and Vice Chair Marrufo, met with MGM Design to discuss the development of marketing collateral and a marketing campaign for the City of San Luis to be used to provide information to stakeholders in both print and digital format, to inform them about information on commercial and industrial development, and more.

Vice Chair Marrufo provided additional information on the material and discussion addressed during the meeting with MGM Design.

Mr. Esparza requested to move this item to the following meeting to allow for a representative from MGM Design to be present and present a draft of the materials. Chairman Carrillo confirmed decision to move item for the following meeting.

There were no questions or comments from the members of the Economic Development Commission

**5.C. Discussion and update of current projects from Economic Development Director. (Armando Esparza, Director of Economic Development)**

Mr. Esparza stated that the Economic Development Department is preparing the department's budget for the next fiscal year and will provide additional information for future projects in the next commission meeting. Mr. Esparza informed and invited Commission Members of upcoming meetings that will be held as part of City-wide initiatives such as the Home-Based Business Session taking place on February 19<sup>th</sup>; Community Connection Event taking place on February 4<sup>th</sup>, March 4<sup>th</sup>, and April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

Mr. Esparza concluded by stating that there is currently one vacant suite at the San Luis Business Incubator program and that the City is working with Arizona Western College on establishing an EV Technician program at the Business Incubator. The program is expected to open during the fall semester. Mr. Esparza also informed that the revision of the Business Incubator program continues to move forward and will inform Commission Members as soon as further updates are available.

Commission Member Jones requested a copy of the slides that were presented in today's meeting. Mr. Esparza to provide copies via email.

Vice Chair Marrufo inquired about a second cohort for the Fuerza Local Business Accelerator Program. Mr. Esparza confirmed that a second cohort will start in August with applications opening between March and April, and that plans are in motion to hold a third cohort.

Commission Member Jones inquired about the "2015 Futures Forum Plan" for San Luis. Mr. Esparza confirmed that the report is available, however, a request was submitted to obtain funding to generate an updated version of the document.

Commission Member Jones stated that there are vacancies of businesses and inquired if a list is available for those properties to be discussed at a future meeting. Mr. Esparza

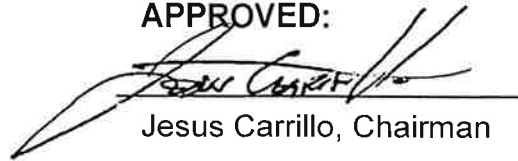
confirmed that as part of the marketing campaign, the City's website is being updated to include an area where the information on the property and the contact information for the property manager will be available to the public.

There were no questions or comments from the members of the Economic Development Commission

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Carrillo, Commission Member Jones and Commission Member Franco adjourned the meeting at 5:11p.m.

**APPROVED:**



Jesus Carrillo, Chairman

**ATTEST:**



Yigal Duarte, Economic Development Assistant

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the San Luis Economic Development Commission meeting of the City of San Luis, Arizona, held on January 29, 2025. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.



Yigal Duarte, Economic Development Assistant