EMMA S. BARRIENTOS MEXICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER MINUTES **REGULAR MEETING WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026**

The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center (ESB-MACC) convened in a Regular meeting on April 1, 2026, at 301 W. 2nd Street in Austin, Texas. (Some members of the ESB-MACC Advisory Board participated via videoconference.)

Chair Navarro called the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center Meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. The agenda was amended to move Item 5, "Conduct officer elections for the Chair and Vice Chair," to the final Discussion and Action Item, Item 9. All remaining action items were reordered accordingly and moved up in sequence.

Board Members in Attendance: Angelica Navarro, Lillian "Lily" Zamarripa-Saenz, Hilario "Larry" Amaro, Noemi Castro, Alexander "Al" Duarte (arrived at 6:14pm), John Estrada.
Board Members in Attendance Remotely: Cynthia "Cy" Herrera, Raul "Roy" Reyna.
Board Members Absent: Lynda Quintana, Selma Sanchez.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: GENERAL
Speaker 1: **Luis Ordaz Gutiérrez, Artistic Director of Proyecto Teatro, shared that Latino communities in the city had experienced significant and disproportionate disinvestment over the past 40 years, highlighting the prevalence of million-dollar investments benefiting primarily white institutions and questioned the lack of comparable funding advancing Latino culture. He expressed disappointment when he saw that the six recommendations presented during the March board meeting were not included on the April agenda, noting that they were developed by members of the cultural ecosystem to advance Latino culture. He urged the board to place those recommendations on a future agenda, emphasizing their importance and possibility to provide critical, potentially life-saving support for the Latino cultural ecosystem.**
Speaker 2: **Hector Ordaz Gutiérrez, Audiovisual Director of Proyecto Teatro registered to speak on item 7 & 8.**
Speaker 3: **Gonzalo Barrientos, Former State Senator stated that it took decades to establish the Mexican American Cultural Center. Following its establishment, challenges arose regarding organizational oversight and management. He explained that over the years he received numerous inquiries about the MACC and had typically referred individuals to the advisory committee or City Council. He expressed his willingness to assist the Board with specific matters when appropriate but stressed that the Board must represent the community's interests. Mr. Barrientos drew attention to the importance of engaging with City Council members, noting that they play a key role in advancing initiatives and addressing community concerns. He provided an example involving a mural by Raul Valdez, Los Elementos, formerly located at Juarez-Lincoln University. He indicated that the mural was demolished and later approved as a recommendation for action in 2023. He questioned why the project had not yet been completed, stating that it should have been finalized three years ago. Mr. Barrientos**

concluded by offering to meet with Board members to provide additional information and recommendations.

Speaker 4: **Anna Maciel, Former ESB-MACC Board Chair provided comment regarding the Awards of Excellence. She expressed concern about the inclusion of board members on the selection committee, stating her belief that voting should be conducted by community organizations to ensure broader representation. She encouraged the MACC to take a more expansive and inclusive approach, noting that the awards should reflect cultural contributions beyond the arts alone. She recommended broadening the vision and criteria used when reviewing applications. Ms. Maciel also addressed Agenda Item #7, sharing her perspective on the history of the Latino Arts Residency Program. She described the challenges she experienced in advocating for the program's preservation and stated that staff had previously supported efforts to eliminate it. She urged the board to recognize the importance of community-wide involvement, rather than limiting participation to a specific group, and called for greater respect and consideration for artists and emerging artists. Additionally, Ms. Maciel noted the importance of how the organization approaches situations involving artists and expressed concern about maintaining respect in those processes. She communicated her intention to submit letters from community members to the board for further review.**

Speaker 5: **Javier Salas, organizer from MexAmeriCon, introduced himself and provided an overview of the organization, explaining that it was a volunteer-led initiative established in 2018 that supports comic book creators, artists, and storytellers. He requested the Board's support in securing space for MexiAmeriCon at the MACC.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve the minutes of the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center Special Called meeting of March 25, 2026.

   The minutes from the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center Special Called meeting of March 25, 2026, were approved on Vice Chair Zamarripa-Saenz's motion. Board Member Herrera seconded. Motion passed on an 8-0 vote. Board Members Quintana and Sanchez absent.

STAFF BRIEFINGS

2. Staff briefing on March and April programs, marketing and outreach efforts, signature event planning, and staffing updates.

   Erik Granados, ESB-MACC Culture and Arts Education Coordinator with Austin Arts, Culture, Music, and Entertainment (ACME), provided an update on Casa de la Cultura's programming sharing information on their bilingual swimming classes, It's My Park Day, Sana Yoga, and Afro-Caribbean Ritmo Dance Series.

   Olivia Tamzarian, ESB-MACC Culture and Arts Education Marketing & Outreach Representative with Austin Arts, Culture, Music, and Entertainment (ACME), reported on the Teen Camino's Leadership programs annual Breaking Barriers event. She also informed the board of the Youth and Family Education programs, sharing details about Spring Break Camp, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Day, Smart Kidz Afterschool and the Lending Library. Tamzarian reminded the Board of the MACC's upcoming signature event, the Awards of Excellence, encouraging members to promote it within their networks. She made the Board aware of where to find the nomination form on the MACC's website (*https://www.austintexas.gov/macc/awards-excellence*) and stated it would remain open through April 10th. She concluded with an announcement of the

MACC Reopening scheduled for June 6, 2026, and would include a ribbon-cutting ceremony from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., followed by tours, activities, performances, and food trucks from 12:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Jesus Pantel, Cultural Funding Supervisor with Austin Arts, Culture, Music, and Entertainment (ACME), presented an update on the City's cultural funding programs. The presentation included award announcements, selected grant recipients, and summary data on awardee demographics and artistic disciplines.
(Please see the Board and Commissions Website for backup material.)

DISCUSSION ITEMS

3. Update on Phase 2 Construction Project.
Heidi Tse, Capital Delivery Project Manager of Austin Capital Delivery Services, provided an update on the Phase 2 Construction Project. The update included project milestones and construction progress photos.

Anna Maciel, Former Board Chair, expressed concerns that elements of the original master plan had changed over time, despite substantial community input regarding desired outcomes. She emphasized that the bond was approved by voters with certain expectations and stated that it was disappointing that the initial phase took so long to implement. She further noted that an additional phase remained and expressed hope that it would be completed more efficiently. Ms. Maciel acknowledged and appreciated the support provided by the project team but underscored the importance of ensuring the City of Austin demonstrates respect for the community's cultural priorities and artistic vision. She cautioned against making significant changes during the process that diverge from community expectations.
(Please see the Board and Commissions Website for backup material.)

4. Update on Future Capital Improvement Project (CIP) plan regarding the replacement of the hot water line.
Heidi Tse, Capital Delivery Project Manager of Austin Capital Delivery Services, informed the Board that the heating hot water loop leak repair would be managed and funded as a separate project. She explained the work would be completed in two phases (Phase A and Phase B), with Phase A nearing completion and Phase B consisting of a larger segment of the repair located near the right-of-way. She further stated that the repair work included three distinct areas and would be completed prior to any official occupancy of the facility, indicating the work was not expected to impact the reopening schedule.
(Please see the Board and Commissions Website for backup material.)

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

5. Approve a letter of support to City Council on the naming of a space at the Mexican American Cultural Center after Vanessa Guillen.
Item withdrawn without objection.

6. Reactivate the Awards of Excellence Working Group to discuss nominations for 2026 awardees, selection committee, assistance with event planning, and details of set up and breakdown to provide support for MACC staff.

Board Member Estrada motioned to reestablish the Awards of Excellence Working Group. Vice Chair Zamarripa-Saenz seconded. Motion passed on an 8-0 vote. Board Member Quintana & Sanchez absent.

7. Create a Latino/a/e Artist Access Program (LAAP) Working Group to collaborate on the redesign of the program, including the review of contracts, policies and procedures; oversight of equipment and inventory; advisement on technical matters; staff training on proper use of equipment; and collaboration on room and space buildouts, as well as support continuity, institutional knowledge, and ongoing communication..
Item withdrawn without objection.

8. Create a Strategic Planning and Partnership working group to strengthen the long-term sustainability, visibility, and impact of the Cultural Center by guiding strategic direction and cultivating high-value partnerships.
Vice Chair Zamarripa-Saenz motioned to create a Strategic Planning Working Group. Board Member Reyna seconded. Motion passed on an 8-0 vote. Board Member Quintana & Sanchez absent.

Hector Ordaz Gutiérrez of Proyecto Teatro addressed the Board letting them know he would like to participate on the working group.

9. Conduct officer elections for the Chair and Vice Chair.
Chair Navarro went over the roles and responsibilities for Chair, Vice Chair, and Board Members before opening the floor for nominations.
   - **Board Member Herrera moved to nominate Chair Navarro to serve as Chair. Board Member Duarte seconded. Motion passed on an 8-0 vote. Board Members Quintana and Sanchez absent.**
   - **Board Member Duarte moved to nominate Vice Chair Zamarripa-Saenz for Vice Chair. Board Member Herrera seconded. Motion passed on an 8-0 vote. Board Members Quintana and Sanchez absent.**

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

10. Update from the Grand Re-opening Working Group regarding planning and logistics for the Reopening.
Item withdrawn without objection.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Review current working groups to assess membership status and determine whether to add or eliminate groups. (Sponsors: Herrera, Zamarripa-Saenz)
Approve a recommendation in support of six Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Advisory Commission FY 26-27 budget recommendations. (Sponsors: Herrera, Navarro)

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Navarro adjourned the meeting at 9:06 p.m. without objection.

The minutes were approved at the May 6, 2026, meeting on Board Member Duarte's motion, Board Member Amaro seconded on an 6-0 vote. Vice Chair Zamarripa-Saenz and Board Members Castro, Herrera, and Reyna absent.