

METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC)

MINUTES

January 25, 2021

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held an electronic meeting on January 25, 2021 with Commission Chair Clay Bailey presiding.

Commissioners Present: Dr. Clay Bailey, Chair; Davis Acker, Menié Bell, Pamela Bobo, John Bridges, Christopher Cotton, Dr. Don Cusic, Jim Hoobler, Lynn Maddox, Dr. William McKee, Chakita Patterson, Gerry Searcy, Tom Wood and Linda Wynn, **were present.**

Staff Members Present: Tim Walker, Susie Pallas, Scarlett Miles, and Caroline Eller were present.

Guests Present: Metro Attorney Alex Dickerson, Metro ITS Dontrai Buchanan

Chair Dr. Clay Bailey called the meeting to order at approximately 12:05 p.m. after verifying that a quorum was present. Chair Bailey reminded everyone in attendance to identify themselves when commenting.

Alex Dickerson thanked Chair Bailey for reminding everyone to identify themselves by name as required by Executive Order No. 16. Mr. Dickerson advised that the motion for that will be the proposed agenda constitutes essential business of this body and that meeting electronically is necessary for the health and well-being of citizens in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Commissioner Bell made a motion that the proposed agenda constitutes essential business and that meeting electronically is necessary to maintain the health, safety and well-being of citizens due to the pandemic. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Cotton. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Dr. Clay Bailey

Chair Bailey presented the December minutes for approval. Commissioner McKee made a motion to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Maddox provided a second. A roll call vote was taken and the December minutes were approved unanimously.

SECOND AVENUE RECOVERY UPDATE– Dr. Clay Bailey

Chair Bailey moved into an update regarding the Second Avenue recovery after the Christmas Day bombing. In the aftermath, conversations between the MHC and MHZC were held out of immediate concern as to what we might do to help with the situation. This led to a conversation about forming a committee to help. That committee put forth a mission

statement as well as some goals, then asked MHZC Vice Chair Cyril Stewart to serve as its leader. We met via Zoom with a sizeable contingent. All commissioners and zoning commissioners were notified about this meeting. We did not make any decisions and this meeting was done in an attempt to do what we could to help during a crisis. In accordance with open meetings laws, it is prudent to note on the public record that these events transpired. However, no voting occurred on any matter. Chair Bailey asked Mr. Dickerson for any additional guidance on what needed to be stated, and Mr. Dickerson advised that we are good with what has been stated.

Chair Bailey then asked Executive Director Tim Walker to provide a few more updates about the Second Avenue recovery efforts. Mr. Walker thanked Chair Bailey and stated that the Director's Report included details about the Second Avenue recovery, including a link to an informational meeting held by the Mayor's Office that the public, property owners and the media were invited to. That meeting was held at 10 a.m. last Friday and that will be a weekly meeting for at least a month or so until we get closer to recovery. As noted in the Director's Report, there are still a lot of unknowns. We are still waiting to hear back from one property owner who owns 170, 172, 174, and 176 2nd Avenue North, properties that are closest to the blast site and which are most affected. All those buildings have a conservation façade easement owned by Historic Nashville (HNI), so we are also working daily with HNI to move towards those buildings being repaired. We are working with the Codes department and HNI who both did independent inspections with structural engineers who say that those buildings are viable. As you may have read in the paper, the property owner recently provided their own structural report that says that up to three of the buildings are not viable. We continue to have discussions and will see how that plays out in the weeks and months ahead. Both the Codes Director and the Mayor's Office strongly support preservation of those buildings.

Commissioner Bell mentioned a statement made by the Mayor's Office about working with another task force and MHC. She asked about how that affects MHC and MHZC's collaboration with the Mayor's Office. Director Walker responded that they are going to take what MHC and MHZC started together and include at least one member from both commissions. They see that group looking beyond repair of those individual buildings and more towards how we make Second Avenue more viable and better than it was before the bombing. We expect some type of design charrette that includes Planning, possibly Urban Land Institute and the Civic Design Center. We expect that will happen sometime in February or March. Planning Director Lucy Kempf is taking the lead for the Mayor's Office on that initiative and she is involving key members of that group including MHZC Commissioner Cyril Stewart. We expect to hear more in the next week or two. Director Walker or Chair Bailey will keep commissioners updated. Commissioner Bell asked how commissioners can participate in the task force. Mr. Walker said only one MHC member will be asked to join that group.

Chair Bailey reiterated Director Walker's message that the response and concern shown by many on this commission, the MHZC and other stakeholders was reassuring. We demonstrate Nashville's resilience in our effort to help. It is frustrating that we cannot get more involved and things don't always move quickly, but we are dedicated to and

acknowledge that we need to follow the guidance of the Mayor's Office moving forward. Chair Bailey thanked everyone for their involvement and concern.

Commissioner McKee asked for confirmation that there are no further scheduled meetings for Commissioner Stewart's task force. Chair Bailey affirmed that point and said that while Mr. Stewart will play a central role moving forward, the particulars are unclear. Chair Bailey noted that Ron Gobbell has been selected to lead the larger Second Avenue recovery efforts. Mr. Walker stated that the Mayor's meeting from last Friday includes Mr. Gobbell, who has been hired by the city for this role and to communicate with all Metro departments. Commissioner Maddox asked which MHC member is on that committee and how commissioners can be notified about the informational meetings. Chair Bailey responded that it has not yet been determined who on the MHC will be selected. Chair Bailey offered to serve as that representative but does not have to be that person. Commissioner Bell said that there was a discussion about who can serve as the representative, and the MHZC voted in Cyril Stewart as their representative. Alex Dickerson stated that we are talking about two different groups. For the task force between MHC and MHZC, Mr. Dickerson recommended that the MHZC empower by vote the individuals who will serve on that task force and recommends the same to this commission. As for the Mayor's task force, the Mayor's Office may be selecting people for that or will have a process for that. Director Walker said that this process has not yet been decided, but he believes that the Mayor's Office may reach out to ask an MHC member to serve. He expects this will happen in the next week or two, and Lucy Kempf is taking the lead on this. Mr. Walker said the Friday informational meeting was set up by the Mayor's Office and he found out shortly before that the meeting was happening and that the public was invited. Director Walker will update the commissioners so they can attend those meetings. Commissioner McKee said that since the original task force is essentially being disbanded, he suggests that a thank you note go out to the people and volunteers who participated on behalf of our commission. Chair Bailey will work with others who were centrally involved leading up to that January 5th meeting to send out our thanks and updates. Chair Bailey stated that it may be premature to vote on the MHC representative for the task force and opened the floor to discussion about this decision. Director Walker advised that the Mayor's Office will likely make that decision. Chair Bailey offered to provide input as needed.

[NCAAHC UPDATE – Linda Wynn and Caroline Eller](#)

Commissioner Wynn stated that the conference is well underway and thanked Caroline for her work on this year's virtual conference. We are celebrating the conference's 40th anniversary this year. The conference will be dedicated to the memory of Dr. Reavis Mitchell who passed last summer. The program will have presentations including: Dr. Bryan Kent Wallace of Fisk University, *Fisk Scientists Past and Present*; Katatra Vasquez of the Department of Energy, *Atomic Hope: Our Words and Our Spaces*; Patrick King of Urban Green Lab, the Nashville Environmental Justice Initiative; Dr. Mary Ellen Pethel of Belmont University, Nashville Sites; MTSU student Keneisha Mosley, the African American presence at Cheekwood; Rev. Jeff Carr, the TSU Sit-In of 1990; a virtual tour of the Jefferson Street Sound (JSS) Museum; entertainment by Andriana Haygood of Belmont University and Don

Adams Band. There will also be a panel discussion that is a retrospective of the conference's 40 years. We look forward to seeing everyone on February 12th. The conference will be online due to COVID-19 restrictions. Linda again thanked Caroline and said that Rep. Brenda Gilmore will be making a contribution to the conference this year. Caroline added that lectures were pre-recorded and will be streamed along with live content. TSU recorded the virtual tour of the JSS Museum. Linda and Caroline wrote six new profiles for this year's conference for Dr. C.O. Hadley, musician Jackie Shane, Rep. John Lewis, J. Robert Bradley, Dr. Reavis Mitchell and Rev. C.T. Vivian. All commissioners received an invite to registration, the cost is \$20. Registration includes a commemorative lapel pin and digital copy of the newly-revised *Profiles of African Americans in Tennessee* book that was first published in 1996. We will post the conference video to Metro YouTube and on the new conference website, www.NCAAHC.org. Chair Bailey thanked Commissioner Wynn and Caroline for their work on the conference and encouraged commissioners to register and share this information with others.

APPOINTMENT OF TASK FORCE

Chair Bailey stated that the next order of business was the appointment of a task force to address a complaint against Director Walker and staff. The nature of this complaint is in the materials Chair Bailey shared prior to the meeting. Chair Bailey has discussed this with Metro Legal including Alex Dickerson and Vice Chair Maddox and determined that it would be best to appoint a task force to permit the complainant to submit his concerns and for Director Walker to respond. Chair Bailey recommends that the following commissioners serve on that task force: Vice Chair Maddox, Commissioners Cotton, Hoobler and McKee, as well as Chair Bailey. The rationale for these commissioners to be on this task force is that they would be most familiar with the content of this complaint due to their prior or present involvement with the Nashville City Cemetery Association. Chair Bailey requested a motion and vote from the Commission regarding this task force. Commissioner Bell made a motion to accept the list, Commissioner Wynn provided a second. Chair Bailey entertained the motion and called the role for a vote. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Bailey reminded the Commission that the February meeting will be held one week later than usual, on February 22. He noted that May is National Preservation Month and staff is already working on the virtual Preservation Awards and reception.

With no further business to discuss, Chair Bailey adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, February 16, 2021.

Caroline Eller