

## METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC)

### MINUTES

May 17, 2021

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held a meeting at Sonny West Conference Center on May 17, 2021 with Commission Chair Clay Bailey presiding.

**Commissioners Present:** Dr. Clay Bailey, Chair; Dr. Jhennifer Amundson, Menié Bell, Pamela Bobo, Dr. Don Cusic, Jim Hoobler, Dr. William McKee, Gerry Searcy, E. Thomas Wood, and Linda Wynn, **were present.**

Davis Acker, John Bridges, Christopher Cotton, Lynn Maddox, and Chakita Patterson **were absent.**

**Staff Members Present:** Tim Walker, Jessica Reeves, and Scarlett Miles were present.

**Guests Present:** Metro Attorney Alex Dickerson, County Historian Dr. Carole Bucy

Chair Dr. Clay Bailey called the meeting to order at approximately 12:04 p.m. after verifying that a quorum was present. He introduced new commissioners Pamela Bobo and Dr. Jhennifer Amundson because it was the first in-person meeting with them in attendance.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – *Dr. Clay Bailey***

Chair Bailey presented the April minutes for approval. Commissioner Cusic made a motion to approve the minutes, Commissioner Wynn provided a second, and the April minutes were approved,

#### **PRESERVATION AWARDS – *Scarlett Miles***

Scarlett explained that the Preservation Awards will be a pre-recorded virtual program that will air on Metro Nashville Network at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>. It will also be shown on the Metro YouTube channel almost immediately.

#### **HISTORICAL MARKERS – *Jessica Reeves***

Jessica presented two markers for review. The first is a privately-sponsored one for St. Ann Catholic Church and School for its Centennial. The text is:

St. Ann Catholic Church and School opened here in 1921. Two Sisters of Charity first welcomed West Nashville Catholics at gatherings held above a nearby hardware store in 1917. This informal gathering became St. Peter's Mission, thanks to support of the Diocese of Nashville and the Church of the Assumption. In May 1921, the Diocese acquired this site, the Byrd-Douglas or Thomasson home. St. Ann School is the oldest Diocesan school still operating in the City of Nashville.

Commissioner Hoobler made a motion to approve this text, it was seconded by Commissioner Bobo and it was approved.

The second marker is for Gerst House and is privately sponsored by Scott Mertie. The text is:

William J. Gerst opened the Gerst House restaurant in 1955, a year after the Wm. Gerst Brewing Co. closed. Serving German-American food, it was a gathering place for attorneys, journalists and politicians due to its proximity to the courthouse. Bill died in 1968; his daughter, Gene Ritter, continued the tradition. In 1970, urban development forced the Gerst House to move across the river. After Gene's death in 1988, it was sold and renamed the "Gerst Haus." It closed in 2018.

A metal photograph will be on side two of the marker. Commissioner Cusic made a motion to approve this text, it was seconded by Commissioner Hoobler and it was approved.

Jessica informed us that the East Nashville marker and the First Baptist Church-East Nashville have both been put back up. They were damaged in the March tornado. The East Nashville Fire marker has been relocated from South 1<sup>st</sup> Street to South 7<sup>th</sup> Street to improve visibility of the marker. The Tennessee/Spring Water Brewery marker was installed last month near BNA's Aircraft Observation Area. Also, Church Street Park is reopening, so the Woman's Suffrage marker that was approved last year will be dedicated on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. More information will be forthcoming.

#### [HISTORIAN'S REPORT – Dr. Carole Bucy](#)

Dr. Bucy held a virtual Preservation Month lecture last Wednesday from the Sonny West Conference Center which was broadcast on Channel 3. Further discussions are taking place to hold more virtual lectures, with topics such as LGBTQ history for October and Nashville's efforts to protect the environment in April. Please send any other suggestions to Dr. Bucy or Caroline. Dr. Bucy detailed her meeting and neighborhood tour with Twana Chick from the Cane Ridge Community Club and Twana's concerns about having the Samuel Smith marker in the neighborhood. Dr. Bucy stated that it is important for us to be totally honest about our history, so she feels that the Samuel Smith historical marker should be approved. Dr. Bucy and Caroline have discussed presenting the Nashville 101 talks virtually this year. The Votes for Women Room at the Nashville Public Library is open and is magnificent. A discussion about visiting the room followed, and there was agreement to have the MHC's June commission meeting at the library with Dr. Bucy leading a VIP tour of the room following the meeting. Dr. McKee commented on Dr. Bucy's Tennessee 101 and Civil War series with the Tennessee Historical Society as being two of the best historical talks he has ever heard. He and Chair Bailey thanked Dr. Bucy for her commitment to education through her role as County Historian. Commissioner Bell asked how CM Styles and CM Rutherford will move forward after the dissent expressed by some of their constituents regarding the Samuel Smith marker. Director Walker stated that the Historical Marker program does not need Council approval and the Historical Commission is committed to educating the public with factual markers. At least one more public meeting will be held to receive input from the

Cane Ridge community and the overall Davidson County community. Commissioner Bell asked if any descendants of Samuel or Eugene Smith had been contacted about the marker and Jessica said that they had not had any communication with any direct descendants.

#### *DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Tim Walker*

Tim began his report with a Sunnyside update. We are reviewing construction documents and once they are completed, they will go to Metro Procurement for bidding the work. Metro Parks, especially Tim Netsch and his staff, have been so helpful in moving this project along and making sure our needs are met. MHC meetings will be held away from Sunnyside through 2022 due to the construction. The maintenance at the City Cemetery has been slow due to equipment being out for service and Parks staffing issues, but Parks has committed to have tree work done by Memorial Day. Commissioner Hoobler said that they will be holding the annual Memorial Day Dash at the City Cemetery and a virtual race also. Tim is holding telephone and Zoom interviews for the open positions and hopes to have two new employees start before the end of June. Tim thanked the mayor's office, especially Mary Falls, for their support of MHC through approval of almost all of our investment requests.

#### *UPDATE - Dr. Clay Bailey*

Chair Bailey announced that the nominating committee—Commissioners McKee, Amundson, Bridges, Cusic, and Searcy— is in place and will present a slate of nominees for Chair, Vice Chair and MHZC Representative in June. Commissioner McKee, who is serving as chair of the committee, asked Commissioners to send him an email to express interest and detail reasons why they want to serve.

With no further business to discuss, Commissioner McKee moved to adjourn, and Commissioner Cusic seconded. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, June 14, 2021.

*Susie Pallas*