

METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC)

MINUTES

June 15, 2020

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held an electronic meeting on June 15, 2020 with Commission Chair Clay Bailey presiding.

Commissioners Present: Dr. Clay Bailey, Chair; Davis Acker, Menié Bell, Christopher Cotton, Dr. Don Cusic, Jim Hoobler, Lynn Maddox, Dr. Bill McKee, and Linda Wynn, **were present**. County Historian Dr. Carole Bucy **also attended**.

Staff Members Present: Caroline Eller, Susie Pallas, Jessica Reeves, and Tim Walker were present.

Guests Present: Metro Attorney Alex Dickerson and Robbie Jones

Chair Dr. Clay Bailey called the meeting to order at approximately 12:00 p.m. after verifying that a quorum was present.

Metro Attorney Alex Dickerson reviewed Gov. Lee's recent executive order permitting local boards and commissions to meet electronically to conduct essential business. Our agenda noted that the meeting would be electronic and that there would be a call-in feature offered. In addition, this meeting will be recorded and posted within 48 hours and voting will be conducted by roll call.

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

Commissioner Hoobler moved to temporarily suspend any rules or provisions that conflict with the executive order until its expiration and Lynn Maddox seconded it. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Bailey reported that Commissioner Hall is moving to Charleston, South Carolina and has resigned as a commissioner. He thanked her for her service to the MHC. Chair Bailey also said that Commissioner Allen is in a rehabilitation center after his stroke and would appreciate communication and well wishes.

HISTORICAL MARKERS – *Jessica Reeves and Caroline Eller*

Caroline and Jessica announced five markers for the Commission's consideration. Caroline began with the Berger Building marker located at 164 Rosa L. Parks Blvd behind the United States Courthouse. The marker is being funded by the General Services Administration

through Section 106 mitigation efforts for the courthouse project. The 1926 building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 for its architectural significance as an excellent example of 20th century commercial architecture. It was the former site of Dad's Radio Supply Store which housed Nashville's first commercial radio station, WDAD. Side one focuses on Samuel Berger, the building's owner, and the architecture, while side two focuses on WDAD radio. Robbie Jones, a consultant with New South Associates, helped with research and text writing and was on hand to answer any questions. There were no questions about the text. Commissioner Hoobler made a motion to approve the text as presented and Commissioner Maddox seconded it. The text was unanimously approved.

Caroline continued with the Buena Vista School marker. This Jacobean-style building is currently used as an enhanced option elementary school at 1531 9th Ave. N. It was built in 1931 and was one of six schools that was desegregated on September 9, 1957. Three first graders, Erroll Groves, Ethel Mai Carr, and Patricia Guthrie, desegregated Buena Vista School. Commissioner Acker opened the discussion by asking if the students should be named in the text. Caroline said that considerable discussion took place in the marker committee meeting regarding this and they decided against it because of space and to avoid omitting anyone unintentionally. Metro Schools have been working closely with the former students to get input about the text and we hope to include them in the marker dedications where there will be more time to hear their stories. Commissioner Hoobler moved to approve the marker text as presented and Commissioner Maddox seconded it. It was unanimously approved.

Jessica presented Emma Clemons School which was named for the first female principal in Nashville. This school opened in 1908, burned in 1914, re-opened in 1916, and an African American first grader—Joy Smith— desegregated this school in 1957. A motion to approve the marker was made by Commissioner Cusic and Commissioner Wynn seconded. It was unanimously approved.

Jones School was the next school to be reviewed. It was named for longtime North Nashville principal, R.W. Jones. Jones School opened in 1936 to replace the old Buena Vista School. Four African American first graders desegregated the school on Sept. 9, 1957. A crowd of white segregationists taunted them, and many white parents removed their students from the school. Members of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) visited parents in the area, supporting those already enrolled and encouraging others to join them. Commissioner Hoobler moved to approve the Jones School marker and Commissioner Wynn seconded it. Commissioner Cotton joined the meeting during the presentation of the Jones School and recorded his vote. The marker was unanimously approved.

Caroline presented the historical marker for Glenn School. The school, named for county judge and public-school system organizer William A. Glenn, was built in 1904 and is also the current home of the Murrell School which provides special education. In 1957, three African American first graders, Lajuanda Street, Jacqueline Griffith and Sinclair Lee, Jr., desegregated the school. Despite the concentrated efforts of segregationist John Casper and being jostled by agitators and protestors, they were hospitably received once they entered the school. Because of the large presence of protestors and agitators, members of

the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) supported parents and students in the area. Jacqueline Griffith and Lajuanda reviewed and offered suggestions for the text. Judge Richard Dinkins, a prominent Nashville attorney who specializes in civil rights cases, also reviewed and approved the text. Commissioner McKee, who knew William A. Glenn, recommended the text be changed to read “Davidson County Judge and former Edgefield Mayor” to more accurately describe his contributions. After discussion, Commissioner McKee moved to approve the marker with revisions and Commissioner Wynn seconded. It was unanimously approved.

The Lock 2 Park marker will have a virtual unveiling on June 24th at 10:00 a.m. It will be live on the Metro Historical Commission Facebook page and recorded by MNN for Metro 3.

Closing Remarks – Chair Clay Bailey

Clay thanked Alex Dickerson for his guidance and Jessica, Caroline and the marker committee for their work on the markers. He also conveyed care and concern for former MHC Chair, Dr. Reavis Mitchell, and to Commissioner Wynn as she deals with the illness of her close friend.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, June 15, 2020.

Susie Pallas