

METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC)
MINUTES

April 21, 2014

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held its regular meeting on April 21, 2014, in the conference room of the Historical Commission office at 3000 Granny White Pike, with Commission Chair Bill McKee presiding.

Commissioners Present: Dr. Bill McKee, Chair; Jim Forkum, Vice-Chair; Bob Allen, Lula Brooks, George Cate Jr, Holly Conner, Don Cusic, Jim Hoobler, Lynn Maddox, Mark Rogers, Gerry Searcy and Linda Wynn. Clay Bailey, Menié Bell, and David Currey were not present.

Guests Present: Dr. Carole Bucy

Staff Members Present: Tim Walker, Scarlett Miles, Tara Mielnik, Yvonne Ogren, Robin Zeigler

Chair Bill McKee called the meeting to order at 12:10 pm, after verifying that a quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes: Bob Allen moved to approve the minutes from the March meeting as written. Don Cusic seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.

PRESERVATION AWARDS – *Scarlett Miles*

Scarlett Miles mentioned that May 28 is the confirmed date for the presentation, with Mayor Dean attending to present awards. The program will be held at the Downtown Public Library with a reception to follow at the Arts Company on 5th Ave N. Judges for this year's program are Jaime Destefano and Susan Besser. She and Fred took the judges on a driving tour to see all the properties on Tuesday, April 15. Seven awards will be presented this year; with four additional Honorable Mentions.

Recipients of the Commissioners' and Achievement Awards are Native History Association and Paul Clements, respectively.

FY15 BUDGET UPDATE – Dr. Bill McKee, Tim Walker

Dr. McKee said he was very pleased with the number of commissioners who had attended MHC's budget hearing on April 2, and that he wanted to let them know how much appreciated they were. Thirteen commissioners from the Historical Commission and two representing the Historic Zoning Commission attended the presentation to support Mr. Walker and the MHC. McKee felt this was a strong show of support and the Mayor had mentioned it as well.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – *Tim Walker*

- MHC's Council Budget Hearing is scheduled for May 21st at 6 p.m. He is hoping there will be a good number of commissioners attending. The FY15 budget may cover the salary for a full-time staff person to assist Tara Mielnik and Yvonne Ogren with their work load due to the increased amount of time they're allocating to the Nashville Encyclopedia. After Mayor Dean's State of Metro Address on April 30, departments will be given information on the FY15 budget proposals.
- Walker has recently met with Butch Spyridan and Terry Clements of the Convention and Visitors Bureau. Spyridan is open to the idea of the CVB paying for a reprint of two of MHC's brochures, as these are very popular with out-of-town visitors to the city. MHC and the CVB will be collaborating on a new brochure that will combine the Footnotes and Capital City tour routes into one comprehensive map and guide.
- Walker spoke briefly about the house on Music Row that had been demolished the previous week. He mentioned that, due to extreme interior and exterior alterations, the house had been deemed not eligible for the National Register by the SHPO. As it was not listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, constructed prior to 1865, or a designated historic landmark, MHC had no authority to delay or halt the demolition. The house was documented and architectural features were salvaged and placed in storage for possible use in the new construction project.
- Walker read a report prepared by TRC Garrow on the recent archaeological discoveries of the Sulphur Dell ballpark site. (attached)

Commissioner Jim Forkum showed a copy of Metro Ordinance (RS2011-834) he had sponsored which required any artifacts discovered during excavation on a public property to be turned over the Historical Commission. He asked if this process had been followed in the Sulphur Dell site excavation. Mr. Walker replied that it was not, however, the MHC was involved in the follow-up selection of the research firm that completed the report.

TRC's report and a copy of the fore-mentioned ordinance are included as part of the April meeting minutes.

Dr. McKee asked Mr. Walker to give a report on the house, formerly Lockeland School, located at 1810 Eastland Avenue. MHC and HNI had publicized the offer by the owners to donate the house to anyone willing to move it to another location. There were a number of inquiries about it, with one contractor who was very interested and had a viable lot nearby. Unfortunately, he found that the cost of having utility lines rased and the relocation itself were too high, and he had to withdraw their offer. The house will be demolished to make way for new development; however, achitectural features will be salvaged for reuse.

NASHVILLE ENCYCLOPEDIA – *Dr. Carole Bucy*

Dr. Bucy reported that the greatest need of the project is writers. She is planning to hold meetings in nine locations around the county to give history presentations and promote the encyclopedia project. She is hopeful that volunteer writers may be found in some of the locations. She will be speaking to the Metro Council about it as well. The time originally given for the Era One articles has passed and sign-ups will begin for the post–Civil War period.

HISTORIC ZONING REPORT – *Robin Zeigler*

Ms. Zeigler reported that expansions of the Hillsboro-West End and Eastwood Neighborhood Conservation Zoning districts (NCZD) were approved and now added to the number under review by the staff. Expansions in Lockeland Springs-East End and Sylvan Park will be approved in May and June. Other neighborhoods, including Una, Inglewood, 12South, and others, are very interested in having overlays put in place.

OTHER BUSINESS

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by

Yvonne Ogren

May 8, 2014

Archeological Report on Sulphur Dell

by TRC Garrow

1) There has long been clear recognition that the area known as Sulfur Dell has been a focus of human activity for thousands of years, up until the present day and into the future.

2) Sulphur Dell was once the location of a Native American mound complex and home to a large community in the centuries before European contact. This archaeological site is now known to archaeologists as 40DV5. The archaeology and paleontology of the area was studied by early Euro-American settlers throughout the 19th century, and more recently was the focus of intensive excavation preceding the construction of the Jefferson Street Bridge in the late 1990s.

3) In planning the new ballpark, the city and its consultants recognized the possibility that construction might encounter and disturb intact archaeological deposits. As a result, TRC was brought in to carry out background research and put together a plan for monitoring the excavation to watch for any such disturbance.

TRC reviewed documentation on the archaeology of the area, consulted with the knowledgeable staff at the state division of archaeology and with Kevin Smith, MTSU professor and acknowledged expert in the late pre-contact period in Middle Tennessee. Developed maps showing the areas within the ballpark footprint that intruded into the roughly defined boundaries of 40DV5.

4) TRC Participated in test trenching across the site in early January. The four trenches dug that day all reached a depth of approximately 18 feet below present surface. Only one penetrated below the level of 20th century fill to hit what appeared to be undisturbed original soil deposits, at about 11 feet below surface.

This trench was located roughly in what will be the middle of left field in the new ballpark.

5) Starting in early March, TRC staff was on site every day during the main phase of mass grading across what will become the ballpark. As expected, most of the excavation did not go below the massive amount of fill put down in the 20th century across this area.

6) On Saturday morning, March 22, a TRC staff member watching the grading did observe an exposure of pre-contact archaeological materials, in the form of dark soil with ash and charcoal inclusions, broken pottery, and mussel shell. The location was in the vicinity of the January test trench which had encountered undisturbed soil at about 11 feet below surface. TRC immediately had all grading operations halted in the area, and reached out to the general project management team and to Mike Moore, the state archaeologist, about the discovery.

7) On Monday, March 24, following consultation with Mike Moore, TRC staff began careful stripping of overburden across the area near the discovery location.

8) The work revealed an extensive complex of pits with baked and reddened edges, sides, and bottoms, clearly involved with high-temperature fires. The pits were filled with ash, charcoal, crumbled burned earth, and massively thick pottery fragments.

9) The working hypothesis is that the features and artifacts are related to an intensive salt production industry here in the late pre-contact period. This industry focused on evaporating water from the nearby mineral springs to obtain salt for food production and trade to areas without natural sources of

10) Over seven days of work after the discovery, TRC and staff members from the Tennessee Division of Archaeology worked to document the feature complex and conduct excavation of a sample of the features. The finds were exposed at the deepest planned level of grading for the new ballpark.

11) Based on consultations between the state archaeologist and the city's representatives, the decision was made to cease further disturbance to the archaeological remains and cover them over with a protective layer of fill. The rest of the underlayers for the actual baseball field outfield playing surface will be placed atop this fill layer.

12 and 13) At this point TRC staff is working with the state archaeologist and his staff in analyzing recovered artifacts and using this along with general documentation of the site to produce a report on the discovery.