

METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC)

MINUTES

September 19, 2022

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held a meeting at the Howard Office Building Sonny West Conference Center on September 19, 2022, with Lynn Maddox presiding.

Commissioners Present: Lynn Maddox, Linda Wynn, Dr. Clay Bailey, Menié Bell, Pamela Bobo, Christopher Cotton, Dr. Don Cusic, Jim Hoobler, Dr. Jane Landers, Dr. Bill McKee, Laura Rost, Gerry Searcy, and E. Thomas Wood **were present.**

Staff Members Present: Tim Walker, Dustin Summers, Scarlett Miles, Caroline Eller, Robin Zeigler, and Ann Mikkelsen (Metro Legal) **were present.**

County Historian: Dr. Carole Bucy **was not present.**

Guests Present: New South Associates: Lydia Simpson and Lauren Walls **were present.**

I. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME – *Lynn Maddox*

- a) Lynn Maddox called the meeting to order at approximately 12:00 p.m. after verifying that a quorum was present.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – *Lynn Maddox*

- a) Lynn Maddox presented the August meeting minutes for approval. Christopher Cotton made a motion to approve, and Laura Rost provided a second. The commission unanimously approved the August minutes.

III. HISTORICAL MARKERS REVIEW – *Scarlett Miles (proxy for Jessica Reeves)*

- a) MARKER #1: Hank Snow’s Rainbow Ranch - 486 characters and spaces
 - i. SPONSOR: MHC priority list
 - ii. LOCATION: 312 E Marthona Rd
 - iii. TEXT: “Clarence Eugene “Hank” Snow (1914-1999) purchased this Madison home with his wife, Minnie, in 1950, shortly after his first appearance on the Grand Ole Opry. He was one of the first musicians in the United States to build and use a home studio. Snow’s band, the Rainbow Ranch Boys, took its name from this three-acre property, also home to Snow’s horse, Shawnee. Canadian born, Snow was elected to the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1978 and the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1979.”

- iv. **MOTION: Lynn Maddox called for a vote on the marker. Linda Wynn made a motion to approve and Jim Hoobler provided a second. The Commission unanimously approved the marker.**

b) MARKER #2: Merritt House

- i. SPONSOR: Core Fund
- ii. LOCATION: 441 Humphreys St
- iii. TEXT: "Gibson Merritt (1800-1873) came to Nashville around 1815 from North Carolina and worked as a farmer and cabinetmaker. Merritt married Sarah Rains (1793-1861) in 1828, and by 1850 he owned forty-four acres and eleven enslaved persons. By 1880, this two-story Italianate house was home to their son, state senator Alfred Gowen Merritt (1832-1908), and his wife, Caroline Donelson (1841-1922). The rear portion is a log cabin that may date to the 1780s and the Rains family."
- iv. QUESTION: Commissioner Rost inquired about placing a comma between "by 1850" and "he owned" using "By 1880..." and "...this two-story..." as an example. After a grammatical review the Commission unanimously determined that the text should remain as presented.
- v. **MOTION: Lynn Maddox called for a vote on the marker. Linda Wynn made a motion to approve the marker, and Jim Hoobler provided a second. The Commission unanimously approved the marker.**

c) MARKER # 3: John Thomas Patton 1884-1965

- i. SPONSOR: Jones Family
- ii. LOCATION: 1024 28th Ave N
- iii. TEXT (Side #1 "front"): "The son of enslaved parents, J.T. Patton founded Patton Brothers Funeral Home in 1908 in Franklin, Tenn. His brothers—Jasper, Daniel, and George—joined him in business, and they expanded to Nashville in 1921. By the mid-1950s, Patton Brothers was the largest Black-owned and -operated funeral business in Middle Tennessee. Patton and wife Alice Otey's older son Thomas, a Fisk graduate and Tuskegee airman, headed the Franklin branch, and younger son Edward ran the Nashville headquarters."
- iv. TEXT (Side #2 "back"): "In 1935 the Reverend John Thomas Patton (1884-1965) hired African American architects McKissack & McKissack to build this home. A community leader and well-respected businessman, Patton hosted meetings to gain equal access to civil and voting rights and education for African Americans. He served as president of the Nashville NAACP chapter (1937-41) and oversaw the move of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church from downtown to North Nashville during the 1950s Capitol Hill Redevelopment."
- v. **MOTION: Lynn Maddox called for a vote on the marker. Linda Wynn made a motion to approve the marker, and Pamela Bobo provided a second. The Commission unanimously approved the marker.**

d) MARKER # 4: Washington Junior High School

- i. SPONSOR: Vanderbilt University

- ii. LOCATION: 24th Ave N and Morena St
- iii. TEXT: “Named for George E. Washington, former principal of Pearl Senior High School, this junior high school opened in 1928. Principals included J.A. Galloway, Braxton Murrell, Clarence Austin and Isaiah Suggs. Students enjoyed a broad curriculum and had student-teachers from Fisk and Tennessee A&I State Universities. The school was razed in the mid-1980s for Pearl-Cohn Entertainment Magnet School. Its alumni include many significant members of Nashville’s African American community.”
- iv. **MOTION: Lynn Maddox called for a vote on the marker. Linda Wynn made a motion to approve the marker, and Laura Rost provided a second. The Commission unanimously approved the marker.**

IV. GUEST SPEAKER – *New South Associates - Lydia Simpson (Speaker) and Lauren Walls*

- a) PRESENTATION: Cemetery Preservation Plan Grant Project
 - i. Lydia Simpson and Lauren Walls of New South Associates gave a presentation detailing Phase 1 of a multi-phase survey working towards development of a countywide preservation plan. The current project is based on the Davidson County Cemetery Survey (DCCS), initiated in 1999 and which documented over 600 cemeteries. This survey is being conducted in known and previously unrecorded cemeteries, assessing their conditions and documenting their boundaries. Each phase of the project will survey 4-5 community subareas. For each site, a completed Survey123 form is being submitted to the Tennessee Historical Commission. MHC staff are providing required matching funds by researching sites and completing a more thorough survey form than what Survey123 allows. For Phase 1, New South Associates provided MHC with a Phase 1 summary report, survey photos, FileMaker survey forms, GPS data, Geo-Data shape file, and an updated database for the DCCS for all sites surveyed.
 - ii. QUESTION 1: Dr. Bill McKee asked about the scope for Phase 2. Lydia Simpson responded that Phase 2’s Sub-Areas have not yet been selected and that the overall survey process was laid out with Phase 1 which will assist in streamlining the process of Phase 2 and allow more prep time.
 - iii. QUESTION 2: Dr. Bill McKee asked if there was a plan in future phases for restoration. Lydia Simpson replied that a countywide preservation plan will identify areas of the greatest need and/or those which are under the greatest threat. Lydia then passed the question to Tim Walker and Caroline Eller to expand upon the answer. Tim replied that once the survey has been completed, MHC will be making Metro Council aware of the cemeteries in their districts. The overall hope is that descendant groups and the local community will aid towards upkeep, repair, and preservation.

- iv. QUESTION 3: Christopher Cotton asked who was responsible for the overall upkeep of the cemeteries being surveyed. Tim Walker replied that most of the cemeteries being surveyed have no ownership and that is part of the issue with upkeep. Caroline Eller added that the benefit of the survey's research is to identify, notify, and engage community and/or descendent groups. Civic and other organizations may also be involved with maintenance or fundraising for assistance. All this will be on the back end of the overall project. Tim Walker noted that our portion of the survey work and research in Phase 1 was a group effort by MHC staff.
- v. QUESTION 4: Linda Wynn asked how many African American cemeteries were documented in the Phase 1 report. Lydia Simpson replied that she could not remember the exact number, maybe 30, but that number is much smaller than it should be. Caroline Eller added that MHC worked with New South Associates to create a more detailed survey form that goes beyond what the THC's Survey123 form allows and that this form has helped collect more pertinent information for the database (i.e., ethnic affiliation, marker types, etc.).
- vi. QUESTION 5: Lynn Maddox asked where the data is being stored. Caroline Eller replied that there is a link to an Open Data portal on MHC's webpage to a data set that is maintained by the Planning Department. The general data set is stored there as a downloadable spreadsheet and this information correlates with a non-public GIS map that Metro agencies can access for locational data.
- vii. QUESTION 6: Lynn Maddox asked about the ownership of the cemetery lands. Tim Walker and Caroline Eller replied that Metro does not own the land and that ownership typically reverts to the descendants if parceled out, or the landowner of the land if located on private property. Families own the actual markers even if a cemetery stands on private land.
- viii. QUESTION 7: Dr. Bill McKee commented that he thought Tennessee state law automatically grants access to cemeteries because of a relative case in Robertson County with a landowner. Caroline Eller replied that *Walter Hines v. Tennessee* (1911) is the precedent for access and that landowners cannot prevent family members/descendants from accessing graves. However, the State of Tennessee recommends that the visitor(s) reach out to the landowner of the relative cemetery to develop a cooperative relationship for access purposes. This will lessen the likelihood of any logistical mishaps. Lydia Simpson added that most of the cemeteries surveyed so far for this project were accessible through public right of ways and that few were inaccessible due to land ownership issues.
- ix. QUESTION 8: Dr. Bill McKee asked if the Talbot's Corner [Thomas Talbot] cemetery was accessed. Scarlett Miles replied that it was accessed during the survey. Dr. Bill McKee commented that there is a Secretary of the State of Tennessee buried there and inquired if there might be an "opportunity" for the State of Tennessee to improve the cemetery based on that fact. Lydia Simpson commented that there is a place on the Survey123 form that allows recommendation for anything that might be eligible for the National

Register of Historic Places and that the Talbot's Corner cemetery may be eligible due to the survey flagging things of interest to the state. Relative to this question/topic, Christopher Cotton asked if all this was possible through the grant. Caroline Eller replied that it was possible through the THC and that grant funding for projects like NRHP listing comes from the federal Historical Preservation grants. Grant monies trickle down from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service to the THC, and then the MHC who gets bonus points on our applications for being a Certified Local Government.

- x. QUESTION 9: Lynn Maddox asked if the MHC could know more about New South Associates. Tennessee Branch Manager Lauren Walls replied that New South Associates is a women-owned business based out of Stone Mountain, Georgia and that the firm has been doing contract work, architectural and agricultural history work for close to 40 years now. The Co-President is a mortuary archeologist who has been overseeing the project on a higher level. There are two archeologists and two historians with New South Associates in the Nashville office.

V. DIRECTOR'S PAY INCREASE (Vote) – *Tim Walker*

- a) DIRECTOR'S PRESENTATION: Tim Walker informed the MHC that a committee of five commission members (Linda Wynn, Lynn Maddox, Dr. Bill McKee, Dr. Clay Bailey, and Menié Bell) performed an extensive annual employee evaluation of him that occurred over a two-day period in August 2022 and thanked those that formed the committee for the effort/energy that was put into his review.

Tim stated that with the conclusion of his annual evaluation, he is requesting a 3% pay increase that was funded as part of the FY23 budget. Our FY23 budget had increased funding to provide all MHC staff and himself with a 3% increment increase on top of Metro's 3.5% Cost of Living increase. The only exception being the MHC's Administrative Officer 3 position (Dustin Summers) was given a total of 9% increase in pay. Tim noted that Dustin took a pay cut to come to MHC from the Metro Nashville Police Department and this 9% increase was done to bring the employee up to a matching pay from their former position during the previous fiscal year (FY22) when available funding was not yet known. It was noted that the MHC's Administrative Officer position performs a variety of difficult tasks and that the pay also had to match the relative/expected workload. Tim added that a \$9K remaining balance in funding outside of the operating fund will be available for staffing needs with the possibility of upgrading the Administrative Officer 3 position to a more appropriate job title that fits the scope of that position's current/future workload expectations.

Tim presented the MHC with a comparable salary list given to him by Metro Human Resources Director (Shannon Hall) showing Director's pay within other smaller Metro departments. This comparable list showed that Tim's salary was at the bottom relative to other directors with similar-sized staff.

- i. QUESTION 1: Linda Wynn asked which departments were referenced on the comparable list of directors that was provided to Tim from Metro HR.

The following list of departments were included, along with their staff count and variance from Director Walker's annual pay; Beer Board (staff of 5, with a +\$1K difference in pay), Community Oversight Board (staff of 7, with a +\$23K difference), Human Relations Commission (staff of 4, with a +\$7K difference), Metro Arts Commission (staff of 9, with a +\$46K difference), and Sports Authority (staff of 5, +\$27K difference).

- ii. QUESTION 2: Linda Wynn asked if there was a process to have the MHC Executive Director's position reclassified and if the other Metro directors have a similar pay cap as the MHC Executive Director's classification. Tim replied that the cap on his position is high, at approximately \$175K-\$185K+ annually, and that other Metro directors have a similar cap range. However, his position is on the lower end of the pay scale from those caps, and that it would require the MHC make a formal request to reclassify/upgrade his position with Metro Finance to begin the paperwork process going into the FY24 budget season.
- iii. QUESTION 3: Christopher Cotton asked where Tim was at comparatively to other Director's positions in pay. Tim replied that he is currently paid \$119K annually, not including the requested 3% pay increase on a graded scale, and the department now has a staff of 15.

QUESTION 4: Linda Wynn asked if all Metro directors have the same salary/grade. Tim replied that they did and that he can provide the MHC Chair and Vice-Chair with further information on the salary/grade for Metro directors.

- iv. COMMENT 1: Lynn Maddox thanked Linda Wynn, Dr. Bill McKee, Dr. Clay Bailey, and Menié Bell for serving on the Director's Annual Evaluation Committee and stated that they performed an outstanding job on the evaluation process. Lynn went on to also thank Tim and his staff for all their hard work.
- v. COMMENT 2: Laura Rost emphasized that the comparable pay of newly hired directors in other departments appears to be higher and that this pay increase is a small step towards rectification in acknowledgement of Tim's hard work.
- vi. COMMENT 3: Dr. Bill McKee asked that Tim accomplishments be read into the minutes. The major/main accomplishments Tim noted are as follows: overseeing multiple separate historic preservation grants (Fort Negley Master Plan, HUD American Baptist College, THC Cemetery Preservation Plan, NPS Civil Rights Resource Survey, and more); historic oversight to the 2nd Ave bombing recovery; Sunnyside building/site renovations; accomplishing the FY23 budget which adds two new Historic Preservationist 1 positions include an archaeologist; and working on expansion of the Historic Preservation Property Tax Abatement Program with the Metro Council and the Mayor's Office.

- vii. COMMENT 4: Robin Zeigler added to Director Walker's list of accomplishments by stating that MHC/MHZC is currently at its largest staffing, and that everyone works well together due to Tim's strong leadership. Menié Bell seconded Robin's acknowledgement on leadership.

b) MOTION: Lynn Maddox called for a vote on MHC Director's requested 3% pay increase. Linda Wynn made a motion to approve, and Menié Bell provided a second. The Commission unanimously approved the MHC Director's requested 3% pay increase.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT– *Tim Walker*

- a) Tim updated the Commission on various projects that MHC is currently working on with the following key notes:
 - i. SUNNYSIDE RENOVATIONS: Landscape buffers and 6-foot chain link fences are currently being put up to encompass the construction site and prevent unauthorized access. Additionally, a gate has been installed that will prevent drive path access for non-staff or commissioners. The addition of this gate will create some access difficulties for MHC/MHZC staff and their business-related visitors. We recommend calling MHC at (615) 862-7970 or emailing a staff member to coordinate access prior to visiting the site. Logistics are still being worked out with Metro Parks and construction crews for any access issues and updates will be provided as they become available.
 - ii. US-HUD GRANT (American Baptist College): Tim is currently working with the facility director at ABC to finalize an update on the scope of work with revised bids for a final submittal that will be due back to US-HUD before 12/31/2022. Attempts are being made to get the submittal in much sooner than that date (within the next few weeks) after Metro Legal completes their review. The Mayor's Office is planning on making an official announcement about this grant with media coverage.
 - iii. MARKER FUNDS: Tim is working with Metro Finance to obtain 4% funds to accommodate future marker projects, as MHC has already committed existing funds to other approved marker projects (and no marker money was included in department's budget for the year). Receipt of these 4% funds is expected from Metro Finance within the next few months.
 - a) QUESTION: Thomas Wood asked if the Marker Committee will be meeting off-site from its usual Sunnyside meeting location due to construction. Tim replied that the meetings will still occur at Sunnyside until further notice and that the gate access challenges should be considered when attending these meetings (ref. VI., a., i. SUNNYSIDE RENOVATIONS in these minutes).
 - iv. FORT NASHBOROUGH: Tim spoke to Metro Parks Director (Monique Odom) and the administration about the possibility of a Capital Spending Plan that the mayor will be proposing within the next couple of months.

Hopefully, there will be funding to complete Fort Nashborough so that it can be truly opened back up to the public for education.

- b) ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE: The full MHC Director's Report is available for review upon request, if needed.

VII. HISTORIC ZONING REPORT – *Robin Zeigler*

- a) Robin Zeigler updated the Commission on various projects that MHZC is currently working on with the following key notes.
 - i. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Robin explained that the MHZC has offered to neighborhoods with an overlay, a presentation informing them on how they can participate in the process. They have visited Belmont, Hillsboro, and Germantown, so far. There is one scheduled for Hillsboro-West End and the next in the works might be Woodland-in-Waverly.
 - ii. NEW MHZC MEMBER: The MHZC will have a new Commissioner starting next month. Elizabeth Cashion is an Architect and has performed a large amount of research in preparation for the role as a MHZC Commissioner.
 - a) COMMENT: Menié Bell and Lynn Maddox provided an acknowledgement of appreciation to MHZC staff, Commissioners, and Metro Legal whose workload in preparing for and attending the MHZC meetings. Robin added that commissioners, on average, review 30 reports a month and the meetings run between 3-5 hours. Menié Bell also noted that Metro Trustee (Erica Gilmore), hosted a viewing of the documentary "Disrupt and Dismantle" which provided enlightening information that educated the public on preservation.
 - iii. DEMOLITION SALVAGE: MHZC encourages salvage when notified of a demolition outside of an overlay. Metro is working to reduce construction waste.

VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) MARKER DEDICATION: Lynn Maddox reminded the MHC about two upcoming marker dedication ceremonies: Percy Priest Lake on Friday, September 30th, 2022 at 11:30 A.M. and Alice "Alsie" Collinsworth (Thompson) on Friday, October 7th, 2022 at 10 A.M.
- b) COMMISSIONER SURVEYS (Acknowledgement): Lynn Maddox thanked Dustin Summers for assisting Commissioners with getting access to their surveys for the Metro Boards & Commissions Membership Data Update.
- c) MHC COMMISSIONER REAPPOINTMENTS: Lynn Maddox noted that five MHC Commissioners (Linda Wynn, Christopher Cotton, Jim Hoobler, Dr. Clay Baily, and Dr. Jhennifer Amundson) are waiting to be reappointed by the Mayor's Office and asked Tim if there have been any updates on these reappointments. Tim replied

that he has spoken with the Mayor's Office as of this morning and it is his understanding that the paperwork has been filed. Tim noted that Christopher Cotton will be dropping off the MHC to serve on the MHZC, newly appointed commissioner, Professor Larry Woods from Tennessee State University will be coming onto the MHC, and the remaining four MHC Commissioners are expected to be reappointed.

- i. QUESTION: Lynn Maddox asked if the Commissioners being reappointed will be contacted for an official notice. Tim replied that he hoped that had already happened, inquiring to commissioners if any of them have been contacted by the Mayor's Office. Jim Hoobler noted that he had to call someone with the Mayor's Office, who stated that the reappointment should be happening soon. Tim speculated that the delay in contact may be due to some personnel changes in the Mayor's Office, but it is his understanding that the appointments and/or reappointments are moving forward.
- d) NOTICE - 10/17/2022 MHC MEETING: Tim reminded Commissioners that the Monday, October 17th, 2022 MHC Meeting will be held at the either Sevier Park Community Center or another location due to the Sonny West Conference Room being unavailable. A reminder will be sent out via email/calendar invite closer to 10/17/2022.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

- a) Lynn Maddox called for adjournment. Dr. Bill McKee made a motion to adjourn, and Linda Wynn provided a second. The meeting ended at approximately 1:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Monday, September 19th, 2022

Dustin G. Summers