

METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC)

MINUTES

March 20, 2023

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held a meeting at the Howard Office Building Sonny West Conference Center on March 20, 2023, with Chair Lynn Maddox presiding.

Commissioners Present: Dr. Clay Bailey, John Bridges, Dr. Don Cusic, Lynn Maddox, Dr. Marisa Richmond, Laura Rost, Gerry Searcy, E. Tom Wood, Larry Woods, and Linda Wynn **were present.**

Staff Members Present: Tim Walker, Robin Zeigler, Caroline Eller, Jessica Reeves, Scarlett Miles, Dr. Adam Fracchia, and Ann Mikkelsen (Metro Legal) **were present.**

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

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

Chair 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*

Chair Maddox presented the February 2023 meeting minutes for approval. Commissioner Rost made a motion to approve, and Commissioner Bridges provided a second. The commission unanimously approved the February 2023 minutes.

III. VOTE: HONOR AWARDS – *Dr. Don Cusic/Scarlett Miles*

Chair Maddox thanked the Preservation Honor Awards committee, including Chair Cusic and commissioners Bailey, Landers, McKee, Rost, and Woods. Discussion commenced regarding the Achievement Award, the Commissioners' Award, and the Fletch Coke Award. Scarlett noted that Phil Ponder has been selected for the Achievement Award, RCA Studio A for the Commissioners' Award, and Gary Burke for the Fletch Coke Award. Descriptions and related materials were previously sent to the Commission.

Chair Maddox confirmed with Metro Legal that since these recommendations came from committee, a second is not needed for the votes. After reading the award description, Chair Maddox called for a vote from the Commission for the Achievement Award to Phil Ponder, and the Commission unanimously approved the award.

Chair Maddox read the description for the Commissioners' Award. Commissioner Cusic noted that RCA Studio B has already received an award, provided historical context about the studios' involvement in the Nashville Sound, and said the committee therefore felt it was appropriate to also recognize Studio A. Chair Maddox called for a vote from the Commission for the Commissioners' Award to RCA Studio A, and the Commission unanimously approved the award.

After reading the award description, Chair Maddox called for a vote from the Commission for the Fletch Coke Award to Gary Burke, and the Commission unanimously approved the award.

IV. GUEST SPEAKER – *Tammy Gordon, Greenwood Seneca Foundation*

Director Walker introduced Tammy Gordon, co-founder of the Greenwood Seneca Foundation, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to “help sites of Blackness reconnect Black people to joy and honor in their history.” Ms. Gordon gave a detailed presentation about the work of Greenwood Seneca, including a current pilot partnership with Belle Meade Plantation to develop their Legacy Tour program. She will also be meeting with Travellers Rest to explore a similar partnership with that historic site. Ms. Gordon fielded follow up questions and comments from the Commission about funding sources for Greenwood Seneca's work and potential partnerships with additional sites and entities, including the Tennessee Historical Commission.

V. PROGRAM TRAINING: PRESERVATION AWARDS – *Scarlett Miles*

Scarlett gave a brief training session which covered the history and process of the annual Preservation Awards program.

VI. PROGRAM TRAINING: HISTORICAL MARKERS – *Jessica Reeves*

Jessica gave a brief training session which covered the history and process of the Historical Markers program.

Chair Maddox noted that the Woodcuts Gallery dedication ceremony will be held on March 24. Jessica added that the dedications for the Lynching of Samuel Smith marker and Bettie Page marker will be held on April 19 and April 22, respectively.

Commissioner Woods asked if there is a published public list of the historical markers. Jessica replied that this data is available on the MHC website and through the Open Data Portal, which includes a map of the marker locations. Chair Maddox requested that the next Director's Report include a link to this portal.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT– *Tim Walker*

- a) Director Walker noted that Commissioner Searcy just had a pacemaker installed and expressed his appreciation that she was in attendance of the meeting. He also thanked the commissioners for attending the education session held on March 4 and thanked Chair Maddox and Commissioner Bell for attending the annual budget

meeting with the Mayor's Office, Metro Finance and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

- b) Director Walker noted that Russell LeSturgeon has accepted one of the two open positions and will start in a month or so. Another candidate declined an offer for the second position and due to a lack of experience among other applicants, we will re-post the position this week.
- c) Director Walker noted that former commissioner Pamela Bobo's seat will be filled tomorrow night at the Metro Council meeting by Dr. Celso Castilho, a professor of history and head of the Latin Studies department at Vanderbilt University. He will be present at next month's meeting.

VIII. HISTORIC ZONING REPORT – *Robin Zeigler*

- a) Historic Zoning Administrator Zeigler had no further updates beyond the items in the Director's Report.

IX. ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) Commissioner Rost expressed praise and thanks for the recent commissioner training session.
- b) Chair Maddox mentioned that the next commissioner training will be held on April 8. Director Walker added that the training will run from 8:30-11:30 a.m. at Two Rivers Mansion.

X. ADJOURNMENT

- a) Chair Maddox called for adjournment. Commissioner Cusic made a motion to adjourn, and Vice Chair Wynn provided a second. The meeting ended at approximately 12:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted Monday, April 17, 2023.

Caroline Eller