

METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC) MINUTES

October 16, 2023

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held a meeting at the Howard Office Building Sonny West Conference Center on October 16, 2023, with Vice Chair Laura Rost presiding.

Attendance

- Commissioners:** Menié Bell, Dr. Don Cusic, Jim Hoobler, Dr. Jane Landers, Dr. Marisa Richmond, Laura Rost, and Larry Woods **were present**.
Dr. Clay Bailey, Dr. Celso Castilho, Dr. Bill McKee, and Linda Wynn **were not present**.
- Staff Members:** Tim Walker, Caroline Eller, Dr. Adam Fracchia, Russell LeSturgeon, Scarlett Miles, Jessica Reeves, Dustin Summers, and Robin Zeigler **were present**. Ann Mikklesen, representing Metro Legal, was present.
- County Historian:** Dr. Carole Bucy **was not present**.

I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND WELCOME – *Laura Rost*

In the absence of Chair Linda Wynn due to a scheduling conflict, Vice Chair Laura Rost called the meeting to order at approximately 12:01 p.m. and verified that a quorum was present through a Roll Call of attendance. As there are only eleven commissioners serving this month due to four unfilled vacancies, quorum is six. Rost welcomed guests in attendance.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – *Laura Rost*

Vice Chair Rost presented the September 2023 meeting minutes for approval. Commissioner Landers made a motion to approve, and Commissioner Richmond provided a second. The commission unanimously approved the September 2023 minutes.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – *Laura Rost*

Vice Chair Rost opened the floor for Public Comment. No members of the public requested time to speak.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION – *Laura Rost/HR & Budget Committee*

Vice Chair Rost, who is coincidentally chair of the MHC's Human Resources and Budget Committee, explained the committee's process for completing Director Walker's Annual Performance Review, as required by the Metro Department of Human Resources (HR). The committee followed the Annual Performance Review template provided by Metro HR, which has been signed by Chair Wynn (who also served ex officio on the committee) and Director Walker and officially filed with Metro HR. Vice Chair Rost expressed that it was an interesting process and provided insight into Director Walker's annual performance reviews with staff. Director Walker expressed appreciation for the thorough and helpful process.

V. *VOTE: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 3% MERIT SALARY INCREASE –
Laura Rost/HR & Budget Committee*

Vice Chair and HR & Budget Committee Chair Rost explained that while item IV regarding Director Walker's Annual Performance Review does not require a vote by the commission, the committee would like to request a 3% merit pay increase for Director Walker, which does require a vote. The proposed increase is 3% of Walker's salary as of 6/30/23, which is \$3,926.77, and shall be retroactive to the start of the fiscal year on July 1, 2023, when other staff received merit pay increases. Rost reminded commissioners that this merit increase is different from the recent salary adjustment, which the committee requested to bring Director Walker's salary in line with directors of other like-sized Metro departments. The previous request was about equity, while this request is about performance.

Commissioner Hoobler made a motion, which Commissioner Woods seconded. During discussion, Commissioner Bell remarked that Director Walker's hours and responsibilities have increased due to the additional management of the Sunnyside construction project. Bell thanked Walker for his leadership and expressed appreciation for his knowledge and oversight. Vice Chair Rost echoed this sentiment. Commissioner Landers thanked Walker for the informative tour he provided for the MHC last week. Vice Chair Rost called for the vote and the commission unanimously approved the merit salary increase of \$3,926.77 (3% of Walker's salary on 6/30/23), retroactive to July 1, 2023 [the start of the fiscal year], for Executive Director Tim Walker.

VI. *VOTE: HISTORICAL MARKERS – Jessica Reeves*

a) Historical Markers presented for review:

- i. Sunnyside – this marker will be placed at Sunnyside, 1113 Kirkwood Avenue, upon completion of construction. It is not meant to contain all of the information we currently know about the house, but rather focuses on the time when it was Sunnyside. Staff, with assistance from Dr. Tara Mitchell Mielnik who also assisted with this text, is working on other interpretive measures to tell a more complete history of the property. Vice Chair Rost and Commissioner Landers had questions about some word choices and the timeline presented within the text. Commissioner Richmond had a question about the use of the property as a field hospital (Union or Confederate). Director Walker also stated that we are awaiting results from the dendrochronology and that information may confirm some dates of construction. Commissioner Richmond moved for approval of the marker, with a construction date confirmed and reworking of the first and second sentences. Commissioner Landers seconded the motion, and the commission unanimously approved the historical marker for Sunnyside.
- ii. Werthan Bag Company – this marker will be placed at the Werthan Lofts. The MHC has previously reviewed and approved this marker, but there are some substantive changes, including the addition of a line drawing by artist William Kent (present), so staff is bringing it back to the commission

for review. Reeves also mentioned the office's acquisition of a book about Werthan Bag Company by descendant Anthony Werthan. Commissioners expressed interest in learning more about how to obtain a copy.

Commissioner Bell expressed appreciation about the involvement of the Werthan family as well as the Werthan Lofts HOA in the process. Upon motion of Commissioner Hoobler, seconded by Commissioner Bell, the commission unanimously approved the historical marker for Werthan Bag Company.

- b) Upcoming marker dedications: Hank Snow's Rainbow Ranch, Saturday, October 21 at 1:00pm (Commissioner Cusic will speak); Washington Junior High, Monday, October 23 at 10:00am (25th Ave N and Morena St); Enchanted Hills (location TBA), Thursday, October 26 at 1:00pm.

VII. DAVIDSON COUNTY'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES – Dr. Adam Fracchia

MHC staff archaeologist Dr. Adam Fracchia presented an overview of Davidson County's archaeological resources, providing definitions of the discipline. Currently, there are 745 sites in Davidson County recorded with the Tennessee Division of Archaeology. Dr. Fracchia discussed issues related to cemetery protection, roles of the staff in reviewing development plans on or near archaeological sites, and opportunities for improving research, monitoring, and stewardship of Davidson County's archaeological resources.

VIII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT– *Tim Walker*

- a) Director Walker provided an update on the hiring of the Site Manager for the Nashville City Cemetery. Bryan Gilley will start on Tuesday, October 31.
- b) All commissioners (and staff) are invited to attend the last class and graduation of the Citizen Historic Preservation Academy on Monday, October 23 (5:30-7:30pm at Sonny West Conference Center).
- c) Friends of Aaitafamá Archaeological Park has dissolved. The groups funds have been transferred to the Community Foundation and will be used for future land purchase, planning, build-out, interpretation in the future, with guidance from Metro Parks and MHC.
- d) Director Walker and Rev. Davie Tucker with the Human Relations Commission have met to discuss the Morris Memorial Building and plans to request funds to purchase the building in the next capital spending plan. Mayor O'Connell was supportive of the purchase during his term as council member and we hope he'll remain supportive as mayor. We will also request designation of the building as a historic landmark.

IX. HISTORIC ZONING REPORT – Robin Zeigler

Historic Zoning Administrator Zeigler encouraged commissioners to attend the Citizen Historic Preservation Academy on October 23. Participants will give short presentations about a historic property using information and skills they have gained as part of the course, including preservation incentives and historic research. Director Walker will present the graduation certificates.

Zeigler also mentioned the departure of MHZC staff member Kelli Mitchell, who is relocating out of state.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

Vice Chair Rost asked Commissioner Cusic to provide an update on the Nashville Music Lecture Series he is giving at RCA Studio B. Commissioner Cusic will speak on “A Nashville Music Timeline” on October 25 and “African American Music in Nashville” on November 15. Both sessions run 6:30-7:30pm.

XI. ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) Commissioner Richmond reported that her official swearing in as a member of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Black Americans will take place on Thursday, October 26. [President Joe Biden announced his intent to appoint Dr. Richmond to the advisory commission on April 21, 2023.]

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Rost called for adjournment. The meeting ended at approximately 12:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted Monday, November 20, 2023.

Scarlett C. Miles