

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY



Metropolitan Historical Commission
Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission
Sunnyside in Sevier Park
3000 Granny White Pike
Nashville, Tennessee 37204
Telephone: (615) 862-7970

METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC) MINUTES April 15, 2024

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held its regular meeting at the Howard Office Building, Sonny West Conference Center on April 15, 2024, with Chair Linda Wynn presiding.

Attendance

Commissioners: Dr. Clay Bailey, Menié Bell, John Bridges, Dr. Don Cusic, Dr. Erica Hayden, Jim Hoobler, Sandra Parham, Dr. Marisa Richmond, Laura Rost, Larry Woods, and Linda Wynn were **present**.

Dr. Celso Castilho, Dr. Jane Landers, Dr. Bill McKee, and Tom Wood were **not present**.

Staff Members: Tim Walker, Caroline Eller, Dr. Adam Fracchia, Bryan Gilley, Scott Keckley, Russell LeSturgeon, Scarlett Miles, Jessica Reeves, Claudette Stager, Dustin Summers, and Robin Zeigler were **present**. Ann Mikkelsen (Metro Legal) was **present**. MHZC intern McKenzie Stephenson was present.

County Historian: Dr. Carole Bucy was **present**.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND WELCOME – Chair Linda Wynn**
Chair Linda Wynn called the meeting to order at approximately 12:01 p.m. and verified that a quorum was present after a roll call of attendance. Two commissioners arrived after roll call.
- II. **APPROVAL OF MARCH MEETING MINUTES – Chair Linda Wynn**
Chair Wynn presented the March 2024 meeting minutes for approval. Commissioner Hoobler made a motion to approve, and Commissioner Rost provided a second. The commission unanimously approved the March 2024 meeting minutes.
- III. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – Chair Linda Wynn**
Chair Wynn opened the floor for Public Comment. No members of the public requested time to speak.

IV. NOMINATIONS TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES – *Caroline Eller and Claudette Stager*

MHC staff members Caroline Eller and Claudette Stager presented three nominations to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). As a Certified Local Government (CLG), the MHC reviews proposed nominations to the National Register for Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County. Ms. Eller provided background on the CLG program and reminded the MHC how these three nominations, including the multiple property documentation form (MPDF), were funded and completed. In 2021, the National Park Service awarded the MHC a \$50,000 African American Civil Rights grant. The two-year project created the National Register of Historic Places countywide historical context (MPDF) and two individual property nominations (Clark Memorial Methodist Church Complex and First Community Church). The documents were developed through historical research, field survey, public engagement (meetings & online survey), advisory committee reviews, and oral history. The project identified 131 extant historical properties related to the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville from 1942-1969; 92 additional properties have been demolished. The MPDF establishes historical contexts to allow for additional NRHP nominations: Historic Context 1: Nashville's Early Civil Rights Movement, 1942–1957; Historic Context 2: Nashville Student Movement, 1958–1964; Historic Context 3: Nashville After the Civil Rights Act, 1965–1969. In addition to historical contexts, the MPDF identifies three associated property types: Strategy Centers, Conflict Centers, and Properties Associated with Prominent Persons. To be listed in the NRHP under the MPDF, properties must: 1) Demonstrate a significant connection to the established historic contexts and themes, 2) Possess sufficient character and integrity to retain their sense of time and place, and 3) Fall within the 1942-1969 period of significance.

- A. The Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, Tennessee, 1942-1969 - This MPDF documents the history and typology of resources related to the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville between 1942 and 1969. The MPDF provides a comprehensive historic context and chronological time frame for the development of the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville between 1942 and 1969 with a focus on the Nashville Student Movement and efforts to desegregate public accommodations from 1958 to 1964. It provides a historical overview of the city's Civil Rights Movement, which began soon after the end of the Civil War and continued through the World War II era, setting the stage for the city's nonviolent, direct-action training workshops in the 1950s that transformed Nashville into an epicenter for young civil rights leaders who changed the trajectory of American history. Hosted by activist churches and led by pastors, the nonviolent training workshops gave rise to the Nashville Student Movement, which resulted in a sustained and successful effort to desegregate Nashville's public accommodations between

1958 and 1964. This MPDF establishes the registration requirements for the three associated property types.

Commissioner Richmond made a motion to approve the countywide context, Commissioner Rost provided a second, and the MPDF entitled “The Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, Tennessee, 1942-1969” was unanimously approved by the Metropolitan Historical Commission.

- B. Clark Memorial Methodist Church Complex - Located at 1014 14th Ave N and 1218-1220 Phillips Street, the complex includes the church (1945-1981), parsonage (1957) and carport (1960), and the Walker House and garage (1941). The Clark Memorial Methodist Church Complex is eligible under Criterion A and Criterion B. It is proposed for listing under the “The Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, Tennessee, 1942–1969” MPDF for the Strategy Centers, Conflict Centers, and Properties Associated with Prominent Persons property types. The Clark Complex hosted training workshops, community meetings, conferences, fundraising, and other imperative events associated with Nashville’s Civil Rights Movement. The complex is also significant for its direct association with movement leaders James M. Lawson, Jr. and Dr. Charles J. Walker.

Commissioner Cusic made a motion to approve the nomination, Commissioner Richmond provided a second, and the nomination of Clark Memorial Methodist Church Complex was unanimously approved by the Metropolitan Historical Commission.

- C. Presented by Claudette Stager - First Community Church – Located at 1815 Knowles Avenue by 1941, First Community Church is eligible under Criteria A and B for its local significance in African American heritage and for civil rights social history from 1957 to 1969. The church was one of several churches used as strategy centers during the Nashville Student Movement’s nonviolent sit-ins during 1959-1960. The church is also significant for its direct association with Rev. C.T. Vivian, who pastored at the church from 1957 to 1961 and was a leader of the Nashville Civil Rights Movement. The church is proposed for listing under “The Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, Tennessee, 1942–1969” MPDF for the Strategy Center property type.

Commissioner Bridges made a motion to approve the nomination, Commissioner Hoobler provided a second, and the nomination of First Community Church was unanimously approved by the Metropolitan Historical Commission.

The State Review Board will review all three nominations on Wednesday, May 22. The meeting begins at 9:00 am at the Tennessee Historical Commission office, 2941 Lebanon Pike.

V. **PRESERVATION EFFORTS AT NASHVILLE CITY CEMETERY - Bryan Gilley**
(Item out of order from posted Agenda)

Nashville City Cemetery Site Manager Bryan Gilley provided an update on preservation efforts at Nashville City Cemetery (NCC) over the past six months. Preservation of NCC is a three-pronged team effort between the MHC, Nashville City Cemetery Association (NCCA) and Metro Parks. Mr. Gilley informed MHC of events taking place at NCC in May and June, including his plans for onsite and offsite training and education. He explained the stone wall repairs (along 4th Avenue in Section 14) as well as new parking lot striping, signage, and the new automatic entrance gate. The gate is set to open at 7:00 am and close at 7:00 pm (hours will adjust with the season). If visitors are inside after the gate closes for the night, they can exit. Mr. Gilley explained some issues with a limb pile and new plans to remove limb debris. Along with ongoing marker repairs, maintenance needs of the cemetery property include repairs of the stone wall in Section 1 and other locations, selective tree removal, improved lighting, street repairs, and section marker replacements.

Questions: Chair Wynn asked about the cost for marker repairs. Mr. Gilley reported that the office has multiple quotes; repairs of markers with the highest priority need was \$7,600. Director Walker added that due to deferred maintenance since the rehabilitation project sixteen years ago, the department has submitted a large request for capital improvement funds. Commissioner Hoobler remarked on crates found in tombs. Mr. Gilley reported that they were built by Boy Scouts and stored in the tomb for Robert Currey. It is empty after flooding in the 1920s. We are not sure to where Currey's remains were relocated. Commissioner Hoobler also mentioned an underwriter who has contributed \$7,500 for the Memorial Day Dash. Dr. Bucy commented that the NCC looks great compared to Mount Olivet Cemetery, which remains in dire straits. Chair Wynn commended Mr. Gilley for accomplishing so much in such a short time with the office.

VI. **NATIONAL MARKER CLEANING DAY (April 26) – Jessica Reeves**

National Marker Cleaning Day will be celebrated on Friday, April 26. This annual event is sponsored by the William Pomeroy Foundation. This is the MHC's first year to participate. In 2018-2020, MHC interns assessed the condition of each of our historical markers. Using this as a guide, we have identified several markers for cleaning, in partnership with Vanderbilt University, Metro Parks, Madison Academy, and MNPS. We will spend about 1 hour at each site/marker and anticipate several council members to join us.

VII. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT– Tim Walker**

Director Walker highlighted some items for the month. He introduced Scott Keckley, newly hired inspector for MHZC. Mr. Keckley in turn introduced himself. He is a former building inspector with Metro Codes. Dir. Walker reminded the group about the Diane Nash Gala on Saturday, April 20. Dir. Walker mentioned

that we hope to hold the ribbon cutting/open house for Sunnyside near the end of June, likely on a Saturday morning. Dir. Walker thanked Chair Wynn and MHZC Chair Bell for attending the department's budget hearing. Both chairs plan to attend the Sunnyside site visit by Mayor O'Connell and Vice Mayor Henderson this Friday afternoon. Commissioner Rost asked if the project would be complete (near complete) by the MHCF fundraiser on June 6. Dir. Walker reported that the interior should be done.

IX. HISTORIC ZONING REPORT – *Robin Zeigler*

Historic Zoning Administrator Robin Zeigler reported that Council Member Vo is holding a community meeting regarding a potential overlay at Douglas Corner [8th Avenue South/Douglas Avenue]. Additionally, an application should be filed soon to seek designation of the Hubbard House as a Historic Landmark Overlay. Admin. Zeigler introduced McKenzie Stephenson who is interning with the MHZC. Ms. Stephenson introduced herself.

Commissioner Bell asked if there are any updates on 2nd Avenue [rebuilding]. Admin. Zeigler said there are no updates. There are plans to upgrade the infrastructure to make the area more walkable, addressing lighting, trash receptacles, and outdoor dining.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

None presented.

XI. ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Bucy mentioned actions by the Tennessee legislature to remove members of the Tennessee Historical Commission, to remove Tennessee History from the Social Studies standards, and to remove references to diversity, equity, and inclusion from higher education. Chair Wynn added that the present Tennessee Historical Commissioners will serve until June 30. The commission will be reconstituted as a smaller body on July 1, with the governor appointing five commissioners and the two speakers appointing five each.

Commissioner Woods mentioned the *New York Times* article from April 11, 2024, "Tracing Charleston's History of Slavery, From a Burial Ground to a DNA Swab."

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Hoobler moved to adjourn; Commissioner Rost seconded. The meeting ended at approximately 1:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted Monday, May 20, 2024.
Scarlett C. Miles