



METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC)
MINUTES
June 17, 2019

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held its regular meeting on June 17, 2019, in the conference room of the Fort Negley Visitors Center at 1100 Fort Negley Blvd., with Commission Chair Jim Forkum presiding.

Commissioners Present: Jim Forkum, Chair; Davis Acker, Bob Allen, Dr. Clay Bailey, Christopher Cotton, Jim Hoobler, Lynn Maddox, Dr. Bill McKee, Mark Rogers, Linda Wynn **were present.** Menié Bell, Dr. Don Cusic, Michelle Hall, Gerry Searcy and E. Thomas Wood, and County Historian Dr. Carole Bucy **did not attend.**

Guests Present: Phillip Staffelli, Marley Abbott, Charles Bailey, Delia Batdorff (Interns)

Staff Members Present: Tim Walker, Sean Alexander, Caroline Eller, Scarlett Miles, Jessica Reeves, Melissa Sajid, Fred Zahn and Robin Zeigler were present.

Chair Jim Forkum called the meeting to order at 12:12 p.m. after verifying that a quorum was present. The meeting started late due to PlaceEconomics' presentation immediately prior regarding the economic impact study.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Jim Forkum

Jim Forkum asked for approval of the May minutes. Bob Allen made a motion to approve, Lynn Maddox provided a second, and the May minutes were unanimously approved.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS – Jim Forkum/Dr. Bill McKee

Dr. Bill McKee stated that the Commission would be looking at four new positions for officers and leadership of the Commission for the next two years. He announced that of the four positions, two are directly involved with the MHZC. He reminded the Commission that this body elects one commissioner to serve on that board and also elects a substitute in case our commissioner cannot be present. The committee's first recommendation for the MHZC position is a reappointment of Menié Bell and Jim Hoobler to serve in her absence. Both commissioners are currently serving in those roles. Additional nominations may come from other commission members. Jim Forkum opened the floor to other nominations and none were voiced. Dr. McKee stated that since this recommendation comes from a committee it does not require a second, so we move for its adoption. Jim Forkum called a vote, and this was unanimously approved. Dr. McKee stated that the second two positions directly involve this commission. The committee recommends the incoming Chair, Dr. Clay Bailey and the incoming Vice Chair, Lynn Maddox. Both were contacted and are willing to serve. There can be other nominations from the floor. Jim Forkum opened the floor to other nominations and none were voiced. On behalf of the committee, Dr. McKee moved for their acceptance which does not require a second. Jim Forkum asked for approval and this was unanimously approved. Jim Forkum congratulated the new Chair and Vice Chair. As Chair of the nominating committee, Dr. McKee thanked Menié Bell, committee chairman Chris Cotton and Tim Walker for their assistance.

STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR – Jim Forkum

Jim Forkum said that he wanted to say something that is not on the agenda. He has discussed with Tim Walker and written a letter stating that he is not seeking another appointment to the Commission. The letter reads "It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the city of Nashville on this board. Of the eight years I have served, four of which were Chair, were rewarding, challenging and productive. I will always be grateful to Tim Walker, the staff and the Commission members who care so deeply about our city's history. The board consists of diverse and talented individuals who will continue to do great things under the leadership of Dr. Clay Bailey and Executive Director Tim Walker. I wish everyone on the MHC the best and a big thank you for all you do. I will

surely miss you all.” He will continue to Chair for the next two months, then Dr. Bailey will officially take over as Chairperson. The Commission thanked Mr. Forkum.

HISTORICAL MARKERS – Jessica Reeves

Jessica Reeves stated that we do not have any markers today, but we will have a few at the next meeting. We are still on track to finish up the district markers for the Council district marker project. We want to finish that before elections at the beginning of August. Committee members please stay after the meeting for a few minutes to discuss an upcoming marker. Dr. McKee asked if there is money annually appropriated for markers. Tim Walker responded there is not. Dr. McKee asked what will happen if the Council does not re-approve funds for district markers, will we go back to the private funding process? Tim Walker responded yes and said that our 4% requests were due at the beginning of the year, and he did ask for additional money for markers but there has been no 4% approval to date. Dr. McKee asked if that will be part of the budget that will be approved tomorrow night and Tim Walker said it will not be. Chris Cotton said of the four proposed budgets that are coming up tomorrow night, one of them includes money for historical markers. There was a brief discussion about the proposed budgets.

MHC BUDGET UPDATE – Tim Walker

Tim Walker stated that Paula Person has left the MHC for a similar position at the Community Oversight Board, and her last day was last Friday. We are in a bit of a dilemma with her position vacant, however, Finance is helping us during this transition, and our Finance representative Alicia Viravouth has been especially helpful. The bad news is that last week, we were informed there was a good chance we would not meet the savings goal given to us by the administration. Due to this issue, we immediately laid off our part time employee. We had the opportunity to keep Paula longer, but because we needed savings in the budget, we chose to let her leave on Friday. We are critically reviewing the budget for additional savings, but because we’ve had so many added expenses this year for services critical to the department’s operation, including internet service and software program renewals, both of which have not been funded, it has been difficult to meet the savings goal. Dr. McKee asked how close we are after the staff reductions. Tim Walker said he would guess it to be about \$5,000 shy of the goal and noted that there was nothing left to cut besides laying off full time staff. It is unclear what the repercussions are for not meeting the savings goal.

Dr. McKee asked what the unexpected shortfalls were. Tim Walker said they include monies the department was to receive to cover employee benefits, which the department does not have control over, however, the critical budget item that has caused us to be overspent is funding associated with City Cemetery repairs. He noted that we always hold off on spending the last \$10,000 of the cemetery repairs until the end of the year, in case there is a funding shortfall. He noted that the department was underspent by approximately \$40,000 in the prior budget year, therefore, we allocated a portion of it to two large cemetery projects, electrical pole lighting and stone work. Last week he was informed that those repairs were charged to this year’s budget instead of the prior year’s budget. Fred Zahn said we should have about \$9,000 remaining for cemetery funding this year, but don’t because of last year’s repairs charged to this year’s budget.

Ms. Wynn asked if leftover money can be carried into the next fiscal year, but Tim Walker said that Metro does not allow operating monies from prior fiscal years to carry forward. Lynn Maddox asked if Finance can bill forward, and Tim Walker said he will inquire. Dr. McKee said that perhaps a reversal entry could be done, as under state regulations reversal entries are typical practice for managing the state’s finances. Walker said books will not close until late July and that may be a possibility. Dr. McKee asked Fred Zahn if there are cemetery repairs that could have been charged to the NCCA instead. Fred responded that if any of the repair work charged to the MHC budget this year could have been charged to the NCCA. There was brief additional discussion about the cemetery repairs charged to this year’s budget that were to be charged to the prior year.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT – Tim Walker

Tim Walker said that PlaceEconomics and their team are here through tomorrow. They were to present to two Council committees, Planning, Zoning and Historical and Convention, Tourism and Public Entertainment Facilities, tomorrow afternoon, however, with the budget discussion being pushed to the end of June, we were concerned about attendance and have moved it to July. It will be taped and aired on Metro 3. We have been very impressed with the findings of the report and it will be a great tool we can utilize for years to come. We have committees for this second part of the project, and they will be meeting during this visit and the next. We

are still trying to raise money to pay for this second phase, but we are about \$11,000 shy on the \$25,000 fee. Tim will be meeting with The District board president tomorrow to discuss this issue and ask them for \$10,000 as it benefits them so greatly.

This is also the Week of Remembrance for We Remember Nashville, the locally-sanctioned chapter of the Equal Justice Initiative. There are several events this week we are involved with including the marker dedication Wednesday at noon and 1:00pm for the two downtown markers. There should be high attendance and good media coverage as the Mayor will attend both. There is an educational forum tomorrow at 6:00pm in the Civil Rights Room at the downtown library. Wednesday is also the Juneteenth celebration at Fort Negley. Thank you to Lynn Maddox and Vanderbilt for covering the cost of the programs for the whole Week of Remembrance.

As an update on Fort Negley, we are submitting a grant to the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area this afternoon, and support letters have been written by Chris Cotton from Friends of Fort Negley, Monique Odom with Metro Parks and Zada Law with the Fort Negley Technical Advisory Committee. Demolition on Greer Stadium is ahead of schedule and expected to be completed in a month. We are close to the goal of raising the \$66,000 with the grant from the TN Civil War National Heritage Area, and Dr. West with MTSU has been very helpful in this respect. Commissioner Wood has been sick and will hopefully be back next month.

HISTORIC ZONING REPORT –Robin Zeigler

Robin Zeigler discussed the Design Guideline Consolidation Project, which is gearing up. We have hired a team of Smith Gee Studios and Nashville Civic Design Center. Their first stakeholder meeting is July 11th. We will also have a community meeting on June 26th for the Marathon Village proposed overlay.

STAFF REPORTS

Jessica Reeves said the Club Baron marker dedication has been re-scheduled from this Friday until after July 4th. We are working to find a date that works for the Mayor's schedule and Councilman Kindall's office. We have a few other marker dedications in July. They will be noted on the Marker Tracker, and we will send these out to the Commission. Jessica introduced each of the interns. Marley Abbott is one of our interns and a graduate student from MTSU. Charlie Bailey is working at Fort Negley and with MHC on Nashville Sites. Delia Batdorff is a recent high school graduate here for a few more weeks and is helping with Nashville Sites. Phillip Staffelli is also here today and was introduced at the last meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Allen thanked everyone who made it to the historical marker dedication which was well-attended. This Friday is the end of the 13th year for the Bellevue History and Genealogy Group, who will have a brunch celebration that day. They will start a new year of programming in August. Tim Walker said *Tennessee Crossroads* recognized this commission for the recent MHC award. Lynn Maddox thanked staff for assisting the D.A.R. at the Flag Day Ceremony. Dr. Bailey thanked everyone for placing their trust in him and Lynn Maddox for their upcoming appointments.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted, June 20, 2019.

Caroline Eller