

METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC)
MINUTES
August 19, 2019

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held its regular meeting on August 19, 2019, in the conference room of the Metro Historical Commission office at 3000 Granny White Pike, with Commission Chair Jim Forkum presiding.

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

Guests Present: Dr. Angela Sutton, Paula Erickson and Karen Hoff (MHZC Intern)

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

Chair Jim Forkum called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. after verifying that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Jim Forkum

Jim Forkum asked for approval of the July minutes. E. Thomas Wood made a motion to approve, Jim Hoobler provided a second, and the July minutes were unanimously approved.

HISTORICAL MARKERS – Guest: Paula Erickson, Burton Hills neighborhood association

Ms. Erickson stated that she is at the meeting to represent the concerns of Burton Hills residents about the placement of the Battle of Nashville (Federal Main Line) historical marker. She presented slides/videos that depicted the current placement of the marker, possible sightline interference for drivers and proposed locations that they recommend for relocation of the marker. She described the size of the Burton Hills neighborhood (which includes residential, two senior centers, church, school and office space) and the large number of cars that pass this marker near one of only two exits out of the neighborhood. Ms. Erickson also stated that the original marker was located on Shys Hill Road. It was taken down, and a new marker with revised text was installed at the present location in January 2019. She stated that Burton Hills offered an easement for the sign to be moved onto Burton Hills land, but she was told that the marker needed to be in the public right-of-way. Jim Forkum stated that the marker committee will take this information under advisement, and staff would follow up with her next month.

FORT NEGLEY PRESENTATION –Dr. Angela Sutton, Postdoctoral Fellow at Vanderbilt University

Dr. Sutton currently works on The Fort Negley Descendants Project, an oral history digital archive aimed at preserving the voices and stories of the descendants of the African American laborers and soldiers who built and defended Fort Negley. In addition to preserving the history, they also want to show the connection to the current residents and city of Nashville. Fort Negley has been designated a 'Site of Memory' on the Slave Route by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), and it is one of only three slave route sites in the United States to receive this designation. Dr. Sutton began her presentation by discussing how Fort Negley is not only an example of a local historic fort, but it represents an actual physical space of enslavement that is part of a much larger global issue. She emphasized that the world's eyes will be on Nashville as we decided how to represent and interpret slave history at Fort Negley. Through her words and slides, she presented a global perspective of slave societies and how each continent was affected differently. To further our understanding of global enslavement, she recommended "Legacies of Slavery" as a resource. After Dr. Sutton's presentation, Christopher Cotton thanked her and said that without her work, the UNESCO designation of Fort Negley would not have happened. He also noted the contributions of the NAACP, Friends of Fort Negley and John Cooper. Tim Walker said that the master plan at Fort Negley should be funded in the next

capital spending plan. In a discussion of possible ideas, Dr. Sutton recommended that degradation and empowerment should both be reflected. The Commission discussed their role in the master plan. Clay Bailey stated that a strong voice from the Historical Commission is crucial, as we decide how to recognize and memorialize what happened at Fort Negley.

MHC BUDGET UPDATE –*Tim Walker*

Tim Walker stated that the \$28,900 budget savings goal implemented by the administration is requiring the department to keep a tight lid on spending. In addition, we will need to find an additional \$10,000 in savings to cover the cost of our annual software renewals and the increased monthly internet fee. In a further discussion of budget issues throughout the city, Christopher Cotton relayed that the Parks department must keep 170+ positions open. It was also mentioned that the libraries do not offer Ancestry.com access any longer. Michelle Hall commented on the high cost of early voting, which prompted comments about low voter turnout in the city. A discussion continued about Sunnyside and the future probability of repairs in the new administration. Lynn Maddox asked for a report on repair/maintenance needs at the City Cemetery be presented at the next Commission meeting.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT –*Tim Walker*

Tim Walker introduced Susie Pallas as the new office manager at the Historical Commission, and she said she is very happy to be a part of the team. Tim said that Commissioners Wood, Maddox and Searcy will be reappointed and Chair Forkum and Mark Rogers will be leaving the Commission. John Bridges and Chakita Patterson will be the new appointments. He presented Chair Forkum with a framed certificate of service and Clay Bailey expressed his appreciation for Chair Forkum's positive impact and leadership. Menié Bell commented on how valuable Chair Forkum has been to the Commission, especially due to his experience with the Council budget process. Chair Forkum thanked Tim, MHZC staff and the Foundation.

Tim Walker continued with his report by saying that the Metro Council vote for a zone change at the historic apartments on Elliston Place and Louise Avenue will be tomorrow night. It has been disapproved by Planning, and if it fails tomorrow night, the legislation will die. Christopher Cotton asked if the MHC can look at taking official positions if they are beneficial to the situation. He expressed interest in supporting staff publicly on this issue and future ones. Regarding the proposed demolition of 126 Second Avenue South, staff has recommended approval of the demo after reviewing a comprehensive engineering report and visiting the building site. The Hotel Indigo proposal before the MPC on Thursday required several meetings with Planning staff on the interpretation of the language in the Downtown Code, but a compromise was reached. The Downtown Historic Preservation Overlay District will be expanded to include the two 15-story historic buildings currently home to the Indigo Hotel.

Lynn Maddox stated that a woman approached her and asked about MHC's involvement in the repairs at the Thomas Overton Cemetery. Tim Walker said the DAR and SAR, not the MHC, is fundraising for these repairs.

HISTORIC ZONING REPORT –*Robin Zeigler*

Robin said she had no report.

STAFF REPORTS

Caroline Eller said that the September Nashville 102 lecture series with Dr. Carole Bucy, is sold out. She also said that a few more historical markers will be presented for review next month. Sean Alexander announced an Archaeology Day at Bells Bend Park on September 14th. Fred Zahn will be hosting a table at the T.J. Martell cancer benefit at the Hutton Hotel on September 4th. He welcomed benefit ticket purchases and donations of items for a cemetery themed gift basket.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Forkum invited Jim Hoobler to discuss a book signing that will be held at 607 Fatherland on September 8th for Ridley Wills II's new book, "Nashville Pikes," which focuses on roads in northeast Davidson County. Jim Hoobler stated that 40% of the proceeds from the sales of the books will go to Historic Edgefield. There was additional discussion about how much others enjoyed the author's previous books on other Nashville turnpikes.

Bob Allen announced two upcoming events at the Bellevue YMCA. There will be a Council-at-Large Q&A on August 22nd and a Mayoral Debate on Sept. 6th with each candidate talking for one hour. Lynn Maddox shared that the City Cemetery Living History Tour will be on October 12th. Clay Bailey announced that Taste of Wedgewood-Houston, a fundraiser for the Friends of Fort Negley, will be on September 24th. He also mentioned that there is a new app being developed for the City Cemetery, and the prototype is almost ready.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted, August 20, 2019.

Susie Dallas