

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY



Metropolitan Historical Commission
Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission
Sunnyside in Sevier Park
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METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC) MINUTES February 26, 2024

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held its regular meeting at the Howard Office Building, Sonny West Conference Center on February 26, 2024, with Chair Linda Wynn presiding.

Attendance

Commissioners: Dr. Clay Bailey, Menié Bell, Dr. Don Cusic, Dr. Erica Hayden, Jim Hoobler, Dr. Jane Landers, Dr. Bill McKee, Sandra Parham, Dr. Marisa Richmond, Laura Rost, and Linda Wynn were **present**.

John Bridges, Dr. Celso Castilho, Tom Wood, and Larry Woods were **not present**.

Staff Members: Tim Walker, Dr. Adam Fracchia, Bryan Gilley, Russell LeSturgeon, Scarlett Miles, Jessica Reeves, Dustin Summers, and Robin Zeigler were **present**. Ann Mikkelsen (Metro Legal) 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 12:02 p.m. after verifying that a quorum was present.
- II. **APPROVAL OF JANUARY MEETING MINUTES – Chair Linda Wynn**
Chair Wynn presented the January 2024 meeting minutes for approval. Commissioner Hoobler made a motion to approve, and Commissioner Bailey provided a second. The commission unanimously approved the January 2024 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. HISTORICAL MARKER – *Jessica Reeves*

Staff member Jessica Reeves presented the 1811 House historical marker for review. Sponsored by Friends of Warner Parks (FOWP), this historical marker will be placed in Percy Warner Park at the 1811 House (also known as the Hodge House). The MHC and the Metro Parks Board approved this marker several months ago. When Metro Council reviewed it [due to the grant from FOWP to Metro Parks], council members asked for more information about those who were enslaved at the site. The office has been working with Metro Parks, FOWP and Council Member Delishia Porterfield, chair of the council's Minority Caucus, on the text. According to a secondary source referencing an 1833 will as well as the 1860 slave schedule census, 14 or 13 persons were enslaved at the property. We are using 14, the higher of the two numbers, per the will, in the text on side one. The presented text states Parks acquired the property in the 1930s, but the Parks website gives the date of 1928. Ms. Reeves recommended approving the marker with a condition that this date will be clarified prior to placing the order, as it will not change the meaning of the marker. Commissioner Landers also recommended changing "charming" to "historic" on side two of the marker. Commissioner McKee asked about the building's present use. Ms. Reeves reported that it is primarily event space for FOWP and the park.

Commissioner Hoobler made a motion to approve the marker text, Commissioner Cusic provided a second. The commission voted unanimously to approve the marker text. Ms. Mikkelsen inquired if the commissioners intended to approve the marker with the suggested conditions and changes, and if so, she advised amending the motion. Commissioner Hoobler amended the motion to approve the marker text with the clarification about the date of acquisition by the Parks Department and with the text change from "charming" to "historic."

Commissioner McKee inquired if the property is called the 1811 House or Hodge House. Ms. Reeves stated that it has gone by Hodge House, but FOWP and Metro Parks would like to call it 1811 House.

V. HONOR AWARDS (PRESERVATION AWARDS) – *Scarlett Miles*

MHC staff member Scarlett Miles asked if Commissioner Cusic or Commissioner McKee would like to present the nominees for the annual Honor Awards (Achievement Award, Commissioners' Award, Fletch Coke Award, Preservation Leadership Award) for review. Commissioner Cusic agreed to do this. The Events/Special Projects and Nominations Committees recommend the following: Fletch Coke Award to Tom Vickstrom for his work preserving and promoting the history of The Hermitage Hotel, Achievement Award to Skip Nipper for his work preserving and promoting Nashville's baseball history, Commissioners' Award to the Nashville Old Timers Baseball Association for its work to promote Nashville's baseball history and future legacies, and the Preservation Leadership Award to Mayor John Cooper for his advocacy and support of Nashville's historic places. Commissioner McKee added that the committee unanimously approved all nominees. Commissioner Rost, who noted that she is not a member of either

committee, expressed that she thought these were great nominations and thanked the committee. Chair Wynn added that she is glad to see recognition of Nashville's baseball history. Commissioner Cusic made a motion to approve the slate of nominees for the honor awards. As this is coming from committee, no second is required. Chair Wynn called for the vote and the MHC unanimously approved the slate of nominees.

Preservation Awards is scheduled for Monday, May 6, 2024.

VI. UPDATE ON SUNNYSIDE INTERPRETATION PLAN - *MHC staff*

MHC staff members Jessica Reeves, Russell LeSturgeon, and Dr. Adam Fracchia provided an update on the plan for interpretation at Sunnyside. Director Walker expressed that he is proud of the team for their work developing the interpretation plan for Sunnyside and their efforts to look at every aspect of the site.

The team very briefly explained what they've done within the categories of archival research, archaeology, dendrochronology, and paint analysis. Jessica Reeves explained some of the findings from archival research, including efforts to trace some of the people enslaved at Sunnyside after they left the site. Dr. Fracchia explained archaeological study of the site, including eight test/excavation units, utility trenches, assistance from students at MTSU and Vanderbilt University, tracking renovations over time, and material culture/artifact findings from several stages of the property's history (such as 3,000 to 5,000 years ago, Civil War era, Park era to present). Dr. Fracchia and MTSU students are still sorting and analyzing artifacts. Russell LeSturgeon explained some of Dr. Maegen Rochner's [University of Louisville] dendrochronology process and findings (1/2 inch diameter cores taken, cabin dated to winter of 1823/1824, this being the building's 200th anniversary). Mr. LeSturgeon also described the paint analysis process by Tim Finch and selection process for the new color scheme. Mr. LeSturgeon also showed 3D-modeling of the building's changes over time and explained its use with AR technology.

The interpretation plan will include an updated historical marker, six interpretive panels, five windows within the log structure (plexiglass with writing), panels in the outbuilding (viewing window in floor), artifact wall in the lobby, and a Nashville Sites tour. The interpretation is meant to be self-guided and may also include lesson plans in the future. Some of the panels will have QR codes typical of Nashville Sites, while others will have AR QR codes. The panels will focus on six periods in the site's history: Early History, Enslaved People at Sunnyside, Civil War/Battle of Nashville, Dr. L.G. Noel, Col. Granville Sevier, Park History.

Questions: Commissioner Bailey asked about plans for the well in front of the house [near the drive]. Director Walker reported that James Dunn with Vintage Millworks has taken the lead on rebuilding the architectural folly that once set on top of it [the well is filled]. The MHC Foundation is assisting with funding and Dir.

Walker is also speaking with Friends of Sevier Park and 12South Neighborhood Association about assistance. The folly should be complete by the end of summer. Commissioner Bell requested a repeat of this presentation for the Metro Historic Zoning Commission. Commissioner Rost expressed that the plan sounds amazing and asked if the displays will contain artifacts from other sites or if they are limited to those found at Sunnyside. She offered some Civil War artifacts from her personal collection. Commissioner Landers asked about archaeology of the well. Dir. Walker reported that all of the wells on site have been filled. Chair Wynn asked if the information will be compiled for publication. Dir. Walker reported that publication, likely on our website, has been discussed, but we are still finding new information and anticipate even more discoveries for at least another year, such as the GPR that Vanderbilt University will be conducting soon along the Confederate line. Chair Wynn inquired about the anticipated date of opening. Dir. Walker reported that we are hoping for April, but it will likely be early May. Work on some outbuildings has not started. The drive will not be completed until the cupola is placed on the carriage house due to the heavy machinery required. NES also needs to install light posts. Chair Wynn inquired about furniture. Dir. Walker reported that funds were allocated to Metro Parks for the purchase, and delivery is anticipated for April. Chair Wynn commended staff for their work and commissioners applauded the team. Commissioner McKee asked a question about the dendrochronology grant, inquiring where Dr. Maegen Rochner has taken samples. Mr. LeSturgeon replied that the office has applied for a THC preservation grant to fund dendrochronology research at sites around the city, including the 1811 House, Buchanan Log House, Morton Cabin, and 1802 House. Structures with timber floor joists can be sampled, such as the 1802 House. We will find out about the grant in the fall. Dr. Rochner is working on a larger project across the state. Commissioner McKee expressed appreciation for including the other sites.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT– *Tim Walker*

Director Walker highlighted some items for the month, reporting that things are moving along at Sunnyside. We hope to have a ribbon cutting in May. We will work with Metro Parks and Mayor O'Connell's office to schedule and plan to invite former mayors. Chair Wynn expressed that she is looking forward to the event. She also encouraged commissioners to read the monthly director's report that is emailed prior to each commission meeting.

Regarding one of the items referenced in the report, Chair Wynn expressed appreciation to everyone who attended the Nashville Conference on African American History and Culture on February 9. As this was the conference's first in-person meeting since 2020, she was pleased with the attendance, which was close to 225.

IX. HISTORIC ZONING REPORT – *Robin Zeigler*

Historic Zoning Administrator Robin Zeigler reported that the position for historic zoning inspector has closed. We are reviewing the applications from Metro HR

and appear to have qualified candidates. The Planning Commission has appointed Matt Smith as its representative to the Historic Zoning Commission. He attended his first meeting this month. The MHZC has changed the application deadline for the Historic Tax Exemption from an annual deadline to a monthly deadline. The MHZC has also recommended approval of changing the age requirement for landmark signage from 50 years of age to 30 years of age. The Planning Commission also recommended approval of this change, and now Metro Council must approve the change.

Commissioner Bell reminded everyone to please check with Dir. Walker and Admin. Zeigler if there are questions about anything case-related in the media.

Director Walker added that some may have questions about Genesco and Monell's, two historic properties along Murfreesboro Road that will be lost due to airport runway expansion. We have reached out to the MNAA and the THC about the Section 106 process. Genesco demolition has commenced; we hope to mitigate or prevent the loss of Monell's (former Colemere Club). There is a memorial marker to Jarman at Genesco that will be relocated to an appropriate location (Mt. Olivet, the former site on Main Street, or a location on 7th Avenue).

Commissioner Bell expressed appreciation for MHZC staff.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

None presented.

XI. ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Wynn opened the floor for other Comments/Announcements: Commissioner Bell thanked Historic Nashville, Inc., and Commissioner Hoobler for a recent tour of Downtown Presbyterian Church. Commissioner Hoobler mentioned a recent feature of the church by Condé Nast International.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Rost moved to adjourn; Commissioner Cusic seconded. The meeting ended at approximately 12:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted Monday, March 18, 2024.
Scarlett C. Miles