



METROPOLITAN HISTORIC ZONING COMMISSION
Sunnyside in Sevier Park, 1113 Kirkwood Avenue Nashville, TN 37204
615-862-7970, historicalcommission@nashville.gov

METRO HISTORIC ZONING COMMISSION (MHZC) MINUTES

February 26, 2025
(special called)

Midtown Hills Precinct
1441 12th Avenue South

2:00 p.m.

Commissioner Committee Attendance: Chair Bell, Vice Chair Stewart and Commissioners Cotton, Price

Staff Attendance: Legal Counsel Ann Mikkelsen, MHC Executive Director, Tim Walker, Historic Zoning Administrator Robin Zeigler

Council Attendance: Councilmembers Cash and Kupin

Committee met at the request of the Metro Historic Zoning Commission:

Motion: Commissioner Smith moved to have the Chair appoint a committee to study bill 2025-742, offer amendments, critiques or advice. Commissioner Mosley seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Chair Bell appointed herself as well as Vice-Chair Stewart, Commissioners Price, Cotton and Smith.

Motion: Commissioner Mosley moved to defer action on any resolution and the committee, after finding and facts and further discussion, could take up that issue on behalf of the commission and consider amendments to bill 2025-742. Commissioner Smith seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Nine members of the public were in attendance; therefore, Chair Bell provided an overview of the project, the charge of the committee, and opened public comment.

Lisa Wood in Woodland-in-Waverly spoke about her experience with rehabilitation of her home. She requested assurance that the overlay protection would remain intact.

Councilmember Cash stated he welcomed more conversation and had not yet made a

decision. He suggested that the Commission look at their Rules to update the design guidelines in terms of who can make an amendment to the design guidelines. He would like to see councilmembers added.

Doug Sloan noted that people are concerned about what might happen. The design guidelines will not change. He finds the amendments to the bill to be appropriate. He noted that other historic zoning programs in Tennessee are within planning departments.

Committee Discussion

Chair Bell and Ann Mikkelsen provided an overview of the discussion from the earlier Metro Historical Commission committee meeting.

Commissioner Price commented that the issues in the report were related to Broadway therefore moving the department is not an appropriate action for just one overlay. He stated that CM Benedict has made multiple incorrect statements that the commission is unable to correct and that she insulted the staff without fact checking. He asked what assurance they have that the state bills will be removed if this change is made and Commissioner Cotton expressed that there is no assurance. Vice Chair Stewart said he is hearing from lobbyists that legislators want the issue to be solved locally. Commissioner Price asked if nothing is going to change, why move the department.

Commissioner Cotton explained that the process has been unfair and he feels that they have been blackmailed but they need to take the emotion out of their decision and accept the reality of the pending state legislation.

Commission Cotton agreed that they interpret the design guidelines strictly and Commissioner Price noted that they do that because the neighborhoods want them to. Commissioner Price expressed his fear that the planning department will place pressure on staff and commissioners to relax their interpretations.

Chair Bell stated that she didn't want the Historical Commission going to the Planning Department.

In defining their discussion about the proposed amendment, they decided not to deal with the section regarding the Metro Historical Commission but instead stated their support of the Metro Historical Commission to remain a stand-alone department.

At a special called meeting on February 26, 2025 a committee of the Metro Historic Zoning Commission crafted the following comments regarding BL2025-742. The committee stated the following:

- The Metro Historic Zoning Commission is not proposing amendments to BL2025-742, beyond those already suggested by Councilmember Benedict.
- The goal and passion of the commission is to strengthen preservation of Nashville and Davidson County.
- The commission is supportive of the autonomy of the Metro Historical Commission and its staff.
- The HDR "Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County Historic Zoning Review" report was not well crafted, flawed in the facts, and excluded a lot of

voices that the commission serves. Importantly, property owners have established the overlays we review.

- It is unfortunate the Metro Historical Commission department is in a situation of defending rather than having the time to thoughtfully react but understands that action must be taken quickly due to pending state legislation.
- There are challenges to the city's growth that support coordination and conversations with other Metro departments and stakeholders.
- Although BL2025-742 is not something we would have chosen it is the only option available if Nashville and Davidson County is to make its own decisions regarding historic design review rather than be preempted by the state.

The committee ordered staff to send their comments to Metro Council, the mayor and vice mayor, the directors of the Planning and Historic departments and the Metro Historic Zoning Commission.

Chair Bell reopened public hearing.

Doug Sloan said he hoped the decisions would be made locally and not by the state. The bill will ensure that preservation is a part of bigger discussions that are the purview of the planning department/commission.

Jeff S, HWE Chair said he appreciated the difficulties of managing the process. He hopes that whatever happens, the process will continue to treat applicants as human beings and consider the neighbors. Moving to planning probably gives businesses more leverage.