

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY



Metropolitan Historical Commission
Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission
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METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC) MINUTES March 17, 2025

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held its regular meeting at the Howard Office Building, Sonny West Conference Center on March 17, 2025, 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, Vice Chair Laura Rost, and Chair 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, Jessica Reeves Fitzpatrick, Dr. Adam Fracchia, Bryan Gilley, Russell LeSturgeon, Scarlett Miles, Dustin Summers, and Robin Zeigler were **present**. Ann Mikkelsen (Metro Legal) was **present**.

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

Guest: Craig Peterson, President, Whitland Area Neighborhood Association

- I. **CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND WELCOME – Chair Linda Wynn**
Chair Linda Wynn called the meeting to order at approximately 12:04 p.m. and verified that a quorum was present after a roll call of attendance. Two commissioners arrived after roll call.
- II. **REVIEW OF FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES – Chair Linda Wynn**
Chair Wynn presented last month's meeting minutes for approval. Vice Chair Rost moved to accept the February 2025 minutes. Commissioner Hoobler seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – *Chair Linda Wynn*

Chair Wynn opened the floor for Public Comment. Craig Peterson, President of the Whitland Area Neighborhood Association, spoke in support of the Metropolitan Historical Commission and Historic Zoning Commission. He plans to speak against BL2025-742 at the Metropolitan Council meeting tomorrow.

IV. HISTORICAL MARKER – *Jessica Reeves Fitzpatrick*

Jessica Fitzpatrick presented the Centennial Celebration of Scarritt in Nashville, 1924-2024, historical marker for review. This privately funded marker will be placed at 19th Avenue South in front of Scarritt Bennett Center. The marker differs from the MHC marker for Scarritt College for Christian Workers [2012], which focuses primarily on the campus architecture and the school's role in the Civil Rights Movement. The new marker focuses on the founding of the College and later the Center. Commissioner Richmond asked about the distance between the two markers; they will be about one block apart. Vice Chair Rost asked about the name of the speaker series; the series is called Belle Harris Bennett Speaks. Commissioner Richmond moved for approval. Commissioner Bell seconded, and the commission voted unanimously to approve the Centennial Celebration of Scarritt in Nashville historical marker.

Ms. Fitzpatrick reported that the Sunnyside marker arrived and has been installed. Brad Smith from Sewah was there for the installation. He is travelling around the country visiting locations of Sewah markers. Other updates include today's shipping of the J.W. Frierson marker and the dedication ceremony for the Metro District Energy System, which is scheduled for March 25 at 10:00 am. The dedication of the Nashville Christian Institute marker will take place on April 1st at 3:00 pm on the Lipscomb University campus due to parking limitations at the marker site.

Chair Wynn acknowledged the passing of Rev. Dr. Charles E. Kimbrough, civil rights activist and former president of the Nashville branch of the NAACP.

V. DISCUSSION OF BL2025-742, and potential vote.

Chair Wynn opened the discussion of this bill, which initially proposed to move the MHC and MHZC under the Planning Department. She thanked Director Walker and staff for their work over the past weeks. She provided an update on the bill's progress since the last MHC meeting. On March 3, the substitute bill, which proposes moving the MHZC under the Planning Department, keeping the MHC as an independent department, passed second reading at council. Two of the three amendments also passed: Amendment 1 by Cash, passed; Amendment 2 by Suara, failed; Amendment 3 by Gadd, passed. There will be a public hearing at the council meeting tomorrow [March 18], which is also third reading. Chair Wynn encouraged commissioners to attend.

Commissioner Bell stated that she plans to attend the council meeting and will speak as a resident of District 19 and in her capacity as an MHC/MHZA commissioner. She encouraged other commissioners to attend as well. She expressed displeasure at how the local legislation has transpired.

Chair Wynn stated that HB1279, the state legislation said to be prompting the local legislation (BL2025-742), is scheduled to be heard in the Cities and Counties Subcommittee on March 19. She has heard, from those lobbying against it, that it is not going anywhere. The Senate bill has not moved since February 12. SB0007, pertaining to the authority of the Tennessee Historical Commission, will be heard in the Senate State and Local Government Committee on March 18. It hasn't moved since January 28. Chair Wynn provided a brief recap of the Special Called Committee meeting on February 26. It was well-attended by the public and Council Members Benedict and Kupin also attended. CM Benedict conceded to removing MHC from the proposal to move the department under Metro Planning. She expressed that she agrees with Commissioner Bell's assessment of the meetings thus far, and she also plans to attend the Metro Council meeting tomorrow. Planning has mentioned a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the MHC will be able to review and comment on it.

Director Walker reported that we received a draft of a framework for the MOU last week. He and staff reviewed it and returned it to Planning with comments; Planning did not address those comments in the next draft. However, Planning wanted to have something to show Council in advance of the meeting tomorrow. It will take about two months to work through.

Vice Chair Rost reported that she plans to attend the council meeting. She expressed concerns about the process, particularly the threat from the state legislature, quoting "Do not obey in advance," from *On Tyranny*. She is suspicious of what more is coming, as there are other solutions to the issues with Broadway that aren't being considered. The problem is not what we're being told.

Dr. Bucy mentioned the state legislature's dislike of Nashville.

Commissioner Hoobler expressed concerns about 2.130, which states that the Historic Zoning Administrator will serve at the pleasure of the Planning Director taking away the administrator's authority.

Commissioner Richmond has spoken with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) representative about her concerns regarding the civil service status of the MHZA staff and asked how the department will be divided.

Director Walker explained that there is a delineation between MHC and MHZA staff. Seven staff members are dedicated to MHZA work. There is some overlap

on a few departmental projects and tasks, which may need to be reassigned and/or clearly divided through the MOU.

Commissioner Bell wondered how representation between the Planning Commission and MHZC will work as there do appear to be some conflicts of interest present.

Vice Chair Rost asked about demolition review of historic properties and how that will work as CM Suara's Amendment 2 (to keep that review with MHC) did not pass.

Director Walker provided background on the original of the demolition delay ordinance and how the current process works. Although the demolition review should stay with MHC, the administration and Planning appear to disagree.

Dr. Bucy expressed concerns that lots with larger acreage will be in danger next.

Vice Chair Rost encouraged commissioners to reach out to their respective council members, acknowledging that she has not been able to engage with her own council member on the issue.

Commissioner Bailey mentioned NEST and pondered if there is a perception that historic preservation is in the way of density, and thus affordable housing.

Commissioner Hoobler mentioned that Historic Edgefield has dense housing. A couple of years ago, there was an issue with a new development. MHZC noted that it was too high, not that it was too dense, which the neighbors supported but the developers did not.

There being no other comments, Chair Wynn stated that she would like to appoint a committee, composed of the MHC's Executive Committee (Chair Wynn, Vice Chair Rost, and MHZC Rep Bell), to review and comment on the MOU. Commissioner Hoobler moved for approval. Commissioner Richmond seconded, and the commission voted unanimously to approve the appointment of a committee to review the MOU.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT– *Tim Walker*

Director Walker reported that he will be attending the council Budget and Finance Committee today regarding a 4% Fund appropriation for the Sunnyside renovation. Our annual budget meeting with Metro Finance and the Mayor's Office is Wednesday, March 19 at 1:00 pm. The council vote on BL2025-742 could impact our budget requests for FY26.

Last week, WKRN interviewed Jessica Fitzpatrick and Mary Ellen Pethel at Sunnyside for a segment on Nashville Sites.

Sunnyside received an Award of Excellence at the Tennessee Association of Museums (TAM) annual conference last week.

VIII. HISTORIC ZONING REPORT – Robin Zeigler

Historic Zoning Administrator Robin Zeigler reported that the new version of Metro Planning's Parcel Viewer now features a link to the MHZC's design guidelines webpage.

Commissioner Bell thanked Ms. Zeigler and the MHZC staff for all of their work, particularly during this stressful time. MHC members agreed and applauded.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Cusic inquired about a strategy for the public hearing at Metro Council tomorrow night. Chair Wynn indicated that the staff could assist with emailing some talking points. She echoed Vice Chair Rost's concerns and skepticism. She suggested a strategy of attending the meeting and speaking if so inclined, expressing the importance of speaking truth to power and expressing how commissioners feel as individuals. Director Walker said the department could provide information to assist commissioners if needed. Strong opposition during the public hearing could sway the vote. Commissioner Bell encouraged everyone to prepare notes ahead of time due to the time limitations (2 minutes). Director Walker will share the public hearing protocol with commissioners. Commissioner Bell noted that some MHZC members might attend. Commissioner Bailey asked if there has been any discussion about a guarantee for MHC staff to remain at Sunnyside. Director Walker said he spoke to Mayor O'Connell in early March and the Mayor said he felt the MHC staff belongs at Sunnyside and we should stay there. Vice Chair Rost also mentioned that at the Special Called Committee Meeting on February 26, CM Benedict did agree to remove the part of the legislation that called for a review of the MHC within six months.

X. ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Richmond asked if a date has been set for Preservation Awards. Director Walker reported that it has been scheduled for Thursday, May 22nd at 4:30 pm, we are still working on securing a location for the reception.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Cusic moved to adjourn; Commissioner Bridges seconded. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted Monday, April 21, 2025.
Scarlett C. Miles