

# METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY



Metropolitan Historical Commission  
Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission  
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## METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC) MINUTES MAY 19, 2025

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held its regular meeting at the Howard Office Building, Sonny West Conference Center on May 19, 2025, with Chair Linda Wynn presiding.

### Attendance

Commissioners: Dr. Clay Bailey, Menié Bell, John Bridges, Dr. Don Cusic, Dr. Erica Hayden, Jim Hoobler, Dr. Bill McKee, Sandra Parham, Dr. Marisa Richmond, Tom Wood, and Chair Linda Wynn were **present**. Dr. Jane Landers and Vice Chair Laura Rost were **not present**.

Staff Members: Tim Walker, Robin Zeigler, Jessica Fitzpatrick, Bryan Gilley, Russell LeSturgeon, Scarlett Miles, and Dustin Summers were **present**. Lora Fox (Metro Legal) was **present**.

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

Guests: Heidi Basgall Favorite, Fairgrounds Preservation Partners, Inc.  
Mary Ellen Pethel, Executive Director, Nashville Sites

- I. **CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND WELCOME – Chair Linda Wynn**  
Chair Linda Wynn called the meeting to order at approximately 12:01 p.m. and verified that a quorum was present after a roll call of attendance. One commissioner arrived after roll call.
- II. **REVIEW OF APRIL MEETING MINUTES – Chair Linda Wynn**  
Chair Wynn presented last month's meeting minutes for approval. Commissioner McKee moved to accept the April 2025 minutes. Commissioner Cusic seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- III. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – Chair Linda Wynn**  
Chair Wynn opened the floor for Public Comment. Heidi Basgall Favorite, representing Fairgrounds Preservation Partners, spoke in favor of agenda item

V.A.1., the Cumberland Park historical marker. Fairgrounds Preservation Partners raised funds to replace the missing marker, which was one of the earliest in the program (#23, erected in 1970). Ms. Basgall Favorite thanked the commission for its efforts as she enjoys seeing historical markers across the city.

#### IV. [NASHVILLE SITES, Dr. Mary Ellen Pethel, Executive Director, Nashville Sites](#)

Dr. Mary Ellen Pethel, Executive Director of Nashville Sites (NS) [the signature project of the Nashville Historical Foundation (NHF), which works in partnership with the MHC], provided an update on the program as it has seen a dramatic increase in user numbers over the past twelve to eighteen months. Additionally, various nonprofits and community leaders are reaching out to partner on new tours and programming. Tours are primarily funded through grants and the NHF. Dr. Pethel shared data from Google analytics recorded from the past 90 days, tracking users and their activity on the NS website. It appears that many users are finding the site organically, including international users, aided by the fact that it is web-based and does not require users to download an app and the website's responsive design. Social media followership has increased significantly as well.

NS and NHF are developing partnerships with other local organizations to plan live launch events for new tours and live events in places that are stops on established tours. One example is the recent "Nashville Sites Live: The Story of Christ Church Cathedral" co-sponsored with Preservation Society of Nashville this past weekend at Christ Church Cathedral, which is a featured stop on three NS tours. The event offered participants a tour of the church, a brief lecture about the building's history, and time for networking.

Dr. Pethel highlighted a few NS tours recently released and nearly completion. NS released two new tours this spring, funded by Metro's participatory grants: the McKissack and Black Architecture driving tour narrated by local architect Brian Tibbs (Moody Nolan), and the North Nashville Leadership driving tour narrated by Dr. James Pratt, Jr. (Fisk University). Tours nearing completion include the Grand Ole Opry driving tour funded by the Mike Curb Foundation and narrated by Kelleigh Bannen, and the Indigenous Peoples and Archaeology, written by Dr. Adam Fracchia and MTSU students and narrated by members of three different tribes. NS interns are working on new tours this summer, including Centennial Park (walking) and Movies and Music City (driving, sponsored by Belcourt Theater). Additionally, interns are working on lesson plans for seven tours.

Dr. Pethel provided a quick demonstration of the Nashville Sites website, including tours and lesson plans, before taking questions. MHC members asked questions pertaining to metrics, funding, and QR codes. In response to these questions, Dr. Pethel explained that a data science intern is examining the NS metrics trying to determine visits compared to taking tours. Many visits occur "in the wild" when users scan QR codes. There has been some theft of the QR code plaques. The program is currently solvent and operates on a cost-efficient

budget. While local universities do not provide financial support, several do provide some in-kind support such as recording studio space at Belmont. Many QR codes are located on historical markers. NS is also hosting a hospitality and tourism intern who is helping to identify more opportunities for promotion and QR placement.

#### V. HISTORICAL MARKERS – *Jessica Fitzpatrick*

A. Jessica Fitzpatrick presented three historical markers for review (out of order from the posted agenda):

1. Nashville Conservatory of Music/Gaetano Salvatore De Luca: This double-sided marker will be placed at 2212 West End Avenue. It is privately funded. Commissioner Bailey moved for approval. Commissioner Bridges seconded, and the commission voted unanimously to approve the Nashville Conservatory of Music historical marker.
2. Don Q. Pullen: This double-sided marker is privately funded and will be placed at the entrance to Hadley-Lillard Park. Commissioner Richmond moved for approval. Commissioner Cusic seconded, and the commission voted unanimously to approve the Don Q. Pullen historical marker.
3. Cumberland Park: Ms. Fitzpatrick thanked Ms. Basgall Favorite and Will Pinkston for their research and support of the marker. The marker is privately funded and will feature text on one side and an image on the other. This is a replacement marker that is being updated with additional information. Commissioner Bridges moved for approval. Commissioner Hayden seconded, and the commission voted unanimously to approve the Cumberland Park historical marker.

Ms. Fitzpatrick provided status updates for several markers, including replacements for Old Hickory Works, Antioch Pike, John Lewis, Percy Priest Lake, the recent dedication of Neuhooff, and the upcoming dedication for Werthan. Commissioner Wood asked about replacing the William Walker marker. Ms. Fitzpatrick explained how the staff and committee prioritize replacing markers.

- B. Ms. Fitzpatrick presented proposed updates to the Historical Marker Program Guidelines, formalizing the use of Chicago Manual of Style as the style guide and establishing a deadline for providing source material to the MHC committee. Commissioner Hoobler moved for approval. Commissioner Bridges seconded, and the commission voted unanimously to approve the revised Guidelines.

#### VI. DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL EVALUATION – *Chair Linda Wynn*

The MHC's Budget and Human Resources Committee plans to meet on Wednesday, May 28 at 3:00pm at Sunnyside to complete Director Walker's annual performance review.

## VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT– *Tim Walker*

Director Walker advised the MHC on additional upcoming committee meetings. The Executive Committee will meet on May 28 at 4:15pm at Sunnyside to review updates to the bylaws. The Nominations Committee will meet on May 29 at 4:00pm at Sunnyside to review nominations for officers. Commissioners are welcome to attend any or all of the three committee meetings. The committees will present items for vote at the June meeting.

The mayor's budget proposal for the MHC includes three requested items: the returned savings goal (\$27,000), additional funding for utilities, and a new position at the Nashville City Cemetery to take over landscaping and mowing. As departments are allowed to submit additional requests to Metro Council, we are making a request for a Public Information Officer, which we have requested for several years prior.

Sunnyside: Master Gardeners held planting days at the office. We are starting to clear the area for the demonstration garden. A vendor has been identified for the carriage house. The well wall has been removed and Dr. Fracchia has completed some archaeology survey in the area. The folly and an interpretive panel should be constructed within a few months. Commissioner Bridges inquired about lighting for the steps, particularly during the winter months. Director Walker has asked about this and will follow up. The office is also considering installing a gate in the parking lot to preserve spaces for staff during business hours. Commissioner Wood asked about the vendor for the carriage house. Director Walker said the contract is not final as a rent study is underway. He does not know the vendor's name, but they plan to offer breakfast and lunch items and drinks/small plates in the evening.

## VIII. HISTORIC ZONING REPORT – *Robin Zeigler*

Historic Zoning Administrator Zeigler reported that Metro Council approved the designation of Marlin Meadows as a Neighborhood Conservation Zoning Overlay District.

## IX. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

## X. ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Wynn reminded commissioners about the annual Preservation Awards program on May 22. Parking will be available at the Customs House (the reception site) and guests will have the opportunity to tour the building. Dr. Bucy reported that she has given several talks about Marquis de Lafayette recently. Commissioner Hoobler reported that LiveNation has contributed another \$7,500 (for a total of \$20,000) to the Memorial Day Dash, benefiting the Nashville City Cemetery. He'll also be providing a walking tour of the cemetery on June 14 at 10:00am. Interns Zach (MHC) and Amelie (NS) were recognized as being in attendance.

XI. **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner McKee moved to adjourn; Commissioner Cusic seconded. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted Monday, June 16, 2025.  
Scarlett C. Miles