



METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC) MINUTES DECEMBER 15, 2025

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held its regular meeting at Fort Negley Visitors Center, 1100 Fort Negley Blvd, on December 15, 2025, with Vice Chair Laura Rost presiding in Chair Wynn's absence.

Attendance

- Commissioners: Dr. Clay Bailey, John Bridges, Gary Burke, Dr. Don Cusic, Dr. Erica Hayden, Jim Hoobler, Kaitlyn Jones, Sandra Parham, Betsy Phillips, Dr. Marisa Richmond, Vice Chair Laura Rost were **present**. Dr. Jane Landers, Dr. Bill McKee, Tom Wood, and Chair Linda Wynn were not present.
- Staff Members: Caroline Eller, Jessica Fitzpatrick, Dr. Adam Fracchia, Bryan Gilley, Russell LeSturgeon, Scarlett Miles, Trevor Porter, Claudette Stager, and Dustin Summers were **present**. Hannah Zeitlin (Metro Legal) was **present**.
- County Historian: position vacant
- Guests: Sydney Schoof, Senior Architectural Historian, Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc.; William Kantz, Jr., Werthan Art Foundation; Cheryl Strichik, Executive Director of Monthaven Arts and Cultural Center

I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND WELCOME – *Vice Chair Laura Rost*

Vice Chair Laura Rost called the meeting to order at approximately 12:00 p.m. She verified that a quorum was present after the roll call of attendance. Commissioner Bailey arrived shortly after roll call.

II. REVIEW OF NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES – *Vice Chair Laura Rost*

Vice Chair Rost presented last month's meeting minutes for approval. Commissioner Richmond moved to accept the November 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner Cusic seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – *Vice Chair Laura Rost*

Vice Chair Rost opened the floor for Public Comment. Sydney Schoof, representing Wrenhaven owner William Cheek, identified herself as a staff member of Richard Grubb and Associates (RGA) and one of the authors of the Wrenhaven National Register of Historic Places nomination. She shared a brief historical summary of Wrenhaven and requested the commission's support of this nomination.

IV. *Werthan Art Collection – William Kantz, Jr., Werthan Art Foundation*

Mr. Kantz introduced himself as the holder of the Werthan Art Collection, which is known to very few people beyond Tim Walker and staff of the Tennessee State Museum. He has had these pieces for about 25 years, but this is the first time he has publicly spoken about the art. Mr. Kantz showed several examples of the artwork and spoke in depth about the collection, the importance of Meier Werthan, and their preservation approach. He hopes to open an art gallery that would include over 10,000 art pieces and more than 1,000 artifacts. He plans to make a documentary about his collection and has created the Werthan Art Foundation to ensure its long-term preservation. Goals are to process/preserve the artwork and develop educational programming. The Foundation will be selling license plates to help fund collection processing. Mr. Kantz posited that 88 Hermitage would function as a perfect place to house the art museum and artifacts. The planning commission has created a plan that would require a \$3.5 million buyer investment. He plans to approach that commission and the mayor about acquisition. Cheryl Strichik, Executive Director of Monthaven Arts and Cultural Center, briefly spoke about their programming.

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT PROCESS – Shannon Hall and Lisa Mason, Metro Human Resources

Shannon Hall, Director of Metro Human Resources, and Lisa Mason, Training and Talent Acquisition for Metro Human Resources, discussed the process behind hiring a new executive director for the MHC after Director Tim Walker's recent departure. They are coordinating a national search for this position starting in January. Ms. Hall detailed the timeline of the search, interview, and hiring process, which is expected to take about three months. In consultation with former Director Walker and Chair Wynn, HR has compiled the job posting based on the actual job description for the position. Copies of the posting have been shared with the commission and HR has also created a supplemental marketing brochure. The posting will be open for approximately one month. Ms. Hall noted that this is an employer market and Metro is an employer of choice, so she expects the commission to have a robust set of candidates. Written supplemental questions will be sent to most qualified candidates, those meeting some or all of the preferred qualifications. Additional review will be conducted by a Subject Matter Expert (SME) Panel, which will refine and identify the

best candidates for an Interview Panel. Ms. Hall noted the unique provision in the commission's bylaws about the Executive Director search, which says the chair shall appoint a search committee made up of the chair, and two commissioners appointed by the chair, as well as two members of the public that are approved by a vote of this commission. The search committee will work with HR to bring qualified recommendations to the full commission for its consideration. Ms. Hall plans to strategically place the two commissioners and two members from the public onto the SME committee to narrow the candidates for the Interview Panel to protect the integrity of the interview process, and many of the candidates may be employed elsewhere. The five individuals will likely be supplemented with a Metro dept. head/executive (i.e. mayor's office). They will be careful not to trigger the Open Meetings Act (OMA). At very end, those finalists will be in a public meeting with the panel that may trigger the OMA. The finalists will be aware of this. Candidates will be kept highly informed of this process. HR expects to stay pretty close to this timeline and will notify the interview panel well in advance of interviews, and coordinate communications and travel with candidates. One important consideration – potential public members of the committee to be discussed at January commission meeting. People evaluating candidates need to be individuals who are not pursuing this opportunity.

Vice Chair Rost noted that Chair Wynn has already asked her and Commissioner Hoobler to be on the search committee. She encouraged commissioners to submit names for potential members of the public for the committee as soon as possible to Dustin.

Commissioner Richmond asked Ms. Hall if there is a minimum number of candidates that has to be brought to the commission for a vote. Ms. Hall replied no, not that she is aware of. She would like to see at least 3-4 final candidates.

Commissioner Bailey asked for clarification on the date that the final candidate would be before the commission, as the week of March 9th is noted in the current timeline. Ms. Hall confirmed that is the plan but acknowledged that spring break occurs around that time as well and that will be taken into account. Vice Chair noted that March 16 is our regularly scheduled commission meeting. Ms. Hall noted that the commission decision and related discussion will likely take at least a half day. HR will help walk us through the consensus process. Further discussion about the search/interview timeline, and Ms. Mason suggested pushing the timeline back by one week.

Commissioner Bridges asked if qualifications need to be provided for proposed members of the public. Ms. Zeitlin said that no qualifications are required with their nomination.

Ms. Hall had two parting requests: commissioners may contact Lisa Mason individually if there is anyone you want HR to actively recruit; if commissioners have suggestions for interview questions, please email those to Ms. Mason.

VI. NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION: CLUB BARON

Caroline Eller presented a brief historical overview of the historical significance of Club Baron as outlined in the National Register of Historic Places nomination. This document was funded through a grant from the Tennessee Historical Commission which also funded architectural survey work in Donelson. RGA authored the nomination, and they presented in-depth information on the property at the November 2025 meeting. Vice Chair Rost called for a motion to approve the Club Baron nomination for submission to the Tennessee State Review Board, Commissioner Richmond moved approval, Commissioner Cusic seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

VII. NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION: WRENHAVEN

Russell LeSturgeon presented an overview of the William T. Cheek House, historically known as Wrenhaven and located in Belle Meade. RGA prepared the nomination. The property is being nominated for the NR at the local level under Criterion B for its association with William T. Cheek, Sr. and under Criterion C for architectural significance. The house was built in 1916. The period of significance is from 1916-1958. The house was constructed concurrently to construction of Belle Meade Country Club. Wrenhaven was one of the earliest substantial residences during this period of development of Belle Meade. Russell provided a detailed overview of the property's historical and architectural significance. Vice Chair Rost called for a motion to approve the Wrenhaven nomination for submission to the Tennessee State Review Board, Commissioner Bridges moved approval, Commissioner Cusic seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

VIII. INTERIM DIRECTOR'S REPORT – *Scarlett Miles*

Interim Director Scarlett Miles noted that a new staff member, Kaden Otte, will be introduced at the January commission meeting. He is starting next Monday. Dr. Lea Williams has been appointed the new Davidson County historian. He will have a five-year term that expires in 2030. We are moving forward with the roof and signage for the summer house at Sunnyside. Dustin has been undergoing extensive training for a new cloud-based payroll and financial services system.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was announced.

X. ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Caroline Eller shared that the Nashville Conference on African American History & Culture will be held on Friday, February 13th from 9:00am to 4:00pm at Tennessee State University's Avon Williams Campus. Both in-person and virtual attendance options are available. Registration will open in late December or early January. This year's theme, suggested by Dr. Williams, is "From Roots to Resilience: Reclaiming Black Journeys, Stories, and Legacies Across Tennessee."

Commissioner Burke noted that today is the 161st anniversary of the Battle of Nashville. His great-great grandfather served in the Union Army, and he helped commemorate the U.S. Colored Troops with an MHC historical marker a couple years ago. Vice Chair Rost thanked him for this reminder.

Commissioner Bailey mentioned that the Battle of Nashville Trust contacted him about updating the Civil War driving tour pamphlet. Interim Director Miles said she would make note of this so we can assist.

Commissioner Richmond inquired about our plans for the sesquicentennial in July, and Vice Chair Rost said that had not yet been determined.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Rost adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted Monday, January 26, 2026.

Caroline Eller