



METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC) MINUTES FEBRUARY 23, 2026

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held its regular meeting at the ITS Enterprise Conference Room, Third Floor, Howard Office Building, 700 President Ronald Reagan Way, on February 23, 2026, with Chair Linda Wynn presiding.

Attendance

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

Staff Members: Caroline Eller, Jessica Fitzpatrick, Dr. Adam Fracchia, Bryan Gilley, Russell LeSturgeon, Scarlett Miles, and Kaden Otte were **present**. Hannah Zeitlin (Metro Legal) was **present**.

County Historian: Dr. Lea Williams was not present.

Guests: Jeff Syracuse, Board President, Friends of Two Rivers

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. She verified that a quorum was present after the roll call of attendance.

II. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES – *Chair Linda Wynn*

Chair Wynn presented the February 2, 2026 special called meeting minutes for approval, noting that this meeting was rescheduled from January 26 due to weather. Commissioner Richmond moved to accept the minutes. Commissioner Bridges seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT – *Chair Linda Wynn*

Chair Wynn opened the floor for Public Comment. Seeing no members of the public wishing to speak, the Commission moved to the next agenda item.

IV. FRIENDS OF TWO RIVERS – *Jeff Syracuse, Board President*

Jeff Syracuse, Board President of the Friends of Two Rivers, presented an overview of the organization's history, current programming, and future plans. He described the Friends group's origins in 2010 as the Friends of Two Rivers Mansion, its partnership with Metro Parks and the Metropolitan Historical Commission, and the development of a master plan for the Two Rivers site.

Mr. Syracuse discussed the recent \$4.5 million restoration of Two Rivers Mansion,

which addressed water damage caused by improperly installed copper flashing during the original \$1.2 million dollar restoration. He noted that Stone Hall, a 1919 Colonial Revival structure on the Ravenwood Country Club property subsequently acquired by Metro, served as an important revenue-generating venue during the two-year closure of the mansion. The organization has since rebranded as “Friends of Two Rivers,” dropping “Mansion” from its name to reflect the expanded scope of properties.

Mr. Syracuse highlighted the organization’s growing tour and educational programming, including free school field trips, an “Enslaved to Freedom” program, and Irish heritage events. He described upcoming events including the Music at the Mansion series, featuring a Nashville Opera program, the Nashville Symphony on June 6th, and other performances, as well as movies at the mansion, an Easter egg hunt, and the annual Evening of Elegance fundraiser on May 1st.

Looking ahead, Mr. Syracuse described plans for a Two Rivers Cultural and Education Center to be built on the property, which would allow the mansion to be converted into a more interpretive destination. He also noted aspirational goals including a potential Nashville History Center at the site and plans to activate Lock Two Park. He invited all Commissioners to attend the next free open house on March 3rd and the 15th annual “Phil the House with Art and Friends” event on Sunday, May 3rd.

Commissioner Richmond asked about the relationship between the water damage to the 2010 flood, and Mr. Syracuse clarified that the damage was primarily the result of the installation error rather than being flood related. Commissioner Bridges asked about the balance between private events and public programming, and the history of musical performances at the mansion. Mr. Syracuse noted that Stone Hall has been used successfully for weddings and other events, including a sold-out Gatsby Soirée on Valentine’s Day.

V. HISTORICAL MARKERS – *Jessica Fitzpatrick*

Jessica Fitzpatrick presented six proposed historical markers for the Commission’s consideration. All markers had been approved by the Marker Committee on February 17, 2026.

a. Peabody Manor Apartments / Henry C. Hibbs

Jessica presented a privately funded, double-sided marker to be located at 1901 Capers Avenue. One side will address Peabody Manor Apartments, designed by Henry C. Hibbs in 1923 as part of a movement to provide elegant apartment living for Nashville’s growing population. The reverse side will cover Henry C. Hibbs himself, a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and first president of its Tennessee chapter, who designed numerous prominent Nashville buildings including Peabody College, Scarritt College, and Fisk University Library. Commissioner Rost moved to approve. Commissioner Bridges seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

b. Cumberland Heights

Jessica presented a privately funded marker to be located at 8283 River Road Pike. The marker had previously been approved but was brought back before the Commission after a board member requested a minor text revision while the marker

ceremony was postponed due to weather. The revised text describes Cumberland Heights, founded in 1966 by Robert M. Crichton Sr. and Dr. Thomas F. Frist Sr., and its expansion over the decades to serve more than a hundred thousand patients and families. Commissioner Hoobler moved to approve. Commissioner Jones seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

c. Cecelia Nabrit Adkins

Jessica presented an updated, double-sided marker funded through the Participatory Budget, to be located at 1022 Archer Street. The marker had been returned to the Marker Committee at the February 2 meeting for additional revisions, including adding the address of the home, referencing her husband John Willis Adkins, and their funeral home, and noting that this was their residence. The revised double-sided format provided sufficient space to document Adkins' many accomplishments, including becoming the first woman to head a denominational publishing house, the first woman to chair the Fisk University Board of Trustees, and the first African American woman on the Metro Nashville School Board. Commissioner Rost noted appreciation for the revisions and for retaining the detail that all eight siblings in the family graduated from college. Commissioner Rost moved to approve. Commissioner Richmond seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

d. Joseph B. Mullins / John Michael Mallette Jr.

Jessica presented a privately funded, double-sided marker to be located at 4000 West Hamilton Road at Joseph B. Mullins Park. Side one covers Joseph B. Mullins (1865–1943), a farmer, minister, and community developer who helped develop housing in the Bordeaux area in the 1920s and for whom the park is named. Side two covers John Michael Mallette Jr. (1960–2021), a devoted public servant who, together with his mother Pazetta Berryman Mallette, rallied the community to acquire the land easement that made the Whites Creek Greenway possible. Commissioner Bridges moved to approve. Commissioner Cusic seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

e. Home of Miranda and Moses McKissack III

Jessica Fitzpatrick presented a double-sided marker funded through the Participatory Budget, to be located at the current address of 1425 Edgehill Avenue (historic address: 1501 Edgehill Avenue). The Commission discussed the address discrepancy and Commissioner Hoobler proposed using the current address for clarity, all agreed. Side one covers Moses McKissack III (1879–1952), co-founder of McKissack & McKissack (1905), the nation's first Black-owned architectural firm, and his wife Miranda Winter McKissack. Side two covers the broader history of the firm and its Nashville works, including references to Calvin L. McKissack. Minor text corrections were noted during discussion by Commissioners Rost, Hoobler, and Bailey, including adding a comma after "Lewis Winter," and updating "raised" to "reared" and "their Nashville works include" for grammatical consistency. Commissioner Hoobler moved to approve with these corrections. Commissioner Richmond seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

f. Home of Geneva and Calvin Lunsford McKissack

Jessica Fitzpatrick presented a privately funded marker to be located at 1503

Edgehill Avenue, noted as a contingency approval in the event that the privately funded marker moves forward. The marker covers Calvin Lunsford McKissack (1890–1968), co-founder of McKissack & McKissack, who lived at this address with his wife Geneva Windham McKissack. Commissioner Bailey discussed spelling out “Texas” in full and removing an erroneous capitalization caused by autocorrect. Commissioner Richmond moved to approve. Commissioner Hoobler seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

g. Marker Program / Event Updates

Jessica announced that the First Masonic Hall historical marker will be dedicated on Saturday, March 14th at 11:00 a.m. She noted that several additional markers will be installed in March, though no other ceremonies are currently planned. She indicated that further information would be communicated to Commissioners as it becomes available.

VI. INTERIM DIRECTOR’S REPORT – *Scarlett Miles*

Interim Director Scarlett Miles introduced Kaden Otte, the new landscape and gravestone repair worker at Nashville City Cemetery. Kaden holds a degree in building preservation and restoration, has interned at Stratford Hall in Virginia, and most recently worked at Yorktown National Cemetery.

Scarlett reported that the Commission has a budget hearing with the Mayor’s Office and Metro Finance scheduled for Wednesday, February 25th at 12:20 p.m. via Webex, with Vice Chair Rost attending alongside staff. The Commission’s budget requests include a 4% operating increase of approximately \$15,000 for waterproofing and sump pump work at Sunnyside; \$60,000 for the marker program (\$40,000 for new markers and \$20,000 for repairs and replacements); a capital improvement budget of approximately \$8,000,000 over four years for the Nashville City Cemetery; a new Public Information Representative position; and the elevation of one Historic Preservationist 1 position to Historic Preservationist 2. She noted that all Metro departments have been advised to expect a lean budget year.

Scarlett noted that the deadline for architectural preservation award nominations has been extended to March 9th and encouraged Commissioners to promote the awards program. She also asked Commissioners to hold Monday, March 23rd for finalist interviews for the Executive Director position, noting that the schedule and location would be confirmed by Metro HR.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

No other formal business was announced.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Burke announced that the documentary “Tide Turners,” about U.S. Colored Troops in Tennessee, was airing on PBS that evening at 9:00 p.m. Central Time, with an encore the following Thursday, February 26th.

Chair Wynn congratulated Commissioner Cusic and Dr. Mary Ellen Pethel on receiving the Book of the Year Award from the Tennessee Historical Society and the Tennessee Historical Commission for their book, *Howdy! The Minnie Pearl Story*.

Commissioner Richmond asked for updates on any Metro plans for July 4th / America 250 programming. Jessica noted that Nashville Sites is seeking a meeting with the Nashville Convention and Visitors Corporation to learn more about potential plans, given that July 4th falls on a Saturday this year.

Vice Chair Rost congratulated Chair Wynn and the organizers of the Nashville Conference on African American History & Culture, which several Commissioners attended and which received very strong attendance. Commissioner Phillips noted that Vanderbilt University Press sold over \$600 in books at the conference, exceeding sales from multi-day festivals, and praised the event as an excellent venue for reaching engaged readers and community members.

Chair Wynn thanked Caroline and Kristie Green at Tennessee State University for their logistical support of the conference. She noted that she may consider passing the conference chair role to Dr. Williams for the 46th annual conference next year.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Cusic moved to adjourn. Commissioner Bridges seconded. Chair Wynn adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted Monday, March 16, 2026.

Russell LeSturgeon