



METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC) MINUTES JUNE 15, 2026

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held its regular meeting at the Howard Office Building, Sonny West Conference Center, 700 President Ronald Reagan Way, on June 15, 2026, with Chair Linda Wynn presiding.

Attendance

Commissioners:	John Bridges, Gary Burke, Dr. Don Cusic, Dr. Erica Hayden, Jim Hoobler, Dr. Jane Landers, Dr. Bill McKee, Sandra Parham, Betsy Phillips, Dr. Marisa Richmond, Vice Chair Laura Rost, and Chair Linda Wynn were present. Dr. Clay Bailey, Kaitlyn Jones, and Tom Wood were not present.
Staff Members:	Caroline Eller, Dr. Adam Fracchia, Bryan Gilley, Russell LeSturgeon, Scarlett Miles, Trevor Porter, Claudette Stager, and Dustin Summers were present. Justin Marsh (Metro Legal) was present.
County Historian:	Dr. Lea Williams was not present.
Guests:	Mack Scott, Joanne Jones and Leonard Johnson, Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church; Anne-Leslie Owens, Metro Arts Commission (guest speaker)

I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND WELCOME – *Chair Linda Wynn*

Chair Linda Wynn called the meeting to order at approximately 12:06 p.m. She verified that a quorum was present after the roll call of attendance.

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

Chair Wynn presented the May 18, 2026, meeting minutes for approval. Commissioner Cusic moved to accept the minutes. Commissioner Bridges seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. After the passage of the vote, Commissioner Landers identified an error under Announcements—Council Member Suara attended the meeting at the Green Building, not Council Member Vo. Commissioner Hayden moved to amend the approved May meeting minutes. Commissioner Phillips seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT – *Chair Linda Wynn*

Chair Wynn opened the floor for Public Comment. Mr. Mack Scott with Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church asked to wait until the historical marker agenda item to speak; Chair Wynn agreed.

IV. “Reflections of Nashville: How History Informs and Shapes the City’s Public Arts Collection” – *Anne-Leslie Owens, Public Art Collections Manager, Metro Arts Comm.*

Ms. Owens provided an overview of the Metro Arts Commission and its Public Art Program. The Metro Arts Commission was established in 1978 under Mayor Richard Fulton. The department initiated its grant program in 1988 and established its public arts program in 2000. Metro Arts program areas include Grants and Strategic Initiatives, Restorative Practices and Equity, Communications and Community Engagement, and Public Art. The Public Art program oversees the Percent for Public Art program, artwork donations to Metro Nashville Government, as well as temporary art projects. Ms. Owens provided background on the Percent for Public Art program, which was established in 2000, and reviewed the process for commissioning and purchasing public art, including the role of the Public Art Committee and other major decision makers (commissioners, staff, and the Community Selection Panel), the recruitment and selection process for artists, and the process steps from location identification to project closeout. She provided an overview of Metro’s Public Art Collection, describing several specific artworks located across the county and highlighting the history that informed and inspired their creation. Ms. Owens walked through the process for *Witness Walls*, located at the Historic Metro Courthouse, as MHC commissioners and staff were involved in that project. She also provided an update on the Arthur Avenue/Interstate 65 *Be As Water* project that will be dedicated later this summer.

Commissioner Bridges shared his involvement in the early formation and history of the Arts Commission. Commissioner Richmond asked about the application process to serve on the Community Selection Panel. Commissioners asked various questions about art depicted in the presentation and commented on other artists and their work.

V. HISTORICAL MARKER: Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church – *Scarlett Miles*

The commission invited guests from Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church to provide public comment. Mr. Mack Scott, an officer with the church, spoke on behalf of the group. He thanked the commission for approving the church’s request for the marker. He noted that he was there in 1955 when the church moved to its present location. Chair Wynn thanked Mr. Scott and the group for attending today’s meeting, putting forth this historical marker, and for coming out to support it.

Commissioner Richmond asked about the church’s former location and the other African American churches located downtown prior to the Capitol Hill Redevelopment Program. Chair Wynn identified the churches, but Ms. Miles and MHC staff did not have Mt. Olive’s former address readily accessible. [ed. The church was located on Charlotte Avenue near Eighth Avenue North.] Ms. Miles also mentioned that last month the Metro Historic Zoning Commission (MHZC) approved the designation of the church as a historic landmark zoning overlay district. Russell LeSturgeon prepared the property history and presented it to the MHZC.

Commissioner Richmond moved to approve the historical marker for Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church. Commissioner Landers seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

VI. ANNUAL EVALUATION FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – *Vice Chair Laura Rost*

As chair of the Budget and Human Resources Committee, Vice Chair Rost presented an overview of the committee's Annual Evaluation for Executive Director Caroline Eller. Committee members Marisa Richmond, Jim Hoobler, and Laura Rost, with Chair Wynn as ex officio, met on June 4 to review Director Eller's performance over the past 60 days. The committee used Metro HR's Annual Evaluation Form and were able to provide a substantive evaluation of Director Eller's work because of past experiences with her as a staff member. [Committee members were also supplied with a supplemental staff report covering her work in both staff roles held during FY26.] However, they had no basis for evaluating her performance on some of the form's questions. Chair Wynn and Director Eller have signed the evaluation form, which has been provided to commissioners for review. Vice Chair Rost stated that because Director Eller has only been in the role for 60 days [start date was 3/31/26], the committee did not feel qualified to evaluate her performance for a merit pay increase. Therefore, the committee did not recommend the 2% merit pay increase.

Commissioner Phillips moved to accept the Annual Evaluation for Executive Director Caroline Eller. Commissioner Richmond seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT – *Director Caroline Eller*

Director Eller introduced Justin Marsh, Metro Legal, who is attending today's meeting on behalf of Hannah Zeitlin.

Director Eller provided an update on the department's budget. Dustin Summers has been analyzing the end-of-year budget for salary and fringe fund savings as well as below-the-line operating funds. We have requested use of the \$40-\$45k salary and fringe fund savings but have not received approval from Metro Finance. We have under \$5k in below-the-line operating funds to use before the end of the fiscal year on June 30. At its meeting on June 2, Metro Council approved the 4% funding request for \$1 million for City Cemetery. These funds will be utilized for GPR study, monument repair, and improvements to lighting and security. We are awaiting final sign-off before the funds are released.

Director Eller provided several updates to ongoing projects at Sunnyside. We are working with the Master Gardeners on water management near the building through plantings and improved drainage in the courtyard. The Gardeners are also preparing for the new demonstration garden behind the log outbuilding. We've received approval from Parks to move forward with waterproofing in the basement and hope that will be completed in a few weeks. Thanks to a generous contribution from the Friends of Sevier Park, repairs are moving forward on termite damage to the Stone House floor as well as water damage to the walls and trim. Metro Parks is managing the floor repairs, while Russell is coordinating quotes for restoration of the walls and trim. Finally, we are making progress converting the downstairs storage room into a Mother's Room in anticipation of Jessica's return from maternity leave in early July.

On June 13, the Nashville City Cemetery Association dedicated a memorial bench to the enslaved Nashvillians buried in the cemetery. Chair Wynn and Commissioners Burke,

Hoobler, and Phillips attended and participated. It was an excellent event and very well attended. The Metro Photographer was present, and we will share images from the event.

Chair Wynn echoed praise for the dedication ceremony. She acknowledged Bryan Gilley for his great work and thanked Claudette Stager and Commissioner Hoobler for their participation in the event and their work with the NCCA. Those who did not attend missed a great event. Commissioner Hoobler provided a brief overview of the program, which included opening remarks by Chair Wynn, remarks by Davidson County Historian Dr. Lea Williams, a poem and invocation by Commissioner Gary Burke, a performance by a Fisk Jubilee singer alumnus, and commentary by Commissioner Betsy Phillips. Vice Chair Rost noted the publicity for the event, including an article published by the *Nashville Banner* and video coverage by News Channel 2.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

No other formal business was announced.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

No other announcements were made.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Cusic moved to adjourn. Vice Chair Rost seconded. Chair Wynn adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted Monday, July 20, 2026.
Scarlett C. Miles