



METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC) MINUTES July 20, 2026

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held its regular meeting at the Howard Office Building, Sonny West Conference Center, 700 President Ronald Reagan Way, on July 20, 2026, with Chair Linda Wynn presiding.

Attendance

- Commissioners: Dr. Clay Bailey, John Bridges, Gary Burke, Jim Hoobler, Kaitlyn Jones, Dr. Jane Landers, Dr. Bill McKee, Sandra Parham, Betsy Phillips, Dr. Marisa Richmond, Vice Chair Laura Rost, and Chair Linda Wynn were present. Dr. Don Cusic, Dr. Erica Hayden, and Tom Wood were not present.
- Staff Members: Caroline Eller, Jessica Fitzpatrick, Bryan Gilley, Russell LeSturgeon, Scarlett Miles, and Dustin Summers were present. Hannah Zeitlin (Metro Legal) was present.
- County Historian: Dr. Lea Williams was present.
- Guests: Ann McGauran, Tennessee State Architect (guest speaker) David Plummer, Centric Architecture (guest speaker)

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

Chair Linda Wynn called the meeting to order at approximately 12:05 p.m. She verified that a quorum was present after the roll call of attendance.

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

Chair Wynn presented the June 15, 2026, meeting minutes for approval. Commissioner Bridges moved to accept the minutes. Commissioner Landers 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, Chair Wynn moved to the next agenda item.

IV. “State Capitol Complex: Where History Meets Innovation” – *Ann McGauran, Tennessee State Architect & David Plummer, Centric Architecture*

Ms. McGauran provided an introductory history of the State Capitol Complex, including the Tennessee State Capitol and the War Memorial Building. Ms.

McGauran and Mr. Plummer explained the recent rehabilitation of both buildings. The earliest photograph of the State Capitol was taken for military purposes during the Civil War. The rehabilitation team used this historic photograph and others, as well as original architectural drawings for the doors and windows, to guide the repair and replacement of the building's windows. The original windows were a casement design but were replaced with double-hung windows over time. As part of this rehabilitation, the windows were returned to the original casement design. Mr. Plummer detailed work completed on the building's cupola, roof, and gutter system. Rehabilitation work of the War Memorial Building included restoration of the memorial plaques, window hardware, bronze features, terrazzo floors, and stairwells. The project has also improved accessibility of the War Memorial Auditorium and restored an obscured lightwell. Ms. McGauran also provided a brief overview of the Capitol Visitors Center and military museum and redesign of the War Memorial Plaza; construction on these spaces should be completed by the end of 2026. Commissioners asked several questions about the project as well as the Office of the State Architect and the State Building Commission.

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

Director Eller thanked Ms. McGauran for speaking to the commission and thanked Commissioner Jones for the recommendation. She encouraged commissioners to share recommendations for future guest speakers.

Director Eller provided an update on the department's budget. Dustin Summers has been working to close out FY26. He has closed out the final encumbrances for FY26 and has implemented the FY27 Pay Plan with Across the Board and merit increases for staff. Director Eller thanked Mr. Summers for his due diligence with these tasks.

Director Eller provided an update on MHC staffing, reporting that Claudette Stager will be able to stay on into FY27. We are moving forward with filling the vacant HP1 position that Dir. Eller previously held. This position will focus on the Davidson County Cemetery Survey management, grant seeking and management, and community engagement outside of grants projects.

Director Eller acknowledged Kaden Otte and Bryan Gilley for their work at the Nashville City Cemetery, including their participation in Nashville City Cemetery Association (NCCA) programming such as the Memorial Bench dedication (June 13) and Descendant's Day (June 28). Dir. Eller also expressed appreciation to them for manually opening and closing the cemetery gate for the past two months as it awaited repairs. The gate has been completely repaired and is now opening and closing automatically. Metro Parks provided over \$16,000 to fully fund the historically appropriate repairs, which we greatly appreciate. Work on the Keeble Building continues with The Tradesman Group planning to replace four windows and the roof. Security cameras will be installed as well. The \$1 million of 4% funds for City Cemetery are now available and Mr. Gilley is currently requesting bids for GPR study and monument repair.

Director Eller has provided commissioners with a copy of the Final Order from Chancery Court regarding the *Works v. Metro* lawsuit. The Court ruled in Metro's favor [that the remains may not be disinterred] but the petitioner will have 30 days to file an appeal.

Director Eller provided details about the Nashville Historical Foundation's annual fundraiser that will be held on Thursday, September 17, at the former Ben West Library. The foundation will be honoring Tim Walker, Executive Director of the Metro Historical Commission from 2009-2025, at this event.

Finally, Director Eller noted that this is Commissioner Jim Hoobler's last meeting as a member of the Metropolitan Historical Commission after almost twenty years of service. He has been a valuable member of the commission, and Director Eller expressed appreciation for his service and guidance. Chair Wynn presented Commissioner Hoobler with a Certificate of Merit, which he accepted with appreciation. Director Eller noted that Commissioner Hoobler will be joining the board of the Nashville Historical Foundation in August.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

No other formal business was announced.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Wynn welcomed Dr. Williams to the meeting. She also welcomed Jessica Fitzpatrick who is returning to the office after maternity leave. Commissioner Phillips reported that she is working with Dr. Williams and Chair Wynn on researching the slaves of the corporation, if anyone has research to share. Mayor O'Connell supports recognition of these individuals. Commissioner Parham reported that she has hired Dr. Jessica Hanson as the new archivist at Meharry. Dr. Hanson worked on the historical marker for Black Bottom.

To conclude the meeting, Commissioner Hoobler, upon request by Commissioner McKee, recounted some of the highlights of his 50-year career as a historian, museum professional, and dedicated volunteer.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Hoobler moved to adjourn. Vice Chair Rost seconded. Chair Wynn adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted Monday, August 17, 2026.
Scarlett C. Miles