



METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC) MINUTES

August 17, 2026

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held its regular meeting at the Howard Office Building, Sonny West Conference Center, 700 President Ronald Reagan Way, on August 17, 2026, with Chair Linda Wynn presiding.

Attendance

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

Staff Members: Caroline Eller, Jessica Fitzpatrick, Dr. Adam Fracchia, Bryan Gilley, Russell LeSturgeon, Scarlett Miles, and Claudette Stager were present. Justin Marsh (Metro Legal) was present.

County Historian: Dr. Lea Williams was not present.

Guests: Jill Meese, Nashville Historical Foundation, President (guest speaker)
Phil Thomason, Thomason and Associates

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

Chair Linda Wynn called the meeting to order at approximately 12:02 p.m. She verified that a quorum was present after the roll call of attendance. Two commissioners arrived after roll call.

II. APPROVAL OF JULY MEETING MINUTES

Chair Wynn presented the July 20, 2026, meeting minutes for approval. Commissioner Richmond moved to accept the minutes. Commissioner Burke seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

IV. NASHVILLE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION OVERVIEW AND UPDATES

Jill Meese, Nashville Historical Foundation (NHF) Board President, provided an update on the work of the NHF over the past year. The NHF supports historic preservation projects and community education through signature programming including Nashville Sites and the Ann Roberts Lecture Series. As the nonprofit friends group that assists the MHC in its efforts to identify, protect, study, and interpret Nashville's history, the NHF sponsors MHC programs, such as the Nashville Conference on African American History and Culture and the 50th Annual Preservation Awards, provides grant-matching funds to support dendrochronological study and ongoing cemetery and architectural survey work, and helped fund the construction of the Summer House at Sunnyside in Sevier Park. The NHF's 2026 fundraiser, *Sipping through History: Echoes of the Ben West Library*, will honor Tim Walker, MHC Executive Director from 2009 to 2025. Ms. Meese provided details about the event and invited commissioners to attend.

Chair Wynn encouraged commissioners to support the NHF and its work.

V. NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

a. Coca-Cola Bottling Plant, 1525 Church Street

Claudette Stager presented the nomination of the Coca-Cola Bottling Plant, located at 1525 Church Street. The MHC reviews and provides comments on Davidson County's nominations to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as part of its Certified Local Government (CLG) duties. Philip Thomason of Thomason and Associates prepared the nomination.

The Coca-Cola Bottling Plant is being nominated to the NRHP as a notable example of Nashville's early 20th century commercial architecture. Completed in 1926, the building was designed by prominent Nashville architect, Donald Southgate, and is locally significant under Criterion C for its architectural character. The design utilizes decorative elements associated with "Tapestry Brick" forms of the 1920s. The building was enlarged in 1940 by George Waller, another well-known Nashville architect, to match the original design with similar brick, concrete detailing and storefronts. The building was expanded twice more but has had few major changes since the last expansion ca.1955; it possesses a high degree of integrity. The period of significance extends from 1926 to 1976, spanning from its construction to when The Coca-Cola Company built a new bottling plant and vacated the property.

Commissioners inquired about plans for the site. Mr. Thomason reported that a development group from Atlanta has plans for a multi-use project at the site. Ms. Stager noted that listing in the NRHP opens the possibility of tax credits and grants. Mr. Thomason agreed; the development group is exploring a preservation easement and potential tax credits for this project. Commissioner Wood moved to approve the nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the

Coca-Cola Bottling Plant. Commissioner Bridges seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The State Review Board will review the nomination at its meeting on September 18, 2026.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Caroline Eller welcomed new commissioner Jay Brothers to the MHC.

Director Eller updated the commission on several departmental items:

Budget: Nearly \$80,000 in unallocated salary funding was discovered after accounting for all FY27 funded and unfunded position costing. Finance has instructed MHC to utilize it on approved staffing needs. At this time, that means increasing the hiring rate of the incoming HP1 position or pursuing step increases to our three Step Grade employees. We are awaiting further direction from Metro Finance as these solutions may not make use of all of the unallocated funds.

Sunnyside: After over a year of discussion, Metro Parks has agreed to take over Sunnyside's billing account with Metro Water Services (MWS) for FY27 and future billing. Dustin Summers' diligent tracking of our water expenses and uses revealed that MHC uses less than 20% of the water that feeds to the main house, public restrooms, Carriage House/Café, and public tennis court water fountain in Sevier Park, yet MHC was covering 100% of the bill in FY26. For FY27 and going forward, MHC will continue to track its water usage and will reimburse Parks for its portion each year.

F27 Objectives: At the request of the Mayor's Office, Director Eller submitted the department's FY27 objectives, to support our goals and metrics for the year. The FY27 objectives are focused on our grants program, community outreach and engagement, refinement/expansion of our archaeology program, education and heritage tourism, and engagement with the development of the forthcoming countywide preservation plan.

Archaeology: Director Eller highlighted the work of Dr. Adam Fracchia and volunteers with the Nashville Public Archaeology Program. Recently, Dr. Fracchia picked up a collection of artifacts from the Tennessee Division of Archaeology. These artifacts will be curated and made available to researchers.

Nashville City Cemetery: The Tradesman Group continues to scrape and paint the exterior gates at the Nashville City Cemetery. We have received bids for ground penetrating radar (GPR) work to be completed in sections 21, 24, 28, and 30 and a contract will be awarded soon. Kaden Otte continues to photograph section 28. Those photos will be used to help create a conditions assessment to be used in bidding out for repairs.

88 Hermitage: Russell LeSturgeon and Claudette Stager continue to work on a plan for 88 Hermitage, with hopes to hold an interdepartmental meeting to discuss preservation options for this historically significant Metro-owned property.

Nashville Sites: Jessica Fitzpatrick and Russell LeSturgeon completed installation of signage for the Historic Second Avenue Walking Tour, which is now live. The Nashville Sites team is also promoting the project as part of the *Nashville Scene's* 2026 Best of Nashville voting, where Nashville Sites is competing in the "Best Free Fun" category. Jessica and Russell are also working with Bryan Gilley on early drafts of text for the forthcoming Nashville City Cemetery tour focused on the Revolutionary War and frontier life in early Nashville.

Biennial Reports: The National Park Service recently issued an acceptance letter for the Biennial Report for the Customs House, submitted by our office in April. Director Eller and Russell LeSturgeon are currently reviewing the draft Biennial Report for Union Station, due to the National Park Service on September 30.

Grant Updates: Russell completed procurement for the dendrochronology grant, funded by a preservation grant from the Tennessee Historical Commission. Russell is also preparing the grant acceptance package for the HUD Community Project Funding grant supporting building repairs and historical interpretation at American Baptist College. We recently received news that our grant application to the Tennessee Historical Commission to support architectural survey has been approved for 2026-2027 funding.

Historical Markes: We installed the Don Q. Pullen marker last week and the dedication ceremony will take place on August 18 at 2:00pm in Hadley-Lillard Park.

Commissioner Wood asked if IT issues at Sevier Park had been resolved. Director Eller answered yes. Commissioner Bridges inquired about lighting along the steps at the main entrance to Sunnyside. Director Eller acknowledged the concern and agreed to look into it.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

No other formal business was announced.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Wynn encouraged commissioners to attend the Don Q. Pullen marker dedication. She also thanked MHC staff for their work. Commissioner Burke encouraged commissioners to take the Fort Negley Nashville Sites tour, which he voices, and other tour voiced by MHC members. Commissioner Phillips mentioned Mayor O'Connell will be on her podcast (Aunt B's Radio Hour) to discuss a Civil Rights/Nashville History Museum. Also, she has a story about Rebecca Higgins, who

is buried in the City Cemetery, coming out in the *Nashville Scene* very soon.
Commissioner Burke thanked Dr. Fracchia and his team for work at Fort Negley.
Commissioner Jones noted that Phase 3 of the Centennial Park Master Plan is complete and will reopen very soon.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Cusic moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Burke seconded.
Chair Wynn adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted Monday, September 21, 2026.
Scarlett C. Miles

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