METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC) MINUTES

September 21, 2026

The Metropolitan Historical Commission held its regular meeting at the Howard Office Building, Sonny West Conference Center, 700 President Ronald Reagan Way, on September 21, 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, Dr. Bill McKee, Sandra Parham, Betsy Phillips, Dr. Marisa Richmond, and Chair Linda Wynn were present. Dr. Clay Bailey, Vice Chair Laura Rost, and Tom Wood were not present.
Staff Members:	Caroline Eller, Jessica Fitzpatrick, Dr. Adam Fracchia, Russell LeStourgeon, Scarlett Miles, Claudette Stager, and Dustin Summers were present. Justin Marsh (Metro Legal) was present.
County Historian:	Dr. Lea Williams was not present.
Guests:	Menié Bell, Nashville Historical Foundation, Board Member

I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND WELCOME

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.

II. APPROVAL OF AUGUST MEETING MINUTES

Chair Wynn presented the August 17, 2026, meeting minutes for approval. Commissioner Bridges moved to accept the minutes. Commissioner McKee seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

III. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 14 SPECIAL CALLED MEETING MINUTES

Chair Wynn presented the September 14, 2026, special called meeting minutes for approval. Commissioner Bridges moved to accept the minutes. Commissioner Cusic seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Wynn opened the floor for Public Comment. Speaking on behalf of the Nashville Historical Foundation (NHF), board member Menié Bell expressed appreciation for the members and staff of the MHC and thanked the MHC for its support of the NHF fundraising event last week. It was good to see commissioners at the event, which honored former MHC Executive Director Tim Walker. Additionally, she expressed her personal impressions related to agenda item VII Certified Local Government (CLG) Discussion. She has watched the recording of last week's Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission (MHZC) meeting during which that body held its own CLG discussion. She appreciated the wise words of Commissioners Jones (who is also on the MHC), Price, and Dr. Williams. Candidly, her observations of the current situation remind her of 2025 and the deconstructing of MHC and MHZC transitioning to Planning. She encouraged MHC members to watch the recording of that meeting on the Metro Government's YouTube channel to see how the MHZC views this proposal. She noted that the verbiage of Mayor O'Connell's letter to the MHZC and/or MHC was not openly shared at the meeting, but references were made that it was clear that it was a direct mandate from the mayor. [Note: MHC has not received a letter from the mayor at any point regarding this matter. Director Eller later confirmed with Ms. Bell that her comment was in reference to the August 28 email from Kristin Wilson, former mayor's office Chief of Operations, to Dir. Eller about a change to the CLG point of contact.] During that meeting, MHC Commissioner Jones, who is also on the MHZC, expressed that MHC members were "blindsided" by the mayor's letter at the MHC's Special Called Meeting on September 14. The NHF was informed of the MHC's (commission) statement. Several MHZC commissioners expressed that the process was in "poor form" by not including MHC and not having prior formal notice and discussion of the proposed restructuring of the CLG program. It is disappointing and disrespectful to the MHC staff and commissioners and their expertise in historic preservation. As a former member of the MHC and MHZC, she is disappointed to once again be in the midst of non-transparency and missed opportunities for collaborative engagement between Metro departments. After hearing responses from Planning Department representatives at the MHZC meeting, she is not compelled to trust their responses to be engaging and to work things out, and they will have to prove their intentions to this commission.

V. HISTORICAL MARKERS

A. New Historical Markers – Jessica Fitzpatrick presented three new historical markers, as approved by the Historical Markers Committee:

1. Carden & Cherry Advertising – This privately-funded marker will be placed near 1220 McGavock Street. The text presented to the commission is updated text that was revised by the sponsors and thus is different from what was posted prior to the meeting. Commissioner Bridges recommended checking the spelling of "premier." Commissioner Landers moved to approve the historical marker text as presented. Commissioner Hayden seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Salem Mason/"Slaves of the Corporation" – Funded by Metro Government, this marker will be placed along Hermitage Avenue near the former location of the waterworks plant. Commissioner Phillips, who worked on the research and text for this historical marker, stated that she was excited to see this marker moving forward. Salem Mason was an interesting person and a valuable source of history. He gave a long interview to a newspaper before his death that tells us a lot about Nashville during the 19th century. Chair Wynn noted that a street in North Nashville is named after him. Commissioner Richmond asked about his role in the Water Department. Commissioner Phillips replied that he laid water pipes, helped build the waterworks, and was assigned various tasks throughout his enslavement and emancipation. He also served as an invaluable source of institutional knowledge (when and where works were constructed, etc.). Commissioner Richmond moved to approve the historical marker text. Commissioner Cusic seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Patti Myint – Funded by Metro Government, this marker will be placed at 2010 Belmont Blvd, near the former site of International Market and Restaurant. Ms. Fitzpatrick referred to the letter of support from Council Member Terry Vo, provided to the MHC prior to the meeting. CM Vo is working on several historical markers recognizing Asian American heritage in Nashville. Commissioner Bridges asked if the image would be in color; it will not. Commissioner Bridges moved to approve the historical marker text. Commissioner Richmond seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

B. Marker Updates – Jessica Fitzpatrick provided the MHC with a schedule of upcoming marker dedication ceremonies: Nashville Business College, 10/1 at 11:30am; Tennessee Tribune, 10/3 at 11am; Central Tennessee College, 10/15 at 1pm (noted appreciation to Commissioner Parham with Meharry and Commissioner Hayden with Trevecca for facilitating collaboration between the two institutions for this marker and ceremony); Thomas Tichenor, 10/20 at 1pm; Dr. George Hubbard/Dr. William Sneed, 10/20 at 2pm; North Branch Library, 10/23 at 11:30am; Frist Art Museum, 10/27 at 11:45am; Bass Street Community, 12/5 at 10:30am, with more to announce next month. Commissioner Richmond asked about the dates with multiple dedications. Ms. Fitzpatrick mentioned that the marker sponsors schedule the ceremonies and occasionally dates overlap. Chair Wynn noted the recent passing of Rosetta Miller-Perry, founder of the *Tennessee Tribune*. Ms. Miller-Perry was looking forward to the marker's dedication. Ms. Fitzpatrick noted that Ms. Miller-Perry's daughter will be present; Vivian Wilhoite has been working with the family on planning the event.

VI. PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND SECTION 106 UPDATES

Dr. Adam Fracchia, MHC archaeologist, presented an overview of the Public Archaeology Program, as well as an update on Section 106 and proposed changes to the program; he manages both programs for the department. Dr. Fracchia provided metrics for the archaeology program since September 2025, including his own work as well as the work accomplished by volunteers in the field and laboratory. He described future goals for the program, which include establishing an archaeological ordinance to protect and recover data from Metro property; developing process and coordination between Metro agencies; enforcing standardization and efficiency; protecting Metro properties (and their archaeological resources); building a staff of archaeologists; securing dedicated funding; and establishing a facility for archaeological collections.

Next, Dr. Fracchia provided the MHC with an overview of the Section 106 review process. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA, 1966) is the foundation of historic preservation in the United States. Section 106 under the NHPA requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their projects on historic properties either listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It provides structure for the consultation process, which allows interested parties to participate, and serves as an important tool for citizens to lend their voice in protecting and maintaining historic properties in their communities. The process encourages but does not mandate preservation. Dr. Fracchia noted that 90% of archaeological excavations completed in the United States are completed as part of the Section 106 process. He provided a high-level overview of the steps in the process and gave examples of recent projects, noting MHC staff involvement as the CLG and Metro's preservation department. Dr. Fracchia also provided an update on proposed changes to Section 106. On July 24, 2026, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) approved a complete proposed modification of the regulations

(36 CFR Part 800) implementing Section 106. The public comment period has not opened for these revisions. Instead of today's step-by-step consultation process, involving states, tribes, local governments, applicants, parties with a demonstrated interest, and the public, under the new framework federal agencies will prepare their own Section 106 reports that unilaterally: 1) determine the extent to which historic properties are identified and how they are identified; 2) evaluate a narrowed range effects on those properties in narrower areas of potential effect; and 3) decide whether or not any mitigation will take place and without the need to consider alternative approaches for avoidance or minimization of adverse effects. The role of State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, Certified Local Governments, and other consulting parties would be reduced to responding to a lead federal agency's already-completed analysis. The new framework would also narrow the undertakings subject to Section 106, excluding many state or locally administered federal programs, projects involving an undefined "minimal" federal funding or oversight, or those actions carried out under delegated federal authority. It would also limit participation by narrowing who can participate in the Section 106 review as the "consultation" process has been rewritten so that agencies need only "seek and consider" the views of others.

Commissioner Landers requested a short summary to assist with submitting comments when the period to do so opens. Commissioner McKee thanked Dr. Fracchia for the first part of the presentation and his work in the archaeology program. Commissioner Burke echoed appreciation for Dr. Fracchia's work at Fort Negley. Asked if he would be participating in Archaeology Day, Dr. Fracchia said he would be at Bells Bend Park this coming Saturday. Commissioner Brothers asked additional questions to clarify understanding about the changes to Section 106 and who commissioners should contact in response. Dr. Fracchia recommended contacting elected representatives and the ACHP with personalized comments. Chair Wynn thanked Dr. Fracchia for the overview.

VII. CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CLG) DISCUSSION

Executive Director Caroline Eller thanked commissioners for attending the Special Called Meeting last week on September 14 to discuss the restructuring of the CLG duties within Metro. Commissioner Bridges asked if anyone had talked to Mayor O'Connell. Commissioner Phillips said she did. Commissioner Bridges expressed that he thinks Chair Wynn should. Chair Wynn said that was under consideration. Commissioner Brothers said he had listened to the audio recording of the meeting. He asked Justin Marsh if he is only representing MHC at this point or if he is also working with the Planning Department, implying concerns about the potential conflict of interest in representing multiple departments, particularly the MHC and Planning Department which seem to have an adversarial relationship. Mr. Marsh explained that the Department of Law represents all Metro departments. They have looked at the matter and have found no legal conflict. In reviewing federal, state, or local laws, under the agreements, they found nothing illegal in the actions.

Commissioner Brothers asked if the Historical Commission wanted to take a responsibility from another board or commission, if the mayor's office gave permission, could that be done without any legal repercussions. Mr. Marsh responded that he wasn't ready to address the hypothetical situation, but if the code does not speak to, or speak clearly to, the department's duties, it is discretionary. Commissioner Brothers understood that Mr. Marsh would need to look at such a situation further but wanted to mention it.

Director Eller brought up point of clarification regarding the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MHC and Planning in 2025, which both the Planning Director and the Council member who sponsored the legislation have referred to recently. Director Eller read Section V.4 of the MOU, "Continuing Education for the MHZC. The Planning Department will ensure that the MHZC is provided with all required training necessary to maintain their status as a Certified Local Government (CLG) under the National Historic Preservation Act, in coordination with the Tennessee Historical Commission's CLG program." This does not state that the MHZC is the CLG. Neither the MOU nor the associated legislation refer to the transfer of broad CLG duties to the Planning Department along with the MHZC. As a follow up to Commissioner Bridges's earlier question asking if Chair Wynn had had a chance to meet with the mayor, Commissioner Phillips asked Chair Wynn if she had talked to the mayor yet, Chair Wynn said no. Commissioner Phillips asked if he had reached out. Chair Wynn said that to her knowledge, he has not reached out to her, but she also acknowledged that it is possible that he sent something to her old email address, but she has not received anything at her personal email or phone.

VIII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Due to the shortage of time, a Director's Report was not provided.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

No other formal business was announced.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

No additional announcements were made.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Cusic moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Brothers seconded. Chair Wynn adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted Monday, October 19, 2026.
Scarlett C. Miles