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MELROSE HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FOR MONDAY DECEMBER 1, 2025 @ 7PM

This meeting of the Melrose Historical Commission was conducted via in-person participation in the Conference Room at the Melrose Public Library, Melrose

CALL TO ORDER

This regular meeting of the Melrose Historical Commission was called to order by Chair Shane Egan at 7:00PM. Members in attendance included Rebecca Blumenthal, George Biblios, Joe Hunt, and Darren Brown. Members Cath Giliberto and Gentry Andrews were absent. MHC high school volunteer Lucy Ferrante was also in attendance. There were four members of the public present.

ORDERS OF BUSINESS

The first order of business was to approve the previous meeting's minutes from November 3, 2025. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

The second order of business was to open the forum for comments from the public. Four members of the public were present and three spoke during the open comments period.

- Rob Tullis was introduced. He was an invited guest of the MHC to speak regarding the Benjamin Lynde House on behalf of the Historical District Commission.
- Nancy Clover indicated that she had been communicating with the Parks Department regarding a new sign for the Mary Livermore Park. She indicated that the Parks Department would appreciate the Historical Committee providing some suggestions for a briefly worded descriptor for the sign.

- Tamara Shovelton, Director of Veteran Services for City of Melrose, indicated that she was attending in response to the posted agenda stating that the MHC would be discussing Melrose veterans.

DISCUSSION

I. *Review Public Comment Policy*

II. *Benjamin Lynde House Sale/Demolition Delay/Expansion of Historic District*

- a. *See 11.3.25 meeting minutes for earlier discussion of the MHC response to the sale of the 244 Main Street property, also known as the Benjamin Lynde House.*
- b. Demolition Delay legislation is on the agenda for vote at the City Council meeting tonight. Chair Egan recapped his attendance at the City Council Legal and Legislative subcommittee meeting last week.
 - i. The subcommittee voted to move it forward to the full City Council for vote.
 - ii. The date for structures effected by this legislation was set as construction earlier than 1900. Historical Commission is supportive of moving the forward and would also be supportive of amending the 1899 date sometime in the future.
 - iii. *Note: The Demolition Delay was passed during the City Council meeting on 12.1.25.*
- c. Two ways to approach protecting a structure such as the Benjamin Lynde House: Demolition Delay and Historic District status for single structures. Rob Tullis from the Historic District was invited to speak at the MHC meeting tonight to discuss more about the process of obtaining Historical District status. Rob Tullis and Chair Egan have been tasked with creating the preliminary report on creating a Local Historic District for the Benjamin Lynde house.
- d. Rob Tullis discussed with the Commission that both Demolition Delay (DD) and Local Historic Districts (LHD) are concerned with preserving the historic built environment. DD just delays the demolition of historic properties, slows down

development. LHD is concerned with preserving the visible structure. The existing Melrose Downtown Historic District stretches from Emerson St. (southern side) to Foster St. (southern side) on Main St.

- i. The MHDC has been discussing expanding boundaries of the Downtown district. The sale of the Benjamin Lynde House started a process of discussing expanding to single building Historic Districts. 122 cities and towns in MA have local historic districts including 100s of single parcel LHDs.
 - ii. Chair Egan and Rob Tullis are creating a preliminary study that will go before the Massachusetts Historic District Commission that comments on the study for revision. There will be a process created to reach out to abutters, seek public comment. Finally, it is submitted to City Council where it is voted on and enacted.
 - iii. Questions posed by Rob Tullis for consideration: What are appropriate boundaries to protect the Benjamin Lynde house? Should the MHC/MHDC combine more parcels for this first process? Should MHC/MHDC create a list for future studies? How to solicit input from the public?
- e. MHC discussed moving forward with this single parcel or perhaps including the three Lynde houses.

III. Sewall Wright Memorial Follow-Up from Professor Govindaraju and Update from Parks Dept. Meeting plus planned social media post

- a. *See 9.8.25 meeting minutes for earlier discussion regarding honoring the geneticist Sewall Wright, born in Melrose*
- b. Chair Egan summarized past discussions for the benefit of the public in attendance.
- c. Parks Department is still looking for an appropriate stone to place a marker on Conservation Land of Sewall Woods adjacent to his birthplace. Dr Govindaraju will submit a paragraph of wording for the plaque. Dr. Govindaraju has indicated that he will have sources to fund the plaque. He is currently out of the country.

IV. *Summit Ave Development*

- a. *See 9.8.25 meeting minutes for earlier discussion of a citizen request for more information about the archaeological relevance of this development parcel.*
- b. Darren Brown updated the committee. The State archaeologist has received the letter he authored regarding this parcel. Will wait another month to hear back before following up.

V. *Historic Home Plaque Program Project Update*

- a. *See 10.16.23 meeting minutes for a summary of the Historic Home Plaque Program*
- b. Joe Hunt provided an update. One plaque is pending. Joe will follow up with the sign company directly.

VI. *November Vietnam Veteran's Social Media Post Status*

- a. *See 11.3.25 meeting minutes for earlier discussion of the Social Media posts created in November to honor the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War and to remember the 11 Melrose men who lost their lives during the conflict.*
- b. Chair Egan reviewed this topic for the benefit of the attending public. The MHC received lots of positive feedback from the public regarding these social media posts.

VII. *"Renovation Done Right" Social Media Recognition Planning*

- a. *See 11.3.25 minutes regarding an award or recognition for historically accurate renovations.*
- b. Chair Egan proposed reaching out to homeowners that were willing to share their renovations with the public. Focus would be on the positive aspects of the

renovations and restorations. Rob Tullis from MHDC has offered to provide his architectural knowledge for commentary.

- c. Chair Egan has proposed running this social media series starting next year and repeating it several times annually.

VIII. *MHS Senior Internship Planning*

- a. The commission continued to brainstorm ideas including updating and researching existing walking tours, cemetery tours, incorporating a history bike route, perhaps incorporating QR Codes or geotags, and videography to preserve oral history.
- b. Chair Egan will follow up with MHS regarding the January submission date.

IX. *Social Media Post Ideas related to the Holidays*

Chair Egan sought input on ideas for social media posts during the holidays. Meanwhile, he will plan to promote the Historic Home Plaques and post information regarding the Demo Delay City Council results.

X. *Potential of Map Education Seminar*

- a. *See 11.3.25 minutes for earlier discussion of possible Melrose map seminar.*
- b. Melrose resident and historical geographer Garrett Dash Nelson who works for the Leventhal Map and Education Center and Altoscope.org has offered to present a map education seminar. Chair Egan will attempt to reserve the library conference room for this event, possibly in March.

XI. *Walking/Driving Tour Ideas*

See MHS Intern notes, above.

XII. *Other Business*

- a. The MHC high school volunteer is working on an interesting social media series. Lucy Ferrante researched Melrose on the Patents website and found several

interesting items associated with our city related to marshmallow crème, beans canning, gold leaf, and musical instruments.

- b. Lucy is establishing a Melrose Historical Club at Melrose High School and is interested in more public service-related projects.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Monday, January 5, 2026, at 7pm and is currently planned to be held in the Conference Room of the Melrose Public Library.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Egan at 8:20pm.