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**MELROSE HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FOR MONDAY FEBRUARY 2, 2026 @ 7PM**

*This meeting of the Melrose Historical Commission was conducted via in-person participation in the Lower Level Conference Room at the Melrose Public Library, 69 West Emerson Street, Melrose MA*

**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, Darren Brown, and Cath Giliberto. Gentry Andrews was absent. MHC high school volunteer Lucy Ferrante was also in attendance. There was one member of the public present. Gene Yee, Melrose resident, spoke about his family’s involvement in preserving the Anna Eva Fay historic home on Franklin Street and mausoleum in Wyoming Cemetery.

**ORDERS OF BUSINESS**

The first order of business was to approve the previous meeting’s minutes from January 5, 2026. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

The second order of business was to open the forum for comments from the public.

**DISCUSSION**

- I. ***Review Public Comment Policy***
  
- II. ***Demolition Delay—Status of Commission Change from Advisory to Regulatory***
  - a. *See 1.5.26 meeting minutes for earlier discussion of Demolition Delay.*

- b. The City Council meeting tonight will be voting to finalize the process of turning the Historic Commission into a regulatory body. This new status will give the MHC the support of the Melrose Planning Board on matters regarding Demolition Delay.

**III. *Expansion of Local Historic Districts—Update from Historic District Commission***

- a. *See 1.5.26 meeting minutes for earlier discussion of the expansion of Local Historic Districts in Melrose.*
- b. The Melrose Historic District Commission met in January and voted to proceed with the process of creating a Local Historic District for the Benjamin Lynde House. As part of this process the MHDC will forward the application to the Massachusetts Historic Commission for comment. They are continuing to consider future properties for similar action.

**IV. *Benjamin Lynde House Update—Neighborhood Meeting/Historic District Commission Meeting—Changes to Design***

- a. *See 1.5.26 meeting minutes for earlier discussion of the Benjamin Lynde House.*
- b. Kim Vandiver, Melrose City Councillor for Ward 5, hosted a meeting at City Hall in January where neighbors of the Benjamin Lynde House development were able to air their concerns regarding neighborhood impact.
- c. The developer's plans for the Benjamin Lynde project's façade and layout continues to evolve.

**V. *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 has sent a second letter to the Massachusetts Historic Commission but has still not received a reply. He has sent another follow up email as well.

**VI. *Historic Home Plaque Program Project Update***

- a. *See 10.16.23 meeting minutes for a summary of the Historic Home Plaque Program*
- b. Another order has neared completion, marking about 6 plaques in total that have been completed.
- c. Joe Hunt suggested ways to streamline and encourage more interest in the program via social media and increased visibility.
  - i. Social Media—Joe Hunt recommends an on-going series of short posts including:
    - 1. Introducing plaque program
    - 2. how to obtain plaque—the different characteristics that make a home distinctive such as architectural importance, view scapes, preservation.
  - ii. Looking for ideas to improve the application format and facilitate the distribution of the application, either by making a digital application available on the City of Melrose website and/or by making applications available in places such as the Melrose City Hall, City Clerk’s office, or the Melrose Public Library.
- d. *Please see addendum to this month’s meeting minutes for more details and action items on this topic.*

**VII. *MHS Senior Internship Update***

Chair Egan has enrolled the Melrose Historical Commission in the Melrose High School Senior internship program. We will find out in a few months if any high school seniors are interested in volunteering with the MHC.

**VIII. *Social Media Post Status***

The Sewall Wright social media post written by Cath Giliberto well received. The Parks Dept. and the DPW are working with the MHC to locate a suitable stone to

serve as a memorial for Sewall Wright to be placed at Sewall Woods, adjacent to his birthplace.

**IX. *Set Date for Next Research Your Home Night***

Rebecca Blumenthal will contact the VFW on Main St. to secure a date for the spring Research Your Home Night. It was determined that the most suitable date would be May 6<sup>th</sup> (or April 29<sup>th</sup>).

**X. *Other Business***

a. ***Next meeting -Mary Stetson Clark award. Do again? Criteria this year?***

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Chair Egan asked members to be ready to discuss the Mary Stetson Clarke Award at the next meeting. He encouraged members to think about the future of the award including future criteria, having already awarded it twice based on Life Time Achievement to Melrose's history.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be Monday, March 2, 2026, at 7pm in the lower level Trustees Room at the Melrose Public Library.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Egan at 8:00pm.

***Addendum: Historic Home Plaque Program Notes—Vice Chair Joe Hunt***

RAISING AWARENESS OF HISTORIC HOME PLAQUE PROGRAM

SOCIAL MEDIA

- A SERIES OF SHORT POSTS DESCRIBING VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE HISTORIC HOME PLAQUE PROGRAM
  - Purpose and significance of the historic home plaque program
  - How to obtain a plaque
  - Historical Value
  - Commercial Use
  - Architectural Importance
  - Social Context
  - Family Domicile
  - Important Sites, Areas, Region
  - Viewscape or Streetscape
  - Preservation Effort Recognition
  - Summary, Conclusion, Invitation
  
- IMPROVE APPLICATION FORMAT AND CONTENT
  - Change Application Form to Simplified PDF Form
  - Change Plaque Information from Letter format to Brochure and Business Card Formats
  
- IMPROVE APPLICATION AVAILABILITY
  - Make Information and Application Electronically Available (Our City Site?)
  - Place Printed Materials on Info Tables and Bulletin Boards (Supermarkets, City Hall, Library, Milano Center)
  
- ENCOURAGE PLAQUES FOR HIGH VISIBILITY SITES
  - Downtown Main Street (With Historic District Input & Approval!)
  - Public Buildings (City Hall, Main Fire Station, Memorial Hall, Library, Lincoln School, Bebee Estate, Mount Hood Clubhouse [1936], etc.)
  
- PRESENTATIONS
  - Chamber of Commerce Networking Events, Council on Aging, Melrose Public Library

- MMTV, Podcasts
- OTHER
  - Photos of Plaques Being Fabricated
  - Join Chamber of Commerce ?
- A series of posts describing our plaque program and its features
  - Purpose and Significance of the Historic Home Plaque:

The Historic Home Plaque program serves to publicize and symbolically acknowledge Melrose structures that are at least 75 years old. Why the 75-year criteria? Considering a generation (socially) as 15 – 20 years, then 75 years is about 4 to 5 generations. Over this span these buildings have had sufficient time to contribute to the city’s past in a variety of ways, such as: historical, commercial, architectural, social, domicile, sites, viewscapes, significant preservation efforts. Info on how to get plaque. Photos of plaques (sample and installed)

- Historical: A property may have been the residence of a notable individual or the location of a memorable event in the city’s history. Possible Examples: Benjamin Lynde House, Joseph Lynde House. Photo of example structure
- Commercial: Some structures may be associated with small locally recognized businesses or industries, such as shoe manufacturing, car radios, or even marshmallow production. Example: Old Wyman House (MEL.12, Shoes)
- Architectural: Certain houses stand out as excellent examples of noteworthy architectural styles or display the influence of a famous architect. Example: Victorian Gothic, 75 Vinton Street
- Social: A building or location may have served as a hub for community gatherings, such as a clubhouse, skating rink, park or auditorium. Example: Mount Hood Clubhouse, Memorial Hall
- Domicile: Most importantly, but often overlooked, many homes are significant in their role as family residences, providing a safe, nurturing environment for generations of occupants who have called Melrose home. Example: plus photo.

- Sites: Sometimes an open area with no or few incidental structures are locations of historical or social significance. Parks, panoramas, playgrounds, nature reserves are common examples. Examples: Dog park , Melrose common.
  
- Viewscape: City planners and architects often consider a street and their adjacent objects as a room (street) with furniture (structures and spaces). Collectively, they set the mood, status, and function of the area and provide context for both the individual structures and included sites. Over time some of these more unique “streetscapes” become visually memorable or significant historically, architecturally, or scenically. Example: Summer Street Streetscape (MEL.I)
  
- Recognition of Preservation Efforts: The display of a Historic Home Plaque is also a public acknowledgment of the efforts made by homeowners and others throughout the decades. These individuals have dedicated their time, talent, and resources to maintain, repair, and preserve their properties. The cumulative commitment of these stewards has kept these homes alive to become “honored elder assets” of Melrose- and thus plaque worthy! Example: House being repaired (such as roof siding), photo: 20 Chestnut Park interior
  
- Summary and Conclusions Hope you enjoyed this series. Historic Commission. How to get Application Welcome to attend meetings either as observer or to speak to one of our agenda items
  
- Category Posting Format
  - A Photograph of the category example
  - A Discussion of what the Category is
  - Discussion of how photograph example displays the category’s features
  - Plaque pitch – How to get application