

MELROSE HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FOR MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7th, 2022 @ 7PM

Pursuant to An Act Relative to Extending Certain State Emergency Accommodations signed into law by Governor Baker on July, 16th, 2022, this meeting of the Melrose Historical Commission was conducted via remote participation

CALL TO ORDER

This regular meeting of the Melrose Historical Commission was called to order by Chair Kate Monea at 7:04pm. Members present in addition to Chair Monea were Vice Chair Tom Champoux, Secretary Kimberly Marolda, Joe Hunt, Kate Roberts, and Shane Egan. One member of the public was present, Erin Kirby.

ORDERS OF BUSINESS

The first order of business was to approve the previous meeting's minutes from October 11th, 2022, which were universally approved by the Commission.

Second order of business was to open up the forum for comments from the public for which there were no immediate comments.

DISCUSSION

- I. *Mass Historical Commission Survey and Planning Grant:* Chair Kate Monea recapped the details of the grant and where it stands now.
 - a. The grant would co-fund a city-wide reconnaissance archaeological survey, which would be a first for the City; this survey would look mostly at sites with potential ancient historical context to identify sites of significance. The City can then do what it wishes once any sites have been identified, but the Commission must first get approval from City Council followed by approval from Mayor Brodeur for the cost-sharing of the grant (maximum funding needed would be \$20K; grant matches funding up to an additional \$20K, equaling a total grant resource of \$40K). This is only an informational survey, so any proceedings or discovery related to the survey should not be outside of the grant's budgetary scope.

City support must be secured by November 14th, 2022, which is the deadline for the full application; this grant is awarded annually, so if support is not secured in time, the Commission can apply again in autumn of 2023.
 - b. Chair Monea noted that while it is likely that the City Council would approve the grant, Mayor Brodeur believes that an approval would not be prudent at this time due to

current budgetary constraints affecting both the town's bottom line and public opinion; namely, educational budget limitations which take priority over new Commission initiatives.

- c. Joe Hunt expressed the need for a game plan should any major archaeological finds stemming from future surveys be found, especially should any finds occur on private property. He also mentioned the lack of professional expertise on the current Commission roster, specifically in the fields of archaeology, archivists, city planners, architects, historians, etc. He believes this could pose a problem should any major findings arise in future surveys.
- d. Chair Monea declared that the survey application will be tabled for this year, but should be revisited in Q3 2023 for the following fiscal year.

II. *148 Myrtle Street Update:* The Planning and Zone Boards have approved a development project on this site, which includes a demolition of the existing house which has historical implications to the City. As a condition of approval by the Planning Board, the developers were encouraged to work with the Commission to take photographs, document the building, and salvage desired elements from the property.

- a. The developers are Matt and Joe Roman of Brown Dog Properties, and Commission members met with them on 10/27 to walk the property. It was discovered during the walkthrough that both the barn and the second floor of the house were locked off and unavailable to the Commission for survey.
- b. The developer was able to gain access to the second floor a few days later. Photos of the second floor were sent, but nothing of note was observed for preservation. Developer will keep the Commission informed of future steps regarding the development of the property.

III. *Site Documentation Processes:* The walkthrough of the Myrtle St. property highlighted the lack of any formal documentation on hand for historical site inspections. Kate Roberts volunteered to research checklists that can potentially be used moving forward.

IV. *Historic Home Signage Program:* This Program had previously been covered by other parties of Melrose city government. Commission members Joe Hunt and George Bibilos again offered to volunteer their time to research historical and city archives, town program comparisons, and the internet in order to serve the continuation of the Program under the Commission. This research will include costs associated with maintaining such a program. Hunt will focus on cities south of Melrose, with Bibilos focusing on cities to the north of Melrose.

- a. Joe Hunt presented information found by George Bibilos (not present) on neighboring town Wakefield's robust program, which he encouraged we emulate. This program places a large part of the research responsibility on the homeowner requesting the signage. It was mentioned that this could be a good tie-in to future "Research Your Home" nights once the Public Library has completed renovations.

- b. Roberts and Secretary Marolda pushed to define next steps... Program criteria will need to be developed, with the biggest issue being the determining factors of what constitutes signage and what doesn't, i.e. age of property, type of architecture, etc. Cost of homeowner participation will also need to be established, as well as the aesthetic of the signage itself (look of sign, details listed, placement of sign on the house). An application and verification process will also need to be created to ensure that all details are correct and appropriate for the signage once approved, in addition to a guideline for applicants detailing the program. A design vendor will also need to be vetted to determine cost and aesthetic, in addition to channels for advertisement once established.
 - c. Chair Monea will research with the City as to what kind of program approval is necessary.
- V. *High School Internship Program:* Shane Egan drafted a proposal to connect with the Melrose High School to establish a photography internship, which could be utilized by the Commission to update our archives with interior / exterior photos of historically significant buildings. Egan will continue to research how to set up such an internship in addition to drafting a program of what the internship would entail as well as deliverables based on guidance from the High School.
- VI. *Website:* Vice Chair Champoux recapped which sites the Commission currently owns, in addition the Wordpress page currently integrated into the City's site. The City page would be our ideal primary site moving forward, and any other sites would need to be removed or migrated to the City site in order to streamline materials.
 - a. Chair Monea walked the Commission through the current state of the Wordpress site, going over various sections currently built out, such as blog posts, maps, Commission overview, etc. This site is not yet live and is still under construction.
 - b. Chair Monea, Vice Chair Champoux, and Roberts will continue working to build out the site and iron out any back-of-house logistics.
- VII. *Social Media Projects:* Jim Bennett, former Commission member, currently contributes to the Commission's social media accounts and has invited current members to assist with writing posts should anyone be interested. Chair Monea and Vice Chair Champoux are the only current Commission members with log-in credentials to the social media sites, and posts must go through them to ensure quality and consistency. There is no set social media schedule for postings or any other campaigns currently in place; all posts are currently ad hoc.
 - a. Secretary Marolda recapped two ideas for future posts, focusing on both stories for shorter bursts of activities in addition to the current long-form postings. These ideas included walking tour highlights through various neighborhoods as well as behind-the-scenes site visits (such as Myrtle St.) to highlight the activity of the Commission. Chair Monea encouraged the Commission to brainstorm other ideas for content, including more short-form concepts to keep with the current trends of social

media use.

- VIII. *ArcGIS Digital Mapping Services:* Roberts recapped how the utilization of a digital aerial mapping service, [ArcGIS](#), could potentially be used to designate where historic buildings are in the city. This service includes interactive options, such as clickable data per building in addition to social and / or cultural maps that could be layered onto the initial map of Melrose, all of which would showcase historical trends and points of interest in the area.
- a. Roberts shared her screen to highlight the features of this cloud-based service, including the aerial maps and subsequent details that could be drilled down upon by the user. Roberts will continue to research pricing and the capabilities of the platform, including color-coding and map layering.
 - b. The potential to utilize our future High School internship program was discussed, as it would take great effort to get information and documented photos for each building as they are currently outlined on the mapping site; onus would be on the Commission to update the topography of each map with demolitions and new developments as they occur.
- IX. *Other Business:* Chair Monea touched base on the 28 Greenwood St. development proposal, as Mayor Brodeur has approved the Commission to draft a letter of support in denying the demolition. This letter would echo the City's concerns which have already been expressed to the developer. Chair Monea will draft the letter and share once complete.

NEXT MEETING

Chair Monea reminded the Commission of the next scheduled meeting date of December 5th, 2022, at 7pm. This meeting will be held virtually with a Zoom link to be sent out prior to the date; this message will also include the agenda for the upcoming December 5th meeting as well as the minutes for the November 7th meeting for review.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Monea at 8:17pm.