

MELROSE HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FOR MONDAY, APRIL 3rd, 2023 @ 7PM

This meeting of the Melrose Historical Commission was conducted via in-person participation in the Cassidy Room of City Hall, Melrose

CALL TO ORDER

This regular meeting was called to order by Chair Kate Roberts at 7:00 pm. Members present in addition to Chair Roberts were Vice Chair Tom Champoux, Secretary Kimberly Marolda, Joe Hunt and Shane Egan. General members of the public were present, including former MHC chair Jim Bennett and community concern presenter Megan McDonough and Laura Eisener, President of the Saugus Historical Society.

ORDERS OF BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS SESSION – universally approved by the Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Megan McDonough revisited the desire for an archaeological review of the NEMT (Northeast Metro Tech School) construction site. *See meeting minutes from 3.6.23 for a summary of the initial discussion*

Laura Eisener, President of the Saugus Historical Society, echoed Megan's desire for more archaeological research to be done on the site.

Former Commission Chair Jim Bennett said that we have no jurisdiction over the construction, but do have interest as one of the towns that is contributing to the taxpaying costs for the school. He noted we can write a letter of support to the Wakefield Historical Commission, but there is nothing else we can do.

McDonough mentioned that there are archaeological resources on the property, namely school-owned pathways within the reservation that cover original tribal sites and mentioned that state-level resources have been proven to be fruitless from the [MA Historical Society](#), the [MA Historical Commission](#), and the [MA Archaeological Society](#) with no attention paid to her requests for advocacy.

Bennett said that we can reach out to the above groups saying that we have concerned citizens within the community who do not support this construction and that we are one of the 12 towns roped into paying for it, and that our citizens have stated that their groups are ignoring

them and that we as local government with a vested interest in historical preservation would like to have an answer so we can have something to tell the concerned citizens.

DISCUSSION

1. *Wayfinding Signage Project in Collaboration with Office of Planning & Community Development*

1. *See 3.6.23 meeting minutes for a summary of the project.*
2. No updates as of yet. We are waiting on the decision from the Office of Planning & Community Development for which images will be used.
3. Egan asked if we are in charge of the selection or if we are just making suggestions? Roberts is asking the Office of Planning & Community Development for more information.
4. Champoux to continue researching options for the Ell Pond photos.

2. *Website Progress*

1. *See 3.6.23 meeting minutes for a summary of the project.*
2. Champoux and Roberts had met with the City IT Department to discuss. The City has offered to train members of MHC on how to build the webpage through the City website.
3. Bennett noted that this work is better suited for paid City employees as opposed to volunteer MHC members.

3. *Research Your Home Night*

1. Location, date and time all confirmed (Temple Beth Shalom on May 10th at 7:00 pm)
2. Decided capacity would be set to 20 houses.
3. Registration to be managed through the MHC email (historicalcommissionofmelrose@gmail.com).
4. Advertised throughout the City by posting fliers (drafted by Roberts) in public places, in addition to postings on our social media sites and a press release from the Mayor's office.
5. Champoux and Egan volunteered to present during the event.
6. Hunt will present a mock-up of the physical plaque for the future signage program.
7. Champoux will create a list of items to bring for each member to donate.

4. *Melrose Historical Commission 50th Anniversary Celebration Planning*

1. *See 3.6.23 meeting minutes for a summary of the proposed celebrations.*
2. Egan revisited the idea of posting historic photos in shop windows along Main Street and other commercial districts. He presented two samples of images posted on foamboard, provided by Miter Biter.
3. Commission determining:
 1. Who will pay for the photos? The businesses or the Commission?
 2. How will this promote the Historical Commission? Should there be a blurb about us below the photos?

4. What context will be provided to the photo? Bennett cautioned that any contextual blurbs need to focus on educational history as opposed to nostalgia for the “aww look at that” feeling
5. Egan has already pulled photos that could be utilized by street but needs to research context
6. Marolda suggested we first see what we have as resources (images and text) to determine which businesses we approach to see if they 1) like the photo and 2) approve the text
7. Marolda mentioned that the origin of this idea was to tie into the Victorian Fair to promote awareness and celebration of the Commission in addition to tapping into the sense of community building that already exists through the Victorian Fair
8. Marolda suggested the photos themselves would be the nod to nostalgia and the blurbs would be the educational component
9. Intern Riley suggested we could have a guide of all the photos with their addresses and more detail about the building to hand out at our booth... could tie it in to a photo hunt or a scavenger hunt for any children in attendance
 1. Bennett mentioned that previous Fair participation from the Commission included a scavenger hunt that proved to be quite popular with raffle prizes being donated GCs from local shops
10. Bennett suggested we also get approval for this photo placement (and funding) from the Mayor so as not to put the choice to participate and the potential financial onus on the businesses
11. Hunt suggested that for those who we have no photos for, we could provide a little plaque with similar branding to honor their history
12. Public Guest asked what the value of promoting the Commission would be other than gaining more followers to our social media pages, how do we tie it in to explaining what it is we actually do
 1. Marolda said that it can help secure revenue through promoting events with donation options in addition to alerting the public of us as a resource to help support their curiosity and their historical advocacy endeavors
 2. Bennett and Champoux both echoed that it is also a storytelling sense of community building
13. Megan McDonough suggested that it is also a resource to learn about grants that may be available for personal advocacy endeavors (such as her NEMT plight)

5. High School Internship

1. Egan introduced the two high school interns who will be documenting the businesses of Melrose as part of their senior internship.
2. Champoux volunteered to be the back-up contact for the interns.

3. Egan volunteered them to help at the Research Your Home Night.

6. Open Seat

1. Roberts and Champoux have determined a top candidate for vote on the Commission.
2. Champoux and Marolda will determine how to go about voting on the candidate and presenting them to the Mayor for approval.
3. Roberts announced that she is stepping down as Chair but remaining on the Commission.
 1. Marolda volunteered to become Chair and Roberts volunteered to take over as Secretary.
 2. Champoux made a motion to approve, Hunt seconded the motion.

7. Other Business

1. Hunt noted that we lost the cabana banner and suggested we have another one made plus a table banner for events.
 1. Egan noted we have \$1600 in funds available for events.
2. Bennett stated that the Arts on Emerson project needs to be moved to other locations due to a lack of cooperation from the developer.
3. Bennett -- Swains Pond... addressing the past inquiry of where that name came from, Bennett has a copy of city records if anyone is interested in addition to having said info and photos for our social media
4. Bennett -- Melrose Public Library has scanned local newspapers from 1870 – 1924 and have been posted on the library website for anyone who is interested in viewing them
5. Bennett – had recently initiated a GoFundMe to support bricks for the first two veterans of color (Wesley Furlong and Moses Mitchell) to put up at the Vietnam Reflections Area at Ell Pond. He received \$1K in 24 hours, which means that there is definite interest in the community to build these types of monuments... highlights that there is a potential tie-in for future pushes like this
6. Egan brought up the Public Comment policy that had been drafted and the parameters of it / how it applies to us... to review and vote at the next meeting (to be sent ahead of time for review)

NEXT MEETING

Chair Roberts reminded the Commission of the next scheduled meeting date of Monday, May 8th at 7:00 pm. This meeting will be held in-person in the Cassidy Conference Room in City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Roberts at 8:24 pm.