

MELROSE HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FOR MONDAY, OCTOBER 16th, 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 of the Melrose Historical Commission was called to order by Chair Kimberly Marolda at 6:58pm. Members present in addition to Chair Marolda were Vice Chair Tom Champoux, Joe Hunt, George Bibilos, Shane Egan, and new members Rebecca Blumenthal and Darren Brown. There were no general members of the public present.

ORDERS OF BUSINESS

The first order of business was to approve the previous meeting's minutes from September 11th, 2023, which were universally approved by the Commission after a minor edit regarding bullet point grammar from Joe Hunt.

Second order of business was to open the forum for comments from the public, of which there were none.

Third order of business was to introduce new Commissioners Blumenthal and Brown to the group with a quick explanation of their background and interest in local history.

DISCUSSION***I. Review Public Comment Policy***

- a. No members of the public were present, thus eliminating the need to review policy

II. Melrose Memorabilia Storage / Potential Permanent Showcase with special guest Mayor Brodeur

- a. Mayor Brodeur broached the subject of finding space within the community for a potential Melrose Museum
- b. Community members Brad Hutchinson and Scott Macauley both have extensive collections of local memorabilia

- i. Hutchinson has been vocal about the need for permanent presentation and storage solutions regarding private local history collections, and is willing to contribute to the base funding of such a project
 - ii. Commission has previously acknowledged the need for a caretaking succession plan of Macauley's collection
 - c. Commission and City do not have a budget for this project, so fundraising efforts would be required
 - d. Two avenues to explore:
 - i. STORAGE OPTIONS
 - 1. Finding a permanent singular space for storage of all artifacts
 - 2. How to preserve items in storage
 - 3. How to inventory items in storage
 - ii. PRESENTATION OPTIONS
 - 1. Finding a permanent singular space for presentation of all artifacts; or
 - 2. Finding several smaller locations throughout the city to present all artifacts, either permanently or through a rotation of objects
 - e. Next steps
 - i. Reach out to neighboring Historical Commissions / Historical Societies for information on:
 - 1. How they store / present local artifacts
 - 2. How such collections are managed
 - 3. What kind of finances are involved to support such a program and how are said finances raised
 - ii. Explore the local collections of which we have already been informed
 - 1. How big is each collection? How much space would be required for these collections?
How many artifacts are salvageable?
 - 2. How many artifacts are redundant of each other?
 - 3. Local collections include Hutchinson, Macauley, and the defunct Melrose Historical Society
 - iii. Brainstorm potential locations and operating systems for the storage and presentation of any and all items

III. MHC 50th Anniversary Celebration Planning

- a. *See 3.6.23 meeting minutes for a summary of the proposed celebrations.*
- b. Photography Project
 - i. Shane Egan revisited the placement of historic photos in local shop windows, breaking down the cost associated with such an initiative.
 - 1. Printed posters would be displayed in their street windows once printing is complete through November, should they choose to participate
 - 2. Each oversized foamboard mounted poster would be approximately \$35 each

- a. Most posters will be in the size range of 20" x 30"
 - b. Some posters may be smaller sizes due to photo quality or original photo dimensions
 - 3. Egan solicited 53 local businesses
 - a. 19 businesses are either not interested or did not reply to request
 - b. 34 businesses will participate
 - i. 15 of these participants will sponsor their individual posters
 - 1. 2 of these businesses (Gray's Appliance and The Barber's Den) paid extra for a duplicate copy to be made for them to keep along with the original.
 - c. Total of 36 photos will be printed
- ii. Egan walked the Commission through examples of the posters to be published
 - 1. It is not possible to include an MHC banner or individual captions if we were to stay within our budget or adhere to our printing timeline
 - 2. Will include a separate 5x7 or 8x10 display print including banner and captions
 - a. Chair Marolda created said captions to conserve time and money
- iii. Will need to promote the placement of these photos
 - 1. Melrose Weekly News – *Egan to connect and provide copy for publication*
 - 2. Chamber of Commerce – *Chair Marolda to connect and provide copy for publication*
 - 3. Let's Talk Melrose, Melrose plug – *Egan made a guest appearance October 28th session*
 - 4. Mayor newsletter – *Chair Marolda to connect and provide copy for publication*
 - 5. E-Mail blast to RYHN attendees
 - 6. Social Media
 - a. Our site – *Chair Marolda to promote as admin of sites*
 - b. Community pages – *Chair Marolda to share with local sites*
 - c. Old Time Melrose – *Egan to promote as admin of site*
- iv. Commission will need to decide what to do with the photos we ourselves funded once they are collected in December (or earlier if the company wishes to have it taken down)

IV. Historic Home Plaque Program

- a. Joe Hunt revisited an overview of progress that has been made on developing the program
 - i. [Markarian Sign Company](#) in Wakefield can create the plaques for \$104 per plaque; Hunt will inquire about reducing cost to an even \$100 per plaque
 - ii. Details of plaque content
 - 1. Top Line – Short fact about the structure or original ownership (or address if no fact available)
 - a. a.k.a. Curtis Goss House
 - 2. Middle Line – Year of construction (or circa)
 - 3. Bottom Line – Melrose Historical Commission
 - iii. Shape of the plaque (silhouette of a house), size (12"x12") material, lettering type, colors, cost
 - iv. Large sample plaque was presented to showcase weight, material, aesthetic, etc.
 - v. Participation Guidance
 - 1. Residence must be 75+ years old for participation
 - 2. Sell for \$125 per plaque
 - 3. Suggested to be affixed to the right-hand side of front door
 - 4. Signs cannot stray from size and color scheme in order to maintain community consistency
 - 5. Signs must be affixed by the resident; neither Markarian Sign Company nor the Commission will install the signage
 - 6. Residents will need to provide the details for printing and MHC will verify details prior to production
 - a. Shane Egan to confirm details once provided by resident
 - 7. Will need to create participation request form / process for application
 - a. Disclaimer that we must print in batches of 6, so production may take time as we wait for requests to batch
 - i. Turnaround time will vary according to Markarian's workload; wait time should not exceed 2 months but we may need to stay on top of this by touching base with company when an order is in progress
 - b. Proof procedures
 - i. Markarian to e-mail a proof to the purchaser; purchaser to return this proof e-mail indicating approval or corrections
 - 8. Will need to create a payment procedure

- a. Purchaser to pay the Commission directly; Commission to deposit funds into our account; Markarian will bill the city for services rendered
- 9. Will need to create shipping / pick-up process
 - a. Purchasers to retrieve their plaques from Commission directly; can be picked up during any of our regularly scheduled meetings

V. *Treasury Review*

- a. Chair Marolda had previously inquired with the City about how Commission funds had been previously spent and the frequency in which they had been replenished
 - i. City advised that there is no annual operating budget for the Commission, and that funds are replenished through Commission's own fundraising efforts
 - ii. Current balance is \$2,378.75, with this amount having been slowly built up since the account was opened in 2015
 - iii. Expenses this year for our 50th Anniversary Photo Project will deplete roughly half of balance
- b. Chair Marolda recently enrolled the Commission in the [Melrose Chamber of Commerce](#) (\$125.00) and has ordered a vinyl Commission banner from [Quality Branding](#) for future events (\$88.00)
 - i. Chair Marolda is gifting these spends to the Commission and will not be seeking reimbursement
- c. Will need to brainstorm ways to increase regular fundraising efforts to ensure treasury remains at a healthy balance
- d. Chair Marolda to inquire with City regarding tax implications of receiving donations
- e. Will need to establish electronic ways of receiving donations to aid in the efficiency of donation solicitation
 - i. Chair Marolda to inquire with City regarding what electronic parameters other Commissions may work within (Venmo? PayPal?), in addition to inquiring as to any official rules put forth by the City regarding general fundraising

VI. *Melrose Historic Interpretation Inquiry (Mass Cultural Council)*

- a. Boston-area historical interpreter, Meghan Boehmer, approached the Commission for community stories centered around local women and their achievements / cultural impact
 - i. Boehmer is applying for a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to help fund her historical presentations
 - ii. Chair Marolda offered backstories on local figure Mary Livermore and suggested a live presentation at the 2024 Victorian Fair, in addition to school performances to enhance their local history lessons (local history begins in

third grade)

VII. ***Massachusetts Historical Commission Fiscal Year 2024 Survey Planning and Grant Application***

- a. Commission has received this application notice every year in the fall for the past two years and likely has received it on an annual basis prior to that; the Commission has yet to apply for any grants from the MA Historical Commission
- b. Before applying for said grant, the Commission would first need to get approval from Mayor Brodeur followed by approval from City Council for the cost-sharing of the grant
 - i. Maximum funding needed would be \$20K; grant would match funding up to an additional \$20K, equaling a total grant resource of \$40K
- c. Plan for grant use must include planning projects related to the identification, evaluation, and protection of National Register-eligible resources
- d.
- e. Ideas for use of such a grant are (provided all content includes buildings within the Melrose on the National Register):
 - i. 12-month city-wide reconnaissance archaeological survey, which would be a first for the City
 - 1. This survey would have looked mostly at sites with potential ancient historical context to identify sites of significance
 - ii. Community-wide or targeted inventories of historic, architectural, landscape, or archaeological resources or planning (survey plan) projects to prepare for such inventories (such as a Melrose Museum)
 - iii. Preparation of historic preservation public information (such as the continued development of our Historic Building Plaque Program)
 - iv. The development of heritage tourism programs (such as arranging of walking or biking historical tours of the City)
 - v. The development of training or educational materials (such as supplemental local history presentations for our school system)
- f. It was decided that we as a Commission would need more time to reasonably gather a working plan to include on such an application (not to mention a well-designed proposal to the City for support)
 - i. We do not yet know what City Council is going to look like for the 2024 year, nor do we have a consensus amongst the Commission as to what kind of plans and programs would be included for such a grant request
 - ii. Commission will spend the next year working on a proposal so we can hit the ground running with the 2024 application once received
 - iii. Need to be sure that Commission is aligned as to what would be most feasible to execute from a volunteer Commission bandwidth, in addition to what would be the most cost-effective to the City and the most enriching for our community

VIII. ***Other Business***

a. Mayoral candidates for upcoming election

- i. Chair Marolda will create a questionnaire and will circulate for feedback
- ii. Said questionnaire will be sent to each mayoral candidate asking their position on historical preservation and the work of the Commission; note this intended to build a relationship with an incumbent Mayor and is not intended to sway individual voting preferences
 1. What are you looking for from us as an advisory Commission to the mayor's seat? What do you want and / or need from us?
 2. Here's what we are looking for in a candidate... what can you do for us?
 3. What is your position on Demolition Delay?
 4. What is your position on the Community Preservation Act?
 5. What is your intention for future presentation / storage of Melrose historical artifacts (i.e. large private collections or found items)? How do you intend on preserving and presenting these to the public?
 6. Can the Commission get a higher budget / restore the original budget in general?
- iii. Said questionnaire will be sent to final two candidates prior to general election on November 7th, 2023

b. Open Seats

- i. Role of Secretary is available, as Chair Marolda and Vice Chair Tom Champoux have been sharing the role for several months as the Commission awaited the appointment of new members
 1. New member Blumenthal volunteered as Secretary; Chair Marolda to continue acting as such for the October meeting, and Blumenthal will take over for the Commission's November meeting as well as all future meetings
- ii. Chair Marolda recommended adding a new role of Treasurer who would be responsible for the deposit, investment, and disbursement of municipal funds
 1. Important role to fill as the Commission begins to be more donation-heavy, including more frequent Research Your Home Nights, participation in local events such as the Victorian Fair, and the promotion and distribution of the Plaque Program
 2. Treasurer responsibilities per the MA Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services:
 - a. Receive, take charge of, and account for all monies belonging to the Commission
 - b. Maintain a cash book and provide for adequate funds for current obligations, managing incoming and outgoing funds

- c. Creates a monthly report of current balances of income and expenses, and presents this monthly report at the monthly Commission meetings
- d. Keeps copies of bills paid, receipts reimbursed, bank statements, and financial reports
- e. Completes or assists the City in completing any annual federal or state tax returns; provides necessary documents for tax returns

NEXT MEETING

All future meetings have been scheduled to take place in the Cassidy Room of City Hall, the first Monday of every month at 7pm (ongoing room reservation has been arranged). However, our next meeting will be Monday, November 13th, at 7pm due to the local Election Day / Week the week prior.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Marolda at 9:01pm.