

MELROSE HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FOR MONDAY SEPTEMBER 9, 2024 @ 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 Vice Chair Tom Champoux at 7:00pm. Members present in addition to Vice Chair Champoux were Chair Kimberly Marolda, Treasurer Shane Egan, Secretary Rebecca Blumenthal, George Biblos and Joseph Hunt. Member Darren Brown was absent. Special guests Mayor Jennifer Grigoraitis and Communication Manager Tom Dalton of the City of Melrose attended. There were no members of the public present.

ORDERS OF BUSINESS

The first order of business was to approve the previous meeting's minutes from August 12, 2024. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

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

DISCUSSION

I. *Review Public Comment Policy*

There was no need to review the Public Comment Policy as no members of the public were present.

II. *Special Guests Mayor Jen Grigoraitis and Tom Dalton*

- a. Mayor Jen Grigoraitis and Communications Manager Tom Dalton met with the MHC to discuss plans for celebrating Melrose's 175th birthday that officially falls on May of 2025. In 1850 North Malden split from Malden and was incorporated as the town of Melrose. The most recent birthday celebration was in 2000 and focused on the centenary of Melrose becoming a city in 1900.
- b. Memorial Hall will be the site of a public birthday celebration on May 3, 2025. The mayor requested the MHC's participation on an informal party planning committee she is forming. She envisions events throughout the early part of 2025 showcasing the history of Melrose. This anniversary coincides with what is expected to be an important year for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as it showcases the events of 1775

leading up to the 2026 celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary. In as such as the Melrose celebrations link with the state-wide events, there may be state-fund available to Melrose. The mayor would like to roll-out plans to the public at the planned Library rededication in January, leaving 3-4 months to informally plan.

- c. Discussion included suggestions on ways to celebrate Melrose's people, include all the neighborhoods, and involve stakeholders in the historical, cultural and educational community. More specific ideas:
 - i. Involvement of Follow Your Art, Melrose schools, the Chamber of Commerce
 - ii. Incorporating various neighborhoods/wards—self guided walking tours, celebrations in parks throughout the city
 - iii. Incorporating the cultural community—murals, art contests through schools with winners/examples displayed at the Memorial Hall party, an official poem
 - iv. Involving school art departments and students in redesigning a new city flag
 - v. Issuing commemorative collector coins, perhaps as a fundraiser
 - vi. Celebrating the oldest home/structure in each ward
 - vii. Commemorative patches to be worn on team uniforms
 - viii. Celebratory flats hung from downtown light poles
 - ix. Burying a time capsule
 - x. Ward "block parties", potentially with different 25-year periods being celebrated
 - xi. Neighborhood house tours—either self-guided or a QR code hunt
 - xii. "Why is your street named what it is?" research or social media event
 - xiii. Involving The Kitchen—foods of Melrose / old school recipe contest
 - xiv. Church tours
 - xv. Melrose photo context
 - xvi. 2026 calendar of old Melrose as a fundraising item
 - xvii. Tom Dalton suggested a thematic approach as a framework:
 - 1. Melrose in Motion (street cards, railroads...)
 - 2. Melrose at Work (rubber mills, Melrose Marshmallows, Friends Beans, Ice houses, Walker's soda...)
 - 3. Melrose at Play (Mt Hood golf and ski, local Marathoners and Olympic athletes, social and athletic clubs...)
 - 4. Melrose at Home (domestic architecture, local recipes...)
 - 5. Melrose at War (locals history of service)
 - 6. Melrose in Hollywood (highlighting some famous Melrosians in state and film)
 - 7. Women in Melrose
 - 8. Melrose at School
- d. Tom Dalton provided the MHC with more immediate action items:
 - i. He requested that the MHC brainstorm any appropriate historical venues or monuments in Melrose that might be candidates for a rededication related to this anniversary.

- ii. He asked the committee to nominate a member to participate in the birthday party planning committee. Member Shane Egan volunteered to do so. Rebecca Blumenthal offered to fill in as needed.

III. ***Victorian Fair Recap***

- a. *See 8.12.24 meeting minutes for more information on the MHC's Victorian Fair participation.*
- b. Overall, the Victorian Fair was a successful event for the MHC.
 - i. Engagement with the public was constant throughout.
 - ii. The B&W photos brought a lot of people to the table.
 - iii. The marshmallow treats were popular, and people appreciated the hat tip to the Melrose Marshmallow Co.
 - iv. The Historic Home Plaque Program was soft launched at this event, with several homeowners taking applications.
- c. Suggestions to consider for next year:
 - i. Create a QR code or other quick access to land on a page with our social media links and research links.
 - ii. Brainstorm a fundraising opportunity for next year's fair, for example raffling off an opportunity to have a commission member research a homeowner's property.
 - iii. There was no need for wi-fi at the booth this year. There would have been no time to research anything. Alternatively we should provide a handout with RYHN links for any interested parties.
- d. Chair Marolda drew a name for the winner of the Scavenger Hunt. She will reach out to the winner, Pat Thorpe, for a mailing address to send the \$30 gift card prize sponsored by Petrone's Pizza. Alternatively, the winner may pick up the gift certificate at the next meeting, October 15, 2024.

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

- a. *See 10.16.23 meeting minutes for a summary of the Historic Home Plaque Program.*
- b. There have not yet been any email inquiries following the soft launch at the Victorian Fair. Chair Marolda will start promoting it via the press release that was reviewed by members at the 8.12.24 meeting with local press and the MHC social media sites.

V. ***Research Your Home Night Update***

- a. *See 8.12.24 meeting minutes for a summary of Research Your Home Night.*
- b. Chair Marolda contacted names from the 2023 waitlist. Fifty homeowners, accounting for a total of approximately 75 attendees, quickly RSVPed.

- c. Chair Marolda reviewed the list of research links that are useful for homeowners. She reviewed the power point presentation that will be used on September 29.
- d. Shane Egan will confirm the attendance of invited guests including the Melrose Reference/Local History Librarian Shelley O'Brien and local historian Scott Macauley.
- e. Chair Marolda reviewed the evening's schedule. MHC members will arrive at 6pm for setup, including the projector that has been purchased by the commission for this and future events. Mt Hood will provide tables, chairs, screen and microphone. Event is scheduled 7pm-9pm. Members will cleanup 9-930pm.

VI. *MS Clarke Historical Recognition Award Update*

- a. *See 6.5.24 meeting minutes for earlier discussion of the creation of an honorary annual award for the purpose of recognizing a deserving recipient for their demonstrated commitment to the celebration and preservation of the history of Melrose, Massachusetts.*
- b. Due to time constraints, members will proofread the latest draft of the press release at the October meeting.

VII. *Corinthian Hall Update*

Member Joseph Hunt presented his research on the Corinthian Hall development project located at 521-529 Franklin St. He provided members with preliminary information on the planned development as submitted to City Hall.

VIII. *Other Business*

There was no other business.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 15, 2024, at 7pm in the Cassidy Room of City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Marolda at 8:40pm.