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MELROSE HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FOR MONDAY OCTOBER 15, 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 Chair Kimberly Marolda at 7:00PM. Members in attendance included Vice Chair Tom Champoux, Treasurer Shane Egan, Secretary Rebecca Blumenthal, Darren Brown, and Joseph Hunt. Member George Biblos was absent. Invited guests included Scott Macaulay and Pat Thorpe, both residents of Melrose.

ORDERS OF BUSINESS

The first order of business was to approve the previous meeting's minutes from September 9, 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*

As there were members of the public in attendance, Chair Marolda reviewed the public comment policy.

II. *Special Guest Pat Thorpe*

- a. *See 9.9.24 meeting minutes for a summary of the Victorian Fair Scavenger Hunt.*
- b. Chair Marolda presented Melrose resident Pat Thorpe with a gift certificate generously provided by Petrone's Pizza as a prize for her participation in the Melrose Historical Commission Victorian Fair raffle.
- c. Chair Marolda solicited suggestions from Ms. Thorpe as to ways the Commission might continue to engage with community members. Ms. Thorpe suggested broadening activities to include highlights of other Melrose neighborhoods.

III. *Mary Stetson Clarke Historical Recognition Award*

- 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. Chair Marolda presented local historian and businessman Scott Macaulay with the inaugural Mary Stetson Clarke award in recognition of his years of service and dedication to the city of Melrose and its historical legacy.
- c. Scott Macaulay shared his memories of Mary Stetson Clarke, the namesake of the award. He praised her early efforts to record the oral history of Melrose when she served on the Melrose Historical Society. He also spoke of her determined efforts to establish the Melrose Historical Commission. He recounted that he joined the Melrose Historical Society in 1976 as a teenager, inspired by the 75th anniversary of the city and the national Bicentennial.
- d. Shane Egan shared his gratitude with the Commission for the generosity Scott Macaulay demonstrates with his willingness to share his vast collection of memorabilia and photos. Thousands have been able to learn from and enjoy his photos as they are shared on social media, far beyond Melrose.
- e. Vice Chair Tom Champoux prepared a press release to announce the award. Members present proofread and finalized this document. It will be shared with the local newspaper as well as published through the MHC's social media outlets.

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

- a. *See 10.16.23 meeting minutes for a summary of the Historic Home Plaque Program.*
- b. The commission has received two applications for a Historic Home Plaque. This program was soft launched during the Victorian Fair and Research Your Home Night where applications were made available.
- c. Members debated if there should be a minimum level of research evidence required to qualify and have the application approved. For example, one application showed only the "build year" as verified by the City of Melrose tax assessor website. Members agreed that the only requirement is that the applicants meet the minimum requirement by showing their home is more than 75 years old. Further research may be encouraged but not required.
- d. Joe Hunt will contact Markarian Sign Company to encourage them to process the first two applications before they meet the batch size of six that they preferred.
 - i. The MHC would like to create a photo opportunity by formally presenting the homeowners the initial plaques.

- ii. This would ideally take place at the next meeting. Photos would then be able to accompany the press release and formal program launch in the newspaper and social media

V. ***Research Your Home Night Recap***

- a. *See 8.12.24 meeting minutes for a summary of Research Your Home Night.*
- b. Research Your Home Night took place on September 29 at 7pm at Mt Hood Clubhouse, 100 Slayton Rd. Attendance at the event was by invitation only from the Spring 2023 waitlist. The event was at maximum capacity. Homeowners were attentive during the slideshow presented by Chair Marolda and Treasurer Shane Egan detailing the best online resources to use to jumpstart their research. Afterwards attendees circulated between local historian Scott Macaulay, his collection of historical maps, and the collection of City List books spanning more than a century (on loan from the Melrose Public Library). Members circulated, offering tips and answering questions. The event ended promptly at 9pm.
- c. Chair Marolda asked members to reflect on the most common questions from homeowners. Attendees struggled the most with understanding how to research the chain of deeds.
- d. What worked best at this event:
 - i. The space worked well
 - ii. Location was unique and the setup by the Mt Hood staff was appreciated.
 - iii. Magnifying glasses with built-in lights worked well.
 - iv. Event seemed adequately staffed with helpers
 - v. Attendees received the help they needed and were happy to work independently collaborating at their tables and following the links provided during the presentation.
- e. Suggestions for next time RYHN was held at Mt Hood included:
 - i. More lighting and space for the maps (Scott Macaulay mentioned that a research book and map received some damage.)
 - ii. Closing the door leading from the public bar.
- f. In order for the Commission members to hone their own research skills, Chair Marolda suggested that members take turns researching and presenting local homes at MHC monthly meetings. She volunteered to present a researched home at the next meeting to kick it off.
- g. With the waitlist for the next RYHN already exceeding 40 homeowners, discussion turned to when and where to host the next event. March 2025 would be an ideal time frame. Event spaces will be evaluated based on cost, availability of WiFi, Projection

Screen, Tables, Linens, Chairs, accessibility, and the need for a Certificate of Insurance (COI).

- i. Tom Champoux will inquire with the Temple Beth Shalom as to availability to host the next event in the spring.
- ii. Shane Egan will research rental option at the First Congregational Church on West Foster St.
- iii. Rebecca Blumenthal will contact the Incarnation Church on Upham St. for rates and availability.

VI. ***Other Business***

Shane Egan was asked for an update on the planning of the 2025 175th birthday celebrations. There has not yet been any communication or planning meetings on this topic with the Mayor's office.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Monday, November 4, 2024 at 7pm in the Cassidy Room of City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Marolda at 8:46pm.