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MELROSE HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FOR MONDAY MARCH 3, 2025 @ 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 Shane Egan at 7:00PM. Members in attendance included Secretary Rebecca Blumenthal, George Biblios, Joseph Hunt, and Darren Brown. Vice Chair Tom Champoux was absent. 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 February 3, 2025. 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. *Presentation of Local Home / Building Research*

There was no presentation this month. George Biblios may present at the April meeting.

III. *Status of Commission's Social Media accounts*

- a. Chair Egan reports that former Chair Kimberly Marolda is passing control of the social media accounts to Shane Egan. Egan will share access with member George Biblios who will assist with the Commission's social media activity.
- b. These accounts include Facebook and Instagram, as well as the MHC's gmail account.
- c. Gaining access to these accounts will facilitate the 2025 rollout and promotion of the historic home plaque program, Research Your Home Night, and the Mary Stetson Clarke Historical Recognition Award in the coming months.

- d. The city has informed Chair Egan that all members will soon be given City of Melrose email addresses to use for City business.

IV. *Research Your Home Night Planning*

- a. *See 8.12.24 meeting minutes for a summary of Research Your Home Night (RYHN).*
- b. The Next RYHN is scheduled for Wednesday, April 9, 2025, at 7pm. The MHC has reserved the VFW at 428 Main St., Melrose, for this event through its event coordinator, Lynn Marie Kelly.
 - i. The rental cost is \$125, payable the night of the event. The space can accommodate up to 144 people, but tables will be set up to accommodate the approx. 70 persons expected. Nine 8-person tables will be arranged within easy view of the TV.
 - ii. There is no sound system, but acoustics shouldn't be a problem. Ms. Kelly suggested bringing a BOSE speaker and wireless microphone if there is a concern.
 - iii. Long tables will be set up in the back to accommodate the maps and research materials that Scott Macaulay has kindly offered to bring to the event.
- c. Chair Egan has acquired the necessary research materials from the Melrose Public Library in advance of the library's imminent closing as it returns to the newly renovated space on West Emerson St.
- d. Members will review and update the September 29, 2024, presentation at the next meeting Monday April 7th in preparation for the April 9th RYHN.
- e. Joe Hunt suggested adding information regarding the Historical Plaque program to the end of the presentation.
- f. Public promotion of this event will begin next week via digital media. Reservations will be capped at approximately 35 homes / 70 attendees.

V. *Update on the 2025 City Birthday Celebration Planning*

- a. *See 8.12.24 meeting minutes for more information on the 2025 City Birthday Celebration.*
- b. The mayor will host a family-centered birthday celebration on May 3rd 10am-12noon at Memorial Hall. The celebration will feature a large cake and past and present members of boards and councils. Sponsorship by businesses and individuals will help fund this event.

- c. The Melrose Creative Alliance is looking to expand the event beyond Memorial Hall with photo ops at Ell Pond gazebo and tie-ins with Molly's Bookstore and Follow Your Art.
- d. The MHC will provide its 50th anniversary B & W photographs. It has also been asked to provide a timeline of the city history. Discussion centered on whether this would be physical or digital, given time and financial constraints. Chair Egan is working with Scott Macaulay on narrowing the scope of possible events and highlights to include, as well as photographs to highlight.

VI. ***MHC plans to acknowledge the April 19th 250th anniversary of the Battle of Lexington and Concord***

- a. Following a citizen inquiry, the mayor has asked the MHC to make a plan to acknowledge the upcoming anniversary of the Battle of Lexington and Concord in regard to the participation of citizens of today's Melrose.
- b. Member Rebecca Blumenthal contacted stakeholders in Melrose including the local National Guard armory and Rising Eagle restaurant to inquire if either establishment already had plans to mark the day.
- c. Members discussed some of the Melrose locations associated with the event including the Gooch Park memorial marker and the Vinton family home on Vinton St. as possible locations to mark the anniversary.
- d. Considering the nearness of the event to both Easter Sunday and the city's birthday celebration on May 3rd, it was decided that use of its social media outlets would reach more people than holding a physical event.
- e. Rebecca Blumenthal and Darren Brown will work jointly on an informative post and associated photos to present at the next meeting on April 7th for members' review.

VII. ***Historic Home Plaque Program Project update***

- a. *See 10.16.23 meeting minutes for a summary of the Historic Home Plaque Program.*
- b. The MHC will take ownership of the existing applications and the digital files of application documents and press release shortly from past Chair Marolda.

VIII. ***Mary Stetson Clarke Historical Recognition Award review***

- 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. The MHC will address a timeline for a Fall 2025 presentation of this award at the May 2025 meeting.

IX. *Update on cataloging historical items held by the City of Melrose*

- a. *See 1.6.2025 meeting minutes for earlier discussion of this topic.*
- b. Chair Egan has cataloged hundreds of documents from the city clerk's office concerning the application for business permits.
 - i. Documents span the 20th c. although most are from the 1970s-1990s.
 - ii. The document is searchable by address allowing potential users to follow a historic timeline of different commercial locations throughout the city.
- c. Chair Egan encountered photos associated with new construction building permits from 1949-1966 in the basement of City Hall. He has also scanned and cataloged this information. The photos provide a rich documentation of the mid-century expansion of the City of Melrose.
- d. All documents and the new digital files have been returned to City Hall.
- e. Chair Egan hopes that at some point these digital files will be able to be hosted online and be accessible to the public. The city will be updating its website functionality soon so perhaps this will allow the MHC to host more interactive data on its page(s).

X. *Status of Open Committee Positions*

- a. The resignations of Chair Kimberly Marolda and Vice Chair Tom Champoux have left two vacant positions on the Melrose Historical Commission.
- b. The city has asked the MHC for suggestions of Melrosians that may be interested in joining the Commission. The city will take charge of filling the open positions.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Monday, April 7, 2025, at 7pm in the Cassidy Room of City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Egan at 8:31pm.