

# Peabody Historical Commission

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## Minutes of September 19, 2019 Commission Meeting

The regular meeting of the Peabody Historical Commission (PHC) was held at the Peabody Institute Library Trustees Room on Thursday, September 19, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. Present were Commissioners: Gerald Bellew, Michael Bonfanti, Carolina Busta, Deborah Eskenazi, Frank Hardy, Andy Metropolis, Cheryl Millard and Vincent Raponi. Absent were: David Cronin.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Michael Bonfanti.

Motion made by Andy Metropolis to approve the regular Committee minutes of July 18, 2019 as presented and was seconded by Cheryl Millard. A roll call vote was taken.

All in favor: Yes. Opposed: No. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chairman's Remarks: 1) Andy & I met with Dick St. Pierre re: using space at the Geo. Peabody House for the Commission's files. Curt is going to order new file cabinets; 2) Spoke to Curt about historic property maintenance. They had money in the past but killed that program when Jack Cella left. Stacey Berenson (Asst. Dir. Comm. Dev.) will draft a request to the CPC for funding for minor maintenance and possibly house markers; 3) There have been complaints about the A/C in the window at the house. It will be removed shortly.; 4) I sent a letter to the Mayor, Curt Bellavance and Albert Talorico stating that all but two buildings sold downtown recently are of historical significance and asking that they keep the Historical Commission informed.

Gerry opened a discussion about the Society being worth millions but coming to the Commission for support to ask the CPC for money to restore a building yet when the Historical Commission asks for support they tell us no. Most of their money is in assets. They've spent \$1,000,000 over five years rehabilitating buildings and are basically self-sufficient. Andy would like to send them a letter regarding the Bowditch House, seeking approval to move it to their property at Brooksby Farm.

### Committee Reports

Educational Exchange Program: Frank: no changes from our last meeting. Andy & I are still waiting to meet with the Mayor about this and a new civics course.

Children's Museum: Cheryl: We heard through Facebook that they're using the Leatherworkers' museum. The Cultural Collaborative wants to be downtown. There was a discussion about where the pop-up museum will open, when the Geo. Peabody House will be turned back over to the Commission, who is paying to have the machinery moved back to the Leatherworkers' Museum. Mike: this was poorly planned. We are losing the city's history and it is the Commission's mission to protect and preserve. The Mayor came here and apologized but no one has spoken to us since.

### Old Business

Historic House Markers: Discussed why they should be wood and not composite which is more durable (opted for wood because restoration has to be the same materials). The Commission can reconsider once pricing has come in. If wood is about the same as composite then we'll stick with wood.

Website Creation for PHC: Scott in IT helped quite a bit. Everyone agrees it looks great.

Commission Portrait: This will be taken by Cheryl in November at the library. Everyone should meet at 6:00 in the Trustees Room then head upstairs for the portrait.

Partnering with Boy Scouts to clean up cemeteries: The boys have finished the cemetery off of Glen Dr. They've done a great job, it looks like a little park now. Mike is going to ask Chief Griffin to put a "no dumping" sign up.

10 Chestnut Street Special Permit: The council approved the special permit for a funeral home. There is some controversy about parking. There are dumpsters there and they're cleaning out the inside. There is no evidence that it was ever a funeral home.

New Business

Historic Marker for Sutton House for Women: No action.

Bowditch House: The City is not interested in pursuing the house. It should be memorialized with a plaque. Frank would like something in writing either way. Mike is going to draft a letter to the Mayor asking where the city stands and request a meeting of the Society, Mayor and Commission.

Motion made by Andy Metropolis and seconded by Debby Eskenazi to send a letter to applicable parties asking where they stand on the Bowditch House property re: purchasing & restoring and if they would like to meet to discuss same. A roll call vote was taken.

All in favor: Yes. Opposed: No. The motion was unanimously approved.

Remarks by Commission Members:

Jerry: to Cheryl – the open house at the Sutton House was wonderful & done very well. I enjoyed the carriage house. I'm not sure if it qualifies but keep the CPC in mind.

Lola: Nothing to add.

Dave: (Absent)

Debby: All set, nothing to add.

Frank: Nothing to add.

Andy: Nothing to add.

Cheryl: Nothing to add.

Vinnie: Nothing to add.

Next Meeting Date: The next meeting date is scheduled for October 17, 2019 at 6:00pm at the Geo. Peabody House & Civic Center, 205 Washington Street.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned 7:35 p.m.: Andy Metropolis/Vinnie Raponi.