

Peabody Historical Commission

Minutes of April 11, 2019 Commission Meeting

The regular meeting of the Peabody Historical Commission (PHC) was held at the Peabody Institute Library Trustees Room on Thursday, April 11, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. Present were Commissioners: Gerald Bellew, Michael Bonfanti, Deborah Eskenazi, Andrew Metropolis, Cheryl Millard, and Vincent Raponi. Absent were Carolina Busta, David Cronin, and Frank Hardy.

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

Motion made by Andrew Metropolis to approve the regular Committee minutes of February 21, 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.

Committee Reports

Educational Exchange Program: No updates.

Children's Museum: Donor appreciation night was Friday, March 29th and the grand opening was Sunday, March 31st. Over 600 people from 53 cities visited in the first 4 days. The last day for tickets is Sunday, June 30th.

Old Business

Historic House Markers: There was a discussion about getting a grant to have them made or charging homeowners for them and whether a house that has had major work done to it should have one. A template will be adopted so markers are consistent throughout the city. Formal guidelines are needed – in other communities, any house over 100 years is considered. Mike would like to add that it must also have historical significance. There has to be an application, guidelines listing criteria (100+ years old, historical significance) and a standard sized sign. Now is the time to have procedures for the Commission as the city is thinking of changing the charter.

Request for marker – 2 Lowell Street Court: Cheryl spoke to the overseer of the house and explained that the Commission is revamping its procedures for house markers. She would like to attend a meeting to ask questions. Cheryl told her the Commission will be in touch but it may be a few months. It is a completely different house from what was built and no one of any significance lived there although it is over 100 years old. Cheryl is going to contact her and let her know the Commission is still working on signs.

Tercentenary Sign – Downing Farm: No updates from Community Development.

Website Creation for PHC: Debby & Cheryl met with the Mayor, he is excited to have a Historical Commission website. He wants something basic, simple with a mission statement and a contact person. He is going to reach out to IT to get it started.

Eagle Scout clean-up of the Russell-Upton Cemetery: Mike thanked the group for meeting with the Eagle Scouts, Anthony & Joey. They are going to start soon. Bill Power is interested in getting involved too. Andy spoke to the

family, they are very excited and appreciative of the project and will help out where possible. He also mentioned that the Commission asked them to take pictures and notes to help with an inventory.

Waterworks Building: They're moving along with construction for the bank and should be open soon.

Bowditch House: The Mayor and Curt Bellavance met with the owners. He doesn't think the city will buy it so he suggested a Plan B: install a sign nearby explaining the history of the house. Andy would like to see the house if the Mayor goes.

New Business

Main St. Historic District Letter from Mass. Historical Comm: No one knows anything. Mike thinks it's from when the city started renovating downtown and hired a consultant. Deanne Healey wants to do historical tours downtown. Gerry thinks he has a brochure from the 1970s that lists the historical properties downtown.

Partnering with Boy Scouts to clean up cemeteries: Mike would like to get Eagle Scouts to do all of the cemeteries (there are 51 in the city) and has talked to some leaders about doing so. There are a number of cemeteries that no one does anything with. He is going to follow up.

Commission Portrait: Cheryl would like to do the Commission portrait. Mike suggested in September.

Remarks by Commission Members: Mike Bonfanti thanked Cheryl for doing a fine job as acting chairman. Frank is in the hospital. He talked to Bill Power about flagging veteran's graves for Memorial Day. Veterans take care of city-owned cemeteries, private cemeteries can be divvied up. Gerry suggests meeting at a common place with a list of cemeteries and veterans graves. Mike is going to call Steve Patten and set up a meeting. There was a discussion about calling the Mall school and asking if there were students interested in helping.

Debby would like to see the Commission's agenda posted under glass like the others are instead of taped to the wall outside of the glass cases the Society has artifacts in. Debby also didn't know the Historical Commission has a budget.

Andy reminded members that the Society is having a presentation on Washington Street Monday (Patriots Day) at 11:30 outside of the monument. This will be followed by refreshments. Mike always wanted to have a road race starting at Bell's Tavern to Arlington.

Next Meeting Date: The next meeting date is scheduled for May 16, 2019 at 6:00pm at the Peabody Institute Library Trustees Room, 82 Main Street.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.: Andy Metropolis/Debby Eskenazi.