

Peabody Historical Commission

Minutes of June 20, 2019 Commission Meeting

The regular meeting of the Peabody Historical Commission (PHC) was held at the Peabody Institute Library Trustees Room on Thursday, June 20, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. Present were Commissioners: Gerald Bellew, Michael Bonfanti, Andrew Metropolis, Cheryl Millard, and Bill Power. Absent were: Carolina Busta, David Cronin, Deborah Eskenazi, Frank Hardy, and Vincent Raponi.

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 May 16, 2019 as presented and was seconded by Gerry Bellew. A roll call vote was taken.

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

Committee Reports

Educational Exchange Program: Bill heard from the English program which is different from Peabody's in that participants aren't necessarily students.

Children's Museum: The museum has been extended to the end of August. Mike is disappointed that the Commission wasn't notified especially since the Mayor came before the board and apologized. He would like to have a full board to discuss if there should be any action. Mark Whiting suggested moving it to the mall. Mike would like to use the space upstairs but isn't comfortable with the kids in there.

Old Business

Historic House Markers: There was a discussion about markers. Dianne is going to get a template from All Kinds of Signs. In order to get a sign, homes must meet certain guidelines including being over 100 years old. If there has been major renovations they may not qualify. Homeowners will pay for their own sign. Bill has records of all historic houses and which ones have signs. It is up to the Commission to do the research although the owner has to request a sign and provide documentation. The application and guidelines are still being worked on. There was a discussion about Evans Flowers – they've been in business for 100 years but the building is not original. Bill suggests writing them a letter congratulating them on 100 years. Mike suggests trying to get a list of businesses that have been operating for 100 years and acknowledging them.

Request for marker – 2 Lowell Street Court: No action/discussion.

Website Creation for PHC: Cheryl handed out two documents: the Mission Statement/Duties of the Commission and a brief summary of members. Debby doesn't want her address listed on the website. Bill is going to review them to make sure the districts are correct. Mike would like to add: demolition delay procedures, the historic marker program. There was a brief discussion about demolition delay orders.

Commission Portrait: This will be taken by Cheryl in September.

Partnering with Boy Scouts to clean up cemeteries: Mike talked to Steve Patten. He's going to try to get a group to help out. He is also going to talk to the scouts again and suggested to the Mayor and city councilors about adding cemeteries to the Pride in Peabody clean up day. He would like to see signage posted so people don't dump in the cemeteries. Andy would like to see them fined and the funds put toward cemetery preservation.

Bowditch House: Mike talked to Curt, the Mayor would still like to visit the house.

Peabody Square Clock: No one is sure that the clock is working. Ron Shah's brother in law repaired it but it took a year.

Veterans' Graves Flags: Mike thanked everyone who participated in flagging gravesites. Per the Vets' Agent, Steve Patten, flagging veterans' graves is his responsibility under the law but he appreciates the help. We'll have an agreement to continue. Bill stated that this started in 1996 because cemeteries weren't being flagged.

10 Chestnut Street Special Permit: They are seeking a special permit for a funeral home. Andy can't find any evidence that it was ever a funeral home.

New Business

Remarks by Commission Members: Mike Bonfanti: Dan Doucette wants to put up historic posters or plaques along the Festival route.

Andy: Would like to recognize the few Peabody veterans left in May after being inspired by D-Day. He thinks there are four. The Kiley Bros. picture at city hall was presented to the family who were very touched. The sister married Roland Kelly of Kelly Auto.

Cheryl: will set a date for a sub-committee to work on the website (Mike thinks addresses should be on the website). The Sutton House on Sewall St. is celebrating 100 years in September. It was built in 1830 by Proctor who gave it to his daughter (Thatcher) then the Suttons acquired it.

Jerry: Discussed having interns itemize records.

Bill: Gave a box of files to Mike. He will also look for the historical properties database and will email it to Dianne. He also distributed a newsletter.

Next Meeting Date: The next meeting date is scheduled for July 18, 2019 at 6:00pm at the Peabody Institute Library Trustees Room, 82 Main Street.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned 7:00 p.m.: Andy Metropolis/Gerry Bellew.