



**COMMEMORATION COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

Boston City Hall Boston, MA, 02201

Held virtually via Zoom

**APRIL 30, 2024**

**Commissioners Present:** Collin Knight, Cedric Woods, Carolyn Goldstein, Lynn Smiledge, Sam Tully-Chambers, Alison Frazee, Kristen Lafferty, Faries Gray, Nat Sheidley, Dr. Noelle Trent, Lydia Lowe, Dory Klein, Kyera Singleton, Bob Allison, Kenzie Bok, Konah Brownell for Jay Ash, Jean-Luc Pierite, Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai, Amanda Zettel, Kimberly Barzola, Suzanne Taylor

**Commissioners Absent:** Eric Hanson-Plass, Joan Ilacqua, Giordana Mecagni, Tatiana M.F. Cruz, Dave O'Donnell, Maureen Garceau, Liza Stearns, Senator Mike Rush, Byron Rushing, Council President Ruthzee Louijeune, Imari K. Jeffries, Juan Lopez, Juan Eusebio, Michael Creasey, Celia Richa, Arthur Jemison, Chelsea Blanchard, Kara Elliott-Ortega, Joe Bagley, Council President Ruthzee Louijeune, Beth Prindle/David Leonard

**Staff Present:** Genesis Pimentel, Commemoration Commission Manager; Murray Miller, Director of Historic Preservation; Kayla Skillin, Archivist for Collections Management

There were no members of the press present.

A full recording of the meeting is available on [boston.gov/commemoration-commission](https://boston.gov/commemoration-commission)

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**SESSION BEGINS - 6:00 PM**

Genesis Pimentel welcomed attendees. Attendees introduced themselves.

**I. ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- a. There was no quorum to vote in the proposed chairs, Commissioners Amanda Zettel and Jean-Luc Pierite.
- b. Genesis Pimentel discussed the agenda and items sent out for review, including the Boston 200 Master Plan and constituent comments while waiting on a quorum.
- c. The update from the Legislation and Preservation Tools subcommittee included that the subcommittee wanted to make formal recommendations to the BPDA for policy and procedure changes that prioritize historic preservation and add tools in the preservation toolbox. The subcommittee has had a range of guest speakers including Director of Historic Preservation Murray Miller. They have narrowed their current focus to addressing Article 85, and are hoping to be getting more involved in Squares & Streets, PLAN Downtown, Article 80



Modernization, and other citywide zoning changes. There have also been discussions about piecemeal surveys to make up a citywide survey.

- d. The update from the Timelines, Archives, and Curricula subcommittee included having Jim Vrabel present *When and Where in Boston*.
- e. The update from the Events, Exhibits, and Trails subcommittee included questions about funding and responsibilities, how to collaborate with TAC, the plaque program, doing community celebrations, and branding.

## II. ESTABLISHING FOUNDATIONS

- a. Genesis Pimentel discussed establishing social media channels, and the challenge of being banned by the platforms due to being flagged as impersonation.
- b. Commissioner Bob Allison discussed that there are many historical societies to build connections with that would help with particular projects.
- c. Commissioner Noelle Trent agreed and stated that groups and organizations are already planning 250th events without waiting for the City. She stated that without City events, it will be confusing for tourists who will be visiting for the 250th but also for the FIFA World Cup.
- d. There was a consensus that there should be collaboration between Boston and cities such as Lexington and Concord.

## III. PLANNING DISCUSSION

- a. Discussions about needing branding came up.
- b. Discussions about the Curley-White Parker Fund for Boston 400 came up. While the hope was that by 2030, there'd be \$30,000, there is currently only \$7,049 in that fund.

## IV. OPEN DISCUSSION

- a. Commissioner Carolyn Goldstein discussed how the Timelines, Archives, and Curricula subcommittee had been discussing how inclusive they wanted to be by including all neighborhoods, all cultural groups, and all important dates. This is broad and inclusive and there is excitement to connect everything to 250 and 400. The question is how do the subcommittees come together and think of framing themselves in interconnected ways.
- b. Genesis Pimentel discussed that the Events, Exhibits, and Trails subcommittee is thinking about feasible things to execute such as markers.
- c. Commissioner Dory Klein asked what the process will be for gathering input from every neighborhood. She asked: Are we thinking about sending out surveys, or having feedback sessions, or what discussions have been had about the process for actually researching and drafting language and what are the next steps?



- d. Commissioner Bok stated that from experience being a City Councilor, things like fabricating plaques is a thing the commission should try to do over the next calendar year, so that by January, there is a proposal for things the Commission believes should be funded in a steady budget. She agreed with Commissioner Klein's idea and discussed creating a neighborhood-based process for people to brainstorm 5-10 important sites or more, and to figure out how we ask BPL branch libraries to contribute. She continued that using coffee hours is another way to start raising awareness about how we want to engage the community on historic preservation and commemoration.
- e. Commissioner Suzanne Taylor discussed how the Events, Exhibits, and Trails subcommittee wants to have a community-based plaquing process. She also stated it might be a good idea to get someone who worked on the Bicentennial to come and speak to the group to share institutional knowledge.
- f. Commissioners responded positively to the Events, Exhibits, and Trails idea about 250 markers for the 250th/400 markers for the 400th. Commissioner Kenzie Bok expressed that it will be a challenge for the Commission to wrangle so many things into something actionable. Suggestions to deal with this included categorizing efforts, so that we can identify decentralized efforts to be supported.
- g. Commissioner Faries Gray expressed that it would be great to have Boston Harbor Islands included in this work as its preservation is of interest to the Massachusetts, and because not only are the Islands important to Boston during the colonial period, but they were really important to the Indigenous peoples before colonists' arrival.
- h. Commissioner Bok expressed that the Commission has more of an advantage than the Office of the Bicentennial because it also includes the 400th of Boston in 2030, so the opportunity for longer-range planning exists.
- i. Genesis Pimentel expressed wanting to discuss the Master Plan for Boston Revolution 200.
- j. Commissioner Suzanne Taylor stated that there are many more widely popular trails in Boston now, and there should be neighborhood trails since there is a charge to focus on neighborhoods and not just Downtown.
- k. Commissioner Bok expressed desire for people to be able to walk into a branch library and pick up a map for a neighborhood trail that has a QR code for people to walk and use their phones.
- l. Commissioner Taylor stated that it could be similar to what BPL has for visiting every branch library, where it's a passport that you get stamped for every trail you've done.
- m. Genesis Pimentel stated that this idea of the passport existing in the 200 Plan, and that she wanted to discuss branding because if there is branding that exist online, you can virtually check-in and get rewarded with incentives



- n. Commissioner Joan Ilacqua asked if there is an official designation for trails and if it needs a nonprofit or group attached.
- o. Commissioner Trent responded that, in theory, anyone can make a trail. However, whether that trail receives appropriate designation and support is separate. She gave the example of the Black Heritage Trail, which was created by a private citizen and eventually became part of the Museum of African American History and the Boston African-American National Historic Site. It was created by an act of Congress, so any changes require an act of legislation. However, anyone can make a trail with Google Maps.

**V. TASKS TO ADVANCE/ASSIGNMENTS**

- a. Share final report from Boston 200.

**VI. SCHEDULING DISCUSSION**

- a. Genesis Pimentel stated she would follow up with a scheduling form.

**VII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- a. There was no public comment.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT - 7:13 PM**

- a. The meeting was adjourned.