



**EVENTS, EXHIBITS, AND TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Boston City Hall Boston, MA, 02201

Held virtually via Zoom

JUNE 27, 2024

Commissioners Present: *Suzanne Taylor, Imari Jeffries, Erica Smith for Celia Richa, Nat Sheidley, Eric Hanson-Plass, John Borders IV, Konah Brownell for Jay Ash, Kyera Singleton, Dave O'Donnell, Dr. Noelle Trent*

Commissioners Absent: *Sam Tully-Chambers, Juan Eusebio, Faries Gray, Kara Elliott-Ortega, Juan Lopez*

Staff Present: *Genesis Pimentel, Commemoration Commission Manager*

Public/Press Present: *Alison Pultinas*

A full recording of the meeting is available on boston.gov/commemoration-commission

SESSION BEGINS - 1:00 PM

I. WELCOME

- a. Commemoration Commission Manager Genesis Pimentel welcomed attendees.

II. ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. Meeting minutes were approved.

III. DISCUSS REPORT AND IDEAS

- a. Genesis Pimentel reviewed the ordinance to begin discussing topics for the 6 month report. Topics included creating a 250/400 plaquing program, promoting existing self-guided neighborhood walking tours and encouraging the creation of others, banners, branding.
 - i. Chair Imari Jeffries stated that the Commission might urge capacity to be built since there is a need for it and for understanding if the subcommittee is in charge of recommending new events or of aggregation of events since that would impact decision making. He asked what the incentive would be for organizations to come under the banner of Boston 250 if Boston has not provided support thus far.
 - ii. Commissioner Noelle Trent stated that the urgency around the logo must be articulated within the next 60 days, and there is little clarity around the Commission's benefits around community affiliation, whether those opportunities even exist, and that the next report should go out before January 2025 because it will be too late then.



- iii. Discussions around the new Environment, Energy, and Open Space Cabinet chief took place and members offered to meet with him.
- iv. Chair Jeffries asked how the Commission came to have multiple Chiefs and sit in the Office of Historic Preservation. He asked if the point of meeting is to help neighborhoods celebrate or if there is something else at play, especially with the Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion as well as Tourism, Sports, and Entertainment being engaged. He noted that there is an opportunity, especially with no money, to engage the capacity of multiple City departments.
- v. Commissioner John Borders discussed that internally he brought up the issue of the budget, stating that if the budget was known, it could be planned against but he got pushback and was told instead to plan and then the City would find the budget. He stated that he knows it isn't practical to ideate possibilities then ask for a budget without knowing what will be given in terms of funding, but he is having those conversations and knows that there is pressure for the City to ask itself what they would like Commemoration to look like.
- vi. Chair Jeffries asked how the City knows it can promote Boston as a destination for 2026 if it does not know how much it will pour into the commemoration. He added that people will want to know what will be done, how it will be done, and how much money is being allocated for 2026.
- vii. Chair Suzanne Taylor stated that a potential recommendation would be to move the Commemoration Commission under OEOI and Tourism, Sports, and Entertainment as well as to hire more people to support the Commission. She also stated that the City needs to make sure to hit the major commemorations and make sure other commemorations are celebrated in between.
- viii. Discussion around the Bunker Hill Reenactment took place. There were questions around whether the reenactment moved to Gloucester. Genesis Pimentel discussed that she spoke to Bunker Hill 250 and they are working in partnership with Gloucester to house and hire the same actors while BH250 is looking for an open space in Charlestown to have the reenactment.
- ix. Commissioner Borders stated that there is opportunity for collaboration including media partners, monetization, watch parties in different neighborhoods, and more. He stated these commemorations are a prompt to ask how these events speak to certain communities.
- x. Chair Taylor asked how the Commission and the City could make sure that parades such as the Pride parade and St Patrick's Day parade have elements of the 250th.



- xi. Commissioner Trent stated that staffing will matter and that Genesis Pimentel will need to be in a department that can and will support her and additional staff, and then the commissioners will need to spend some time thinking about the big moments of 2025 and 2026 that will need to be invested in.

IV. DISCUSS KNOWN CITYWIDE AND STATEWIDE CELEBRATIONS

- a. Chair Jeffries, using Paul Revere's Ride as an example, stated that there needs to be a lens of justice and civic engagement in the events that will be put on, so questions that need to be asked include: Whose story is told and whose isn't? How do we make an event more inclusive? What is the justice moment of this event and what perspectives exist? He adds that if there is no meaningful civic engagement and social infrastructure investment then Boston residents at-large won't care enough to participate. He stated that the logo is important because it is an opportunity to rebrand Boston.
- b. Commissioner Borders highlighted Crispus Attucks and how there are opportunities to highlight hidden stories inside of 250 and explained there is an opportunity to work with Arts and Culture.
- c. Commissioner Trent brought up Juneteenth 2026, explaining that we might do a bigger parade leading into the parade that has happened every year for 14 years in Roxbury. She asked if there could be something bigger that connects Beacon Hill to Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan because these are the neighborhoods where Black Bostonians have historically lived.
- d. Chair Taylor stressed that the 250 logo should align with Boston branding.
- e. Commissioner Dave O'Donnell recommended having a series of programming between April 2025 and July 2026 across all neighborhoods.
- f. Commissioner Kyera Singleton added that it should go out into August to include Quock Walker Day on July 8 and bring in West Indian Independence Day and the larger Caribbean communities into these 250 celebrations. She explained that conversations always discussed how to add people of color into revolution events instead of understanding how foundational they really are to Boston's history. She stated we should not focus on adding people of color in but centering them by centering larger emancipation movements and periods.

V. OPEN DISCUSSION

- a. Chair Taylor asked whether the Boston Cultural Council could have a theme around 250 years of freedom for 2025 or 2026.
- b. Commissioner Trent asked if there was a possibility of something like Boston Food Day where someone gets a grant and puts on a community meal in different neighborhoods over a period of days to engage people civically.



- c. Chair Taylor added that there might be more than just one official drink and instead there could be a Paul Revere drink, an Emancipation Day drink, and more where Main Streets and local businesses could get involved.
- d. Chair Jeffries showed the commissioners Embrace Beer, Commissioner Borders stated there should be a 250 Bourbon tour. Commissioner Singleton stated that there should be a rum tour, and Chair Jeffries listed some local breweries.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

- a. Alison Pultinas expressed concern about how Genesis Pimentel and the Office of Historic Preservation is pulling together each subcommittee that seem expressly different in the topics they cover. She also discussed different existing trails including her self-guided Mission Hill walking tour, sites associated with Sacco and Vanzetti, Judge Hayden, and a trail discussing the history of Latvians in Mission Hill.

VII. ADJOURNMENT - 2:30 PM

- a. Chair Taylor motioned to adjourn.
- b. Commissioner Singleton seconded.