



**TIMELINES, ARCHIVES, AND CURRICULA SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Boston City Hall Boston, MA, 02201
Held virtually via Zoom

MARCH 5, 2024

Commissioners Present: Joe Bagley, Bob Allison, Giordana Mecgani, Tatiana Cruz, Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai, Kristen Lafferty, Carolyn Goldstein, Dory Klein, Joan Ilacqua, Collin Knight, Kimberly Barzola

Commissioners Absent: David Leonard, Cedric Woods, Angela Hedley-Mitchell, Liza Stearns

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

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.
- b. Commissioners introduced themselves.

II. ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. Commissioner Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai corrected something in the previous meeting minutes.
- b. Meeting minutes were approved.
- c. Genesis Pimentel explained the process by which Commissioners can work on smaller projects together.

III. REVIEW OF WORK

- a. Commissioner Tatiana Cruz stated that there was no update to give on Curricula. She has a list of contacts she would reach out to and would wait on Genesis Pimentel to connect her with members of the Curricula project.
- b. Chair Joe Bagley discussed the spreadsheets that are the internal list of ideas, concepts, dates, places that the group will come up with and expand upon.
- c. Commissioner Kristen Lafferty mentioned that she had been using Jim Vrabel's 2005 book *When in Boston* to get dates, and then she realized that he created a



Boston history database. She reached out to him to get an update on its status since he's been looking for a home for it. The Library had shown interest, and Commissioner Lafferty believes his database could be valuable to this subcommittee.

- d. Commissioner Dory Klein reported that his project is under consideration for BPL but no updates yet.
- e. Chair Bob Allison agreed it was a good idea and discussed how Jim Vrabel has set up his database to be searchable, and that this could be something that the Commission actually does.
- f. Commissioner Klein noted that his website isn't public yet, and that his website is a big undertaking that would require serious staffing and funding to support.
- g. Chair Joe Bagley discussed how Boston.gov uses Drupal for its web hosting, so there could be issues with the City hosting. However, Kayla Skillin discussed how there are ways around Drupal where you can input your URL into the Boston website as a sub URL, like the City's Preservica.
- h. Commissioner Giordana Mecagni discussed that maintenance and upkeep of a database is difficult.
- i. Chair Bob Allison suggested that Jim Vrabel is invited to present what he has, and it could be something the Commission can recommend and move forward with.
- j. Chair Joe Bagley stated that the database would have to be as up-to-date as possible and asked if the subcommittee wanted to put a pause on spreadsheet development.
- k. Commissioner Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai raised the concern of what qualifies to be on the spreadsheet and how the Commission would separate the boundary between national and local.

IV. DISCUSSION ON NEXT STEPS

- a. Chair Joe Bagley stated that the goals he thinks make sense are finding a way to collect data, putting the data in a publicly accessible space, and encouraging others to add to the data beyond what the subcommittee can collect. He stated this could start with this subcommittee collecting data, expanding it to the larger Commission, then to the public.
 - i. Chair Joe Bagley and Joan Ilacqua both spoke on how they believe that dates should not be used as a way to limit their scope because important histories will get missed.
 - ii. Genesis Pimentel created a Google Folder for them to begin aggregating their data.



- iii. Commissioner Giordana Mecagni suggested reaching out to historical and neighborhood societies for information.
- iv. Commissioner Carolyn Goldstein mentioned that groups of people also matter, so the Commissioners have to get a good handle on communities outside of neighborhoods.
- v. Commissioner Giordana Mecagni asked Chair Joe Bagley if he wanted to use community asset mapping. Chair Joe Bagley replied that they're not there yet, and that Tatiana Cruz mentioned discussing the lists they'll compile in the upcoming meeting.
- vi. Commissioner Giordana Mecagni introduced a timeline created during resilience and racial equity work, created on Timeline.JS, which she recommends as a platform.
- vii. Chair Joe Bagley stated that in theory, the Commemoration Commission page can be broken down into parts where all this information can live. However, he stated that there are limitations to what the website can do.
- b. Commissioner Giordana Mecagni offered to host whatever the boston.gov website cannot, and that communities need historical asset mapping in Boston.
 - i. Chair Joe Bagley knows ARCGIS and StoryMaps can be used by the City. Commissioner Giordana Mecagni mentioned that Google Maps works well also.
- c. Chair Joe Bagley opens the conversation to Curricula. He asks if we are looking at just BPS or broader and that it should expand beyond social studies to include other areas such as STEM.
 - i. Commissioner Tatiana Cruz mentioned that Facing Histories and Ourselves put together an 8th grade social studies curriculum on BPS in the 60s-70s. She asked who is working on curriculum development and professional development for teachers. She stated that BPS teachers want more on racial or queer histories. She also would like to expand beyond BPS. She noted that some schools might have strong Black History curriculum but will lack good curriculums for the population they serve the most, so they might have to do an informal survey on schools.
 - ii. Genesis Pimentel mentioned that internships could be a good venue for students.
 - iii. Chair Joe Bagley asked for clarification on whether curricula development meant working with teachers on developing something or giving teachers an already finished product.
 - iv. Commissioner Tatiana Cruz explained that BPS teachers don't create curriculums because they have to follow a standard curriculum. Tatiana



Cruz stated that the subcommittee's next steps should be finding out what their curriculum currently is, how that's being taught, their professional development, and if they are interested in building new units not confined to history or social studies. With private schools, she mentioned they have much more autonomy. She thinks a good starting question is "What do you teach about the history of Boston?"

- v. Chair Joe Bagley asked if the subcommittee's audience is teachers or administrators.
 - vi. Commissioner Liza Stearns discussed how BPS deconstructed their central office for curricula, so schools can function as silos. She discussed how the Parks Service focuses on community-practice, place-based teaching, so they have a Teaching Institute every summer. She noticed that teachers don't have the capacity to create the curricula themselves but getting support is great.
 - vii. Commissioner Tatiana Cruz agreed with Commissioner Liza Stearns, stating that she has created units for teachers because it is difficult for teachers to do the research and curation themselves. She raised the idea that TAC should curate a resource document for teachers. Tatiana Cruz, Liza Stearns, and Collin Knight expressed interest collaborating on the curriculum aspect.
- d. Chair Joe Bagley discussed that the Ordinance asked for a product in 6 months and asked if people felt comfortable setting goals now. Joe Bagley thinks that within three months, there could be an initial draft of a timeline. He specified that there could be an internal draft within a month and external drafts within 3 months.
- i. Commissioner Tatiana Cruz suggested using part of the next meeting to prioritize based on anniversaries that are coming first and create the timeline then.
 - ii. Commissioners Giordana Mecagni and Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai expressed interest in cultural asset mapping for archives.
 - iii. Commissioner Dory Klein introduced an index of archival collections pertaining to Chinatown to share a potentially useful data model.
 - iv. Chair Bagley wondered if there could be a streamlined database for other subcommittees to access and focus on anniversaries within 2030.
 - v. Commissioners feel comfortable sharing out existing databases to other subcommittee members to add to.



- vi. Commissioner Mecagni introduced ArchiveGrid and Chair Bagley discussed wanting to capture non-traditional archives, such as oral historians, Tribe historians, zines, NAICOB archival collections, and more.
- vii. Discussion about using the terms history holders and archives to be inclusive.
- viii. Commissioner Carolyn Goldstein mentioned that the neighborhood series booklets should be recreated and modernized with something similar to the Chinatown History Directory at Northeastern.
- ix. Commissioner Dory Klein discussed how the database was populated through a grassroots approach and seconded that for this to be expanded, it should be done at a neighborhood level with language access would be the best way to go about this.
- x. Chair Bagley mentioned that the Commission would also need to focus on communities that are not just neighborhoods, starting with neighborhoods, defined communities, and then expanding.
- xi. Commissioner Klein discussed that the BRC held focus groups and community feedback sessions.
- xii. Discussion on setting up social media.
- xiii. Commissioner Mecagni expressed wanting to reach out to historical societies to join the subcommittee meetings.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

- a. There were no public comments.

VI. ADJOURNMENT - 2:00 PM

- a. Co-Chair Bob Allison motioned to adjourn the meeting.