



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

AN ORDINANCE TO CREATE THE BOSTON COMMEMORATION COMMISSION

WHEREAS, Boston has the opportunity to use the upcoming 250th anniversary of 1776 in 2026, the upcoming 400th anniversary of the founding of Boston in 2030, and other significant historical anniversaries for all our local communities to tell the full range of our history, including the struggles and accomplishments of Boston's Indigenous, Black, immigrant, womens', and LGBTQ+ communities who are too often left out of the official narrative; *and*

WHEREAS, The organization Revolutionary Spaces recently modeled such an approach with its commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the 1770 Boston Massacre, which centered on the diverse individuals who were killed and resulted in the commission of a new play about Crispus Attucks by Boston-based playwright Miranda ADEkoje; *and*

WHEREAS, Bostonians like George Middleton — an African-American who built the oldest standing house on Beacon Hill, served in the American Revolution, and pushed for equal school rights for Black children as early as 1800 — were central to the early days of the Republic and ought to be better known; *and*

WHEREAS, Upcoming anniversaries provide Boston with an opportunity to both plan commemorative events and update local and state laws concerning historic buildings in ways that marshal investment and attention to more fully preserve and honor a history that includes all Bostonians, not only white, affluent, and well-known historical figures; *and*

WHEREAS, Creating tourism, events, and exhibits around historically significant anniversaries can help to boost the local economy in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and if planning is inclusive and intentional, the City can ensure local, minority, women, and LGBTQ+ owned businesses in every neighborhood are promoted and able to benefit, as will the diverse community of local hospitality workers; *and*

WHEREAS, Exhibits in the Boston Public Library's branch libraries and engaging local historical curricula in the Boston Public Schools afford the opportunity to make every Bostonian feel ownership over and connection to the City's history in its

full depth and diversity, and to expose young people to the empowering and enriching possibilities of historical research and narrative; *and*

WHEREAS, For us to truly preserve all of Boston’s history, our City’s mechanisms for historic preservation and our inventories of Boston’s physical history must be revamped so as to ensure that less well-resourced areas are also receiving preservation attention and protection; *and*

WHEREAS, To make the best use of this opportunity to revitalize and revolutionize our approach to our local history, and to leverage related available federal, state, and private funds, Boston must begin the conversations now and establish a Boston Commemoration Commission to lay out a road-map for the next ten years leading up to the City’s 400th anniversary; **NOW, THEREFORE**

Be it ordained by the City Council of Boston as follows:

Section 1.

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, Chapter VII shall be amended by adding at the end thereof, the following new section and subsections.

7-15 Boston Commemoration Commission.

7-15.1 Purpose.

The purpose of this ordinance is to establish the Boston Commemoration Commission. The Commission is herein tasked with developing and executing a plan to mark upcoming historical anniversaries, including but not limited to the United States Sestercentennial (250th) in 2026 and the 400th anniversary of the founding of the City of Boston in 2030, while investing in inclusive and robust historical resources and preservation tools. The intent of this ordinance is to ensure that the many diverse community voices and organizations who steward Boston’s history, and the City departments with responsibilities related to historical narrative, exhibits, curricula, archives, preservation, and event-planning, are all able to work together to deepen the public opportunities to engage with that history, in collaboration with state and federal partners. This ordinance affirms that our diverse and intertwined community histories are of great value to the City of Boston and its residents, that historical tourism should be a driver of true shared prosperity, that inclusive and honest historical memory is a crucial public good worthy of attention and resources, and that communities all over the City should have the tools and resources to research, preserve, acknowledge, and celebrate their history.

7-15.2 Establishing the Boston Commemoration Commission.

The Boston Commemoration Commission will include members appointed by the Mayor, including:

1. One (1) member who represents a tourism-related Boston business outside downtown
2. One (1) member who represents a tourism-related Boston business in the downtown area
3. One (1) member from the Boston Chamber of Commerce
4. One (1) member from The Boston Foundation
5. One (1) member from the Massachusetts Competitive Partnership
- 6 - 7. Two (2) members who are archivists and are seeking to preserve a diverse history
8. One (1) member who is a digital archivist or preservation specialist seeking to preserve a diverse history
9. One (1) member from a non-profit institution with major Boston historical holdings
10. One (1) member representing a Neighborhood Historic District
11. One (1) member involved in local history in a neighborhood without a Historic District
12. One (1) member affiliated with the North American Indian Center of Boston
13. One (1) member from the Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag
14. One (1) member from the Museum of African American History
15. One (1) member with an expertise in local Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) history
16. One (1) member with an expertise in local Indigenous history
17. One (1) member with an expertise in local Black history
18. One (1) member with an expertise in local European immigrant history
19. One (1) member with an expertise in local Latinx history
20. One (1) member with an expertise in local women's history
21. One (1) member with an expertise in local LGBTQ+ history
22. One (1) member with an expertise in local intellectual history
23. One (1) member from the Massachusetts Historical Society
24. One (1) member from the Boston Preservation Alliance
25. One (1) member from Revolutionary Spaces
26. One (1) member from the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau
27. One (1) member who is a hospitality worker
28. One (1) member of the Boston Legislative Delegation
29. One (1) member of the Boston City Council

And the following members, ex-officio:

30-32. Three (3) members from National Parks of Boston, representing the Boston National Historic Park, the Boston African American National Historic Site, and the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area

And the following people or their designees, ex officio:

33. Chief of Economic Development
34. Chief of Arts and Culture
35. Director of the Mayor's Office of Tourism, Sports, and Entertainment

36. The Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools
37. The City Archivist
38. The City Archaeologist
39. President of the Boston Public Library
40. Chief of Environment, Energy, and Open Space
41. Executive Director of the Landmarks Commission
42. Chair of the Landmarks Commission
43. Director of the Boston Planning and Development Agency
44. Collector-Treasurer, as steward of the Community Preservation Trust Fund

The Boston Commemoration Commission will include, but not be limited to, the following subcommittees: (1) Events, Exhibits, and Trails, (2) Timelines, Archives, and Curricula, and (3) Legislation and Preservation Tools. All members of the Boston Commemoration Commission shall be assigned to at least one subcommittee. The Boston City Council member shall sit on any subcommittees on which the Councilor requests membership.

The City shall assign the equivalent of two (2) full-time staff: one (1) half-time staff person to coordinate the Commemoration Commission as a whole, and one (1) half-time staff person to coordinate each of the three above-enumerated subcommittees, with these staff persons to be drawn from such City departments as may be most appropriate.

The Boston Commemoration Commission's full meetings will be open for any organizational member of Revolution 250 and/or of state-level Commissions focused on commemorating Massachusetts history to attend.

The Boston Commemoration Commission members shall serve without compensation. Members will elect a Chair for the Boston Commemoration Commission every year with a simple majority vote. Members of each subcommittee will elect a subcommittee Chair every year with a simple majority vote.

The Boston Commemoration Commission will exist until June 30, 2031.

The Boston Commemoration Commission shall first convene within sixty (60) days of the effective date of this ordinance. Should there be a vacancy or resignation in any of the above positions, the Mayor will appoint a new representative from another equally relevant office or organization within ninety (90) days. Members of the Boston Commemoration Commission will remain members as long as the Commission exists or unless voted to be removed by a majority vote of the Commission.

7-15.3 Responsibilities and Authorities of the Boston Commemoration Commission.

The primary responsibility of the Boston Commemoration Commission is to advise the Mayor and relevant departments on making Boston's celebrations of significant upcoming historic anniversaries, as well as Boston's preservation policies and tools, robust and inclusive of all history, including the history of Indigenous, Black, immigrant, LGBTQ+, women, and other historically marginalized communities. The Boston Commemoration Commission will advise the Mayor and relevant departments on the following: a) commemorating upcoming historical anniversaries that are significant to Boston, b) collaborating with state-level commemoration and historic commissions, c) ensuring that the City applies in a timely and robust fashion for any available Federal or State funds, d) recommending how to collaborate with state-level and regional commemoration efforts, e) fulfilling the goals of its subcommittees, as detailed below, and f) determining whether any other subcommittees should be added relevant to its primary responsibility.

The goals of the Events, Exhibits, and Trails Subcommittee include producing recommendations for events and exhibits that educate participants on the diverse history of Boston and determining how to promote historic anniversaries and acquire related public and private funds to benefit tourism, historic sites, and economic development in Boston, including by promoting minority, women, and LGBTQ+ owned businesses, and by supporting the formation of historical trails and tours that extend beyond the downtown area. Within the first year of convening, the Subcommittee shall produce an initial actionable plan of next steps in support of commemorative events to fall between 2022 and 2026, to be approved by vote of the full Commission and presented to the City Clerk.

The goals of the Timelines, Archives, and Curricula Subcommittee include recommending a timeline of significant historical events in Boston to comprise the focus of the Commemoration Commission's work over the coming years, planning content for exhibits throughout the City that educate participants on the diverse history of Boston, determining how to save, process, and highlight Boston's rich archival resources, including through digital archives, and incorporating archival history and commemorative activities into the Boston Public School Curriculum. The Subcommittee will also recommend how collections can be made accessible and inclusive, as well as recommend how the archival capacity of all communities could be supported and expanded. Within the first six months of convening, the Subcommittee shall produce an initial recommended timeline of key occasions to be the focus of the Commission's commemorative work through December 31, 2030, to be approved by vote of the full Commission and presented to the City Clerk.

The goals of the Legislation and Preservation Tools Subcommittee include proposing a plan for a complete citywide historic building survey that would inventory Boston's built history across all of its neighborhoods, recommending reforms for the Article 85 process, suggesting adjustments

to better align funds from the Community Preservation Trust with the aims of equitable citywide historic preservation, and putting forward other policy changes that would enable the City to have a more comprehensive, equitable, and effective historic preservation process. Within the eighteen months, the Subcommittee shall produce an initial report summarizing such proposals, to be approved by vote of the full Commission and presented to the City Clerk.

This Commission will meet quarterly. Additional meetings may be held to work on specific issues as they relate to the overall work of this Commission. The Commission will file a bi-annual (every 6 months) progress report with the Clerk to update the City and community on their progress. Any plans, timelines, and proposals presented by the Commission to the Clerk may be adjusted and refined by vote of the Commission over the course of its existence.

Subcommittees will meet monthly or more often as needed. The Commission subcommittee members will serve without compensation.

At any point, the Commission may be called upon to testify to and update the City Council on their progress.

If the Commission determines necessary, the Commission is authorized to continue meeting beyond June 30, 2031, provided the Commission continues to provide bi-annual reports to the Clerk.

The Commission reports submitted to the Clerk and any documents pertaining to the governing of the Commission will be publicly available.

Section 2.

The provisions of this ordinance are severable and if any provision, or portion thereof, should be held to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such unconstitutionality or invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions, which remain in full force and effect.

Section 3.

The provisions of this ordinance shall be effective immediately upon passage.

Filed on: December 13, 2021