



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

Boston City Hall Boston, MA, 02201

Held virtually via Zoom

FEBRUARY 13, 2025

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Suzanne Taylor, Nat Sheidley, Karin Goodfellow, Dr. Noelle Trent, Kyera Singleton, Sam Tully-Chambers, John Borders IV, Esther Farah for Imari Jeffries, Matt Arsenault for Celia Richa, Faries Gray

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Juan Lopez, Eric Hanson-Plass, Dave O'Donnell, Jay Ash, Juan Eusebio

STAFF PRESENT: Genesis Pimentel, Commemoration Commission Manager; Kathy Kottaridis, Director of Historic Preservation

PUBLIC/PRESS PRESENT: Samantha Pardo; Mary Smoyer; Sydney Salazar; Alison Pultinas; Meg Campbell; Joan Ilacqua

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

SESSION BEGINS - 2:00 PM

I. WELCOME

- a. Genesis Pimentel welcomed attendees.

II. ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. Meeting minutes were approved.

III. BOSTON WOMEN'S HERITAGE TRAIL PRESENTATION

- a. Members of the Boston Women's Heritage Trail, Meg Campbell and Mary Smoyer, presented on the history of the organization and the work that they have done.
 - i. Background: Established in 1989, the trail has 18 walking trails, 15 organized geographically and 3 by theme, with 6 more trails blazed by students. The trail was initially funded by a \$1,000 grant from the Women's Educational Equity Act and has since been maintained by a board of volunteers. The trail's future plans include continuing to add more trails and working towards having more schools named after women.
 - ii. They worked on a concept called "Talking Statues" with QR codes that have short monologues of the women being commemorated by the statue. They also worked on a concept called "Sidewalk Stories" where



stickers on the sidewalk have scannable QR codes to bring attention to the stories of women in those areas.

- iii. They came across Cedar Grove Cemetery, which has 130+ unnamed Black women buried, and the Home for Aged Colored Women, which was founded in 1860 by a group of abolitionists, both black and white, to provide support to elderly African-American women in need of housing or aid. They are partnering with this group to honor this history.

IV. Q & A

- a. Commissioner Sam Chambers asked if there was a partnership between BHWT and Rogerson, the group who owns the property that was Home for Aged Colored Women.
 - i. BHWT stated that they are in conversation to start formalizing a partnership.
- b. Commissioner Nat Sheidley asked how the Commission can garner interest for the work BWHT does without taking responsibility for driving the work, and how the Commission can continue to be in a place where it is responsive to and serving community partners.
 - i. BHWT stated that authentic community engagement means you don't know what you are bringing to the community until you get people's opinions, so that they shape what matters. They added that this is a very iterative and organic process. She stated that historical societies used to meet once a year, but that Boston is so civically involved that it is important to lean on that.
- c. Commissioner Faries Gray discussed the lack of Indigenous women on the trail, and emphasized the importance of Indigenous women to the success of the Bay Colony.
 - i. BWHT responded that they have been wanting to implement more Indigenous histories, but they have gotten some pushback on how best to portray and express the stories. They asked to be connected with Gray. They also want to explore Latina women's histories more.
- d. Commissioner Nat Sheidley asked how the Commission could identify what is most valuable to target in 2026 in the hopes of shaping Boston 400 and getting people across the City interested in trails and markers in their neighborhoods.
 - i. BWHT discussed how, as an all-volunteer organization, they try to do things that are inexpensive, reusable, and grab people's attention, such as bus stop PSAs, banners, and having conversations with Transportation about grants and branding.
- e. Commissioner Joan Ilacqua asked about the costs of markers and the permissions they needed for the sticker program. Ilacqua discussed how the History Project commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots by getting permission from businesses to put up banners and do chalking.



- i. BWHT responded that the genius of the stickers initiative is that permits aren't needed to install them. She discussed how getting a plaque and statue took almost three years. They asked to be connected to Ilacqua to collaborate further.
- f. Genesis Pimentel asked BWHT what would be most useful in streamlining a process in which they might have to get permits for markers.
 - i. BWHT discussed uniformity in marker design, QR codes to update information, and that the most complicated part of markers is that the owner of the building has the ultimate say on whether markers can go up or not.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

- a. There were no public comments.

VI. ADJOURNMENT - 3:00 PM

- a. The meeting was adjourned.