

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR BOK, Arroyo, Baker, Breadon, Campbell, Edwards, Flaherty,
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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 Black, immigrant, female, Indigenous, 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 to 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 purpose of this ordinance and the Boston Commemoration Commission is to develop a plan to celebrate upcoming historical anniversaries, including, but not limited to the United States Sestercentennial and the 400th anniversary of Boston, while investing in Boston's historical resources. The intent of this ordinance is to ensure that celebrations and anniversaries of historical events are inclusive, historically accurate, and celebrate the diverse history of Boston.

7-15.2 Establishing the Boston Commemoration Commission.

The Boston Commemoration Commission will include members appointed by the Mayor with approval of the City Council, 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 a community archive seeking to preserve a diverse history
4. One (1) member from a non-profit institution with major Boston historical holdings
5. One (1) member representing a Neighborhood Historic District
6. One (1) member involved in local history in a neighborhood without a Historic District
7. One (1) member affiliated with the Native American Indian Center of Boston, or another individual with expertise in Indigenous history
8. One (1) member affiliated with the Museum of African American History, or another individual with an expertise in local Black history

9. One (1) member with an expertise in local Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) history
10. One (1) member with an expertise in local European immigrant history
11. One (1) member with an expertise in local Latinx history
12. One (1) member with an expertise in local women's history
13. One (1) member with an expertise in local LGBTQ history
14. One (1) member with an expertise in local intellectual history
15. One (1) member from the Boston National Historic Park
16. One (1) member from the Massachusetts Historical Society
17. One (1) member from the Boston Preservation Alliance
18. One (1) member from Revolutionary Spaces
19. One (1) member from the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau
20. One (1) member and one (1) alternate who is a hospitality worker
21. One (1) member of the Boston Legislative Delegation

And the following people or their designees, ex officio:

22. Chief of Economic Development
23. Chief of Arts and Culture
24. Director of the Mayor's Office of Tourism, Sports, and Entertainment
25. Chief Academic Officer of the Boston Public Schools
26. The City Archivist
27. President of the Boston Public Library
28. Chief of Environment, Energy, and Open Space
29. Executive Director of the Landmarks Commission
30. Chair of the Landmarks Commission
31. Director of the Boston Planning and Development Agency
32. Collector-Treasurer, as steward of the Community Preservation Trust Fund
33. A Boston City Councilor designated by the Council President

The Boston Commemoration Commission will include, but not be limited to, the following Subcommittees: (1) Events and Trails, (2) Timelines, Exhibits, and Curricula, and (3) Legislation and Preservation Tools. Members of the Boston Commemoration Commission appointed by the Mayor (members #1 through #21) 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 remaining ex-officio members shall be assigned to Subcommittees as follows:

- Members 22 through 24 (Chief of Economic Development, Director of the Mayor's Office of Tourism, Sports and Entertainment, Chief of Arts and Culture, or their designees) shall be assigned to the Events and Trails Subcommittee.

- Members 25 through 27 (Chief Academic Officer of the Boston Public Schools, City Archivist, President of the Boston Public Library, or their designees) shall be assigned to the Timelines, Exhibits and Curricula Subcommittee.
- Members 28 through 32 (Chief of Environment, Energy, and Open Space, Executive Director of the Landmarks Commission, Chair of the Landmarks Commission, Director of the Boston Planning and Development Agency, Collector-Treasurer, or their designee) shall be assigned to the Legislation and Preservation Tools Subcommittee.

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 shall serve without compensation. Members will elect a Chair for the Boston Commemoration Commission every year with a simple majority vote. If there is a tie, the alternate hospitality worker member shall cast a 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 ensure that Boston's celebrations of significant upcoming historic anniversaries, as well as Boston's preservation policies and tools, are robust and inclusive of all history, including the history of Indigenous, Black, immigrant, LGBTQ, and other historically marginalized communities. The Boston Commemoration Commission will a) lead and coordinate the work of commemorating upcoming historical anniversaries that are significant to Boston, b) collaborate with state-level commemoration and historic commissions, c) ensure that the City applies in a timely and robust

fashion for any available Federal or State funds, d) fulfill the goals of its subcommittees, as detailed below, and e) carry out any other tasks relevant to its primary responsibility.

The goals of the Events and Trails Subcommittee include planning events 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, Exhibits, and Curricula Subcommittee include identifying a timeline of significant historical events in Boston to be commemorated over the coming years, planning 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, and incorporating archival history and commemorative activities into the Boston Public School Curriculum. Within the first six months of convening, the Subcommittee shall produce an initial 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 Special 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, and may invite such guests as the membership deems appropriate. 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 Special Commission is authorized to continue meeting beyond June 30, 2031, provided the Special 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: May 3, 2021