

**OFFERED BY COUNCILORS GABRIELA COLETTA ZAPATA, RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE,  
BREADON, DURKAN, FERNANDES ANDERSON, FITZGERALD, FLYNN, PEPÉN, WEBER  
AND WORRELL**



**CITY OF BOSTON  
IN CITY COUNCIL**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING  
CITY OF BOSTON CODE,  
ORDINANCES CHAPTER VII  
SECTION 7-15**

- 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; *and*

**WHEREAS:** Reforming the Commemoration Commission is necessary to accomplish these goals in an orderly and efficient manner; ***NOW THEREFORE***

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

Section 1.

The City of Boston Code, Ordinances, Chapter VII, Section 7-15 is hereby amended by replacing the existing section 7-15, *Boston Commemoration Commission* and replacing it with 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. One (1) member from Embrace Boston
7. One (1) members who is an archivist and is 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 with a Historic District
11. One (1) member involved in history in a Boston neighborhood without a Local 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. One (1) member 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 Opportunity and Inclusion
34. Chief of Arts and Culture
35. The City Archivist
36. The City Archaeologist
37. President of the Boston Public Library
38. Director of the Office of Historic Preservation
39. Collector-Treasurer, as steward of the Community Preservation Trust Fund

The Boston Commemoration Commission may be advised by stakeholder groups structured by theme, including but not limited to: (1) Events, Exhibits, and Trails, (2) Timelines, Archives, and Curricula, and (3) Legislation and Preservation Tools. The Commission may establish additional stakeholder groups as it deems appropriate. These stakeholder groups shall take no official votes, shall consist of any persons the Commission may wish to invite, shall meet on a schedule determined by the Commission and regardless of whether a majority of invitees can attend, and may only share ideas and recommendations in a nonbinding fashion with the Commission.

The City shall assign the equivalent of two (2) full-time staff 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 or Co-Chairs for the Boston Commemoration Commission every two years 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 provide the Mayor and relevant departments with reports and recommended actions for: 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, and d) recommending how to collaborate with state-level and regional commemoration efforts.

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 of findings and recommendations with the Clerk to update the City and community. 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.

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: February 26, 2025