PRESS RELEASE

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Old South Association, Bostonian Society Pursue Merger

Boards Focus on Enhancing Visitor Experience at Historic Old South Meeting House, Old State House and Along Freedom Trail®

BOSTON - The nonprofit boards governing Boston’s Old State House and Old South Meeting House have voted to pursue a merger that will strengthen their shared commitment to maintain and enhance visitor experiences in and around the two historic Freedom Trail sites long into the future.

The Bostonian Society (Old State House) and the Old South Association of Boston (Old South Meeting House) boards voted this week to support a proposed merger after nine months of thoughtful and detailed discussions among staff and board members. The votes allow the nonprofits to work toward a formal agreement, which is expected later this year.

“The proximity of these unique sites, the stories they tell, and the public-facing missions of our two organizations make this partnership an ideal fit,” said Carl Sciortino, President of the Old South Association’s Board of Managers. “There will be immediate synergies that will improve our ability to serve the public and, with an inspiring long-term vision, we know a merged organization will have greater reach and impact for both local residents and out-of-town visitors.”

“Our boards share a foundational commitment to preserving these important historic sites for generations to come, and to making their history -- as settings for vital debates about political representation and individual freedom -- even more relevant today,” said Martha McNamara, Chair of the Bostonian Society’s Board of Governors. “While each building has its own deeply resonant and meaningful stories to tell, this potential merger will allow us to explore more fully their interwoven histories as both birthplaces and continuing touchstones for the practice of democracy in Boston and our nation.”

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Discussions began among leadership of the two entities last August and have grown increasingly detailed and specific between the two boards in recent months.

“With close to 600 years of combined history, these two official Freedom Trail historic sites had major events that led to the founding of our nation, have preserved their authentic treasures for hundreds of years, and provide year-round programming that delight local residents and visitors from around the globe,” said Suzanne Taylor, Executive Director of the Freedom Trail Foundation. “We look forward to seeing merger discussions continue and the benefits a joint organization will offer to enhance Freedom Trail experiences for more than 4 million annual visitors.”

“When these two great historic landmarks combine their expertise, I believe this will have a very significant and positive impact,” said Rosemarie Sansone, President and CEO of the Downtown Boston Business Improvement District. “Both are in the epicenter of one of Boston’s top tourist destinations, where thousands of tourists visit each day, pumping millions of dollars into the downtown economy each year. Together, these organizations will have the opportunity to play upon each other’s strengths and to create a dynamic platform, where the possibilities of presenting these unforgettable stories of our country’s history are endless.”

McNamara and Sciortino committed to updating the public and stakeholders as negotiations are finalized and fully engage the public in the collaborations that will come.

About The Bostonian Society
Established in 1881, the nonprofit Bostonian Society is the primary steward of the 1713 Old State House and its collection of Revolutionary artifacts and records. It maintains the Old State House for the public, raising all funds for the building’s ongoing preservation and restoration. The Society’s staff interprets the Revolutionary-era history of Boston every day in the museum. In addition, the Society maintains a research library and a collection of more than 7,500 books, 350 maps and 30,000 photographs.

About the Old South Association of Boston
Since 1877, the Old South Association of Boston has preserved the 1729 Old South Meeting House as a busy museum, treasured landmark, and active center for civic dialogue and free expression. The Old South Association’s mission is to preserve the Old South Meeting House and its history as inspiring symbols of democratic ideals, to sustain the building’s tradition as a community meeting place for the free exchange of ideas, and to be a place where people can connect the issues of the past with the issues of today.

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