

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION
JUNE 18, 2008
MINUTES

A meeting of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission was held on June 18, 2008, in the 5th Floor Board Room of the State Museum, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The following Commissioners were present: Wayne Spilove, Rhonda Cohen via conference call, Senator Jim Ferlo, Laura Fisher, Janet Klein, Dennis Swank for Dr. Brian Mitchell, Kathleen Pavelko, Representative Scott Petri, Representative Rick Taylor and Clare Zales. The following staff were present: Barbara Franco, Jean Cutler, Jason Gerard, Beth Hager, Bill Sisson, David Haury, Howard Pollman, Brenda Reigle, and Kirk Wilson. Andrea Bowman, from the Office of General Counsel, was present as PHMC Counsel. Jim Pickman, Civil War Consultant for PA Heritage Society was present.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Spilove called the meeting to order at 9:51 a.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 19, 2008

Chairman Spilove called for a motion to approve the minutes from March 19, 2008. On motion by Ms. Pavelko, seconded by Senator Ferlo, the minutes were approved.

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Spilove gave a summary of programs/meetings he attended this past quarter:

- The American Revolution Center at Valley Forge.
- Working with the Delaware River Port Authority on the restoration of the doors on the Benjamin Franklin Bridge.
- Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve Land Transfer.

- Chairman Spilove commended Ms. Fisher for working on the Pennsylvania Forbes Trail; a six-day, 450 miles stage race showcasing young riders in a marathon across Pennsylvania.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Franco reported that this year's budget is better than last year but we are still behind. Our challenge next year is to break even. Ms. Franco thanked PHMC staff for their help that included the delay of new hires to help minimize the deficit. Problems with tracking the budget include utility and fuel costs, wage categories and how federal funds are tracked.

The Digital Imaging program (DISC). DISC was setup as a cost recovery program in the Preservation Fund. Over the past few years DISC has not been profitable and has run deficits in the Preservation Fund. The Commission is working with the Governor's Office to transfer the program to the Department of Revenue. The transfer of the DISC program relieves the Preservation Fund of the DISC deficits which have reduced unrestricted funds, the loss of the revenue will also reduce the amount available to augment administrative expenses that funded several positions. Several positions have been transferred back to GGO into vacant positions and will not be refilled.

We are working with the Office of Administration regarding the possibility of charging agencies to store their records in order to cover the costs of operating the Records Center. Mr. Haury reported that he and Andrea Bowman met with representatives from the Office of Administration and Budget Office and are moving forward with implementing charges for the Records Center for the 2009 – 2010 fiscal year.

We are beginning to prepare for the new Right-to-Know Law that will go into effect in January 2009. Immediately all contracts over \$5,000 will have to be posted with the Treasury in a digital and redacted form that can be made publicly accessible.

Ms. Franco noted that the first report of the new Strategic Plan was available at everyone's places. The Bureau for Historic Sites and Museums is currently completing a self assessment. Ms. Franco thanked Brenda Reigle, Acting Bureau Director for her leadership in working with this project.

The commission is involved in two items with the Strategic Plan: the Governance Committee and the Capitol Project Committee. The Governance Committee is chaired by Ms. Pavelko. Walter Lehmann is a graduate student at George Washington University and PHMC intern. Mr. Lehmann has reviewed the history code and looking at comparisons with other states in terms of how they are setup and what are their best practices. We will hold three meetings over the summer and by the fall we will report back to the Commission.

The Capitol Projects Committee is chaired by Ms. Klein. Ms. Franco reported that she, David Haury and Kirk Wilson met with Mayor Reed about possible locations for a new State Archives building. Since this meeting we have been in touch with the Vartan Group and they are interested in working with the Commission.

The PA Heritage Society is looking to increase their fundraising potential by adding new board members.

This year, the PA Heritage Society paid for printing three issues of the Pennsylvania Heritage Magazine. Ted Walke, Chief of Publications looked into the possibility of the Society publishing all four issues of the Magazine. As a non state agency, the Society can print four issues of the magazine and pay for postage for less then the cost of three issues of the magazine to restore their partnership this would allow the Commission to do the

editorial/design and the Society would cover printing the magazine. Ms. Hager is also working on pursuing more corporate partnerships with the Society.

Ms. Franco is currently reviewing the following: Collections Management Policy, Fees Policy and Publications Policy.

There are two Bureau Director Positions that are vacant: Director of Management Services and Director of Historic Sites and Museums. Wasyl Polischuk retired in March of this year. The position was advertised in February, interviews were held in March. We were hoping to have the position filled as soon as possible. Unfortunately when the finalist name was submitted to the Office of Administration and Governor's Office it was held for some time and the position was downgraded to a Step 10 due to anticipated consolidation of IT under OA. All other Bureau Directors are at a Step 11 and both finalists turned down the job offer. Ms. Franco is looking to reorganize to make that position an Assistant Executive Director.

The Director for Historic Sites and Museums position is being advertised nationally, a search committee is being formed and interviews will be held at the end of this month.

This year's Annual Report will use "Value of History" as the topic.

Ms. Franco announced that Eric Ledell Smith, Historian with the State Museum passed away earlier this week. Eric worked with the Black History Advisory Committee and was a local historian in Harrisburg. A memorial will be held at the State Museum later this month.

V. COURTESY RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Haury announced the retirement of Mary Byers. Ms. Byers has been a valued member of the DISC team and the Bureau of Archives and History, since 1993. Ms. Byers has 29 years of service to the Commonwealth and the citizens of Pennsylvania.

Ms. Pavelko called for a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Ms. Fisher, the resolution for Mary Byers was approved. (SEE ATTACHMENT A)

VI. ACTION ITEMS

a) Saxonburg Historic District Act

Chairman Spilove called for a motion to recommend approval of the request for certification by the Saxonburg Historic District, Butler County. On motion by Ms. Pavelko, seconded by Ms. Klein, the request for certification by the Saxonburg Historic District was approved. (SEE ATTACHMENT B)

b) Approval of the preliminary distribution plan for General Operating Support for Museums and Official County Historical Societies.

Chairman Spilove called for a motion to approve the General Operating Support Grants for Museums and Official County Historical Societies. On motion by Ms. Pavelko, seconded by Ms. Klein the General Operating Support Grants for Museums and Official County Historical Societies were approved. (SEE ATTACHMENT C)

Chairman Spilove called for a motion to approve the rankings of the Project Grants as presented. On motion by Ms. Pavelko, seconded by Ms. Fisher the rankings of the Project Grants were approved. Ms. Cohen abstained from voting. (SEE ATTACHMENT C)

c) Approval for new Criteria of State Historical Markers

Chairman Spilove called for a motion to approve the new Criteria of State Historical Markers with the change of #11 “equitable” should read “equal”. On motion by Ms. Pavelko, seconded by Ms. Fisher the Criteria of State Historical Markers were approved with changes as noted. (SEE ATTACHMENT D)

d) Black History Advisory Committee Nominations

Mr. Haury reported two committee members have completed their terms of service. We are nominating Norm J. Jones and Dana Y. King.

Chairman Spilove called for a motion to approve the Black History Advisory Committee Nominations. On motion by Ms. Pavelko, seconded by Ms. Klein the nominations for the Black History Advisory Committee were approved. (SEE ATTACHMENT E)

e) PHMC Commission Meetings Fiscal Year 08-09

Chairman Spilove announced that instead of holding the next Commission Meeting in September the meeting will be held in October at the Gettysburg National Military Park in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Heritage Society meeting.

Chairman Spilove called for a motion to approve the meeting dates for the Commission Meetings with the possibility of moving the September meeting to October in Gettysburg. Motion approved. (SEE ATTACHMENT F)

VIII. OTHER REPORTS

a) National Register Nominations

Ms. Cutler reported that the board met and made recommendations to the National Park Service. A total of nine recommendations were received, three were rejected.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

No new business to discuss at this time.

X. OLD BUSINESS

No old business to discuss at this time.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Spilove adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.