

**PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION**  
**JUNE 17, 2009**  
**MINUTES**

A meeting of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission was held on June 17, 2009 in the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Board Room of the State Museum, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The following Commissioners were present: Wayne Spilove, Rhonda Cohen, Senator James Ferlo, Laura Fisher, Janet Klein via conference call, Dave Myers represented Dr. Brian Mitchell, Kathleen Pavelko, Representative Scott Petri and Representative Rick Taylor. The following staff were present: Barbara Franco, Jean Cutler, Jason Gerard, Rhonda Newton, Jack Leighow, David Haury, Tom Leonard, Howard Pollman, Steve Miller and Kirk Wilson. Andrea Bowman, from the Office of General Counsel was present as PHMC Counsel.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Spilove called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. He changed the order of the agenda to accommodate the legislators who needed to return to the State Capitol. Chairman Spilove asked Commissioners to identify themselves for everyone in the room.

**III. ACTION ITEMS**

**a) Commission Meetings FY 09-10**

Chairman Spilove called for a motion to approve the dates for the upcoming Commission Meetings for the FY 09-10. On motion by Senator Ferlo, seconded by Ms. Fisher the dates for the upcoming Commission Meetings are approved as follows: September 16, 2009, November 18, 2009, March 17, 2010 and June 16, 2010.

**b) FY 2009-2010 PHMC Grant Report**

Chairman Spilove called for a motion to approve the 09-10 PHMC Grant Report.

Ms. Pavelko accepted motion to approve the grant report contingent on funding, motion seconded by Ms. Fisher.

**c) PHMC Historical Markers**

Chairman Spilove called for a motion to approve the Historical Markers as submitted. On motion by Ms. Fisher, seconded by Ms. Cohen the PHMC Historical Markers were approved as submitted.

**d) Proposed Operational Changes at PHMC Sites**

Mr. Miller provided a brief report on the public meetings that were held at Joseph Priestley House, Fort Pitt Museum, Flagship Niagara, Brandywine Battlefield Historic Site, Bushy Run Battlefield Historic Site and Conrad Weiser Homestead and reported on the suggested operational models that staff plan to pursue.

A public meeting was held on April 9, 2009 for the Joseph Priestly House. It was recommended that staff continue dialogue with the Friends Board leadership. The Friends are working on a phased plan that will shift the site's interpretation toward a science education center in collaboration with new and expanded partnerships that includes the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit. In the short term, PHMC would secure collections, continue maintenance and security contracts, while working with the Friends to negotiate a new management agreement. Staff has encouraged the FJPH to engage with the American Chemical Society, the Northumberland County Historical

Society, the Northumberland County Commissioners and local universities to explore alternate uses and new operational models.

A meeting was held on May 14, 2009 for the Fort Pitt Museum at City Council Chambers in Pittsburgh, PA. PHMC received proposals from the Friends of Fort Pitt Museum and the John Heinz History Center. Both parties put a great deal of thought and work into plans for operating the site with much reduced state funding. Staff recommended entering into a management agreement with the John Heinz History Center for a term up to ten years for operation of the Fort Pitt Museum. The John Heinz History Center presented a credible plan for the sustained operation of the facility. They plan to operate and market a full schedule of public programs. PHMC will continue to provide funding for building maintenance.

A meeting was also held the evening of May 14, 2009 for the Flagship Niagara. Staff recommends entering into a management agreement with the Flagship Niagara League to operate the sailing program of the Flagship Niagara for up to two years. During extensive conversations with the League's leadership and community leaders in Erie, it is clear that the community is ready to support this symbol of their city and the state. PHMC will continue to provide basic maintenance and insurance costs.

On May 18, 2009 a public meeting was held for the Brandywine Battlefield Historic Site at Brandywine River Museum in Chadds Ford, PA. Staff recommended entering into a management agreement with Chadds Ford Township and the Brandywine Battlefield Associates to operate the site for a term up to ten years. The Chadds Ford Township Supervisors and Brandywine Associates have been working cooperatively with PHMC for over three months to detail the terms of the management agreement. A full

time PHMC maintenance position will remain in place to assure full facility operations and site security during and after the transition.

On May 27, 2009 a public meeting was held for Bushy Run Battlefield Historic Site. Staff recommended entering into a management agreement with the Bushy Run Battlefield Heritage Society to operate the site for a period up to ten years. The Bushy Run Battlefield Heritage Society is cooperatively negotiating with PHMC to establish terms and agreement that will help them realize their goal of operating the site and its many events. A full time PHMC maintenance position will remain to assure site operations and site security.

A meeting took place on June 4, 2009 for Conrad Weiser Homestead. Staff recommended continuing dialogue with the Friends Board. A subsequent meeting was held June 10<sup>th</sup> with the Board to discuss terms of a new management agreement. It was agreed to continue the effort to keep the site open under the Friends of Conrad Weiser board's management, additional fundraising efforts and using the CW Memorial Park Trust fund to help support the transition.

Ms. Franco would like the Commission to authorize staff to continue negotiations with the identified partners to work on the management agreements.

Following the public meetings we've had subsequent conversations with partners and in some cases have begun to put together proposals either in written or verbal form. Because we are working around the budget timeline we do not anticipate that changes in staffing will be made until the budget is passed.

The sites discussed have state wide and national importance. We are looking at what is the long term commitment of the state. We want to maintain the stewardship and preservation of these sites and continue to have a state presence.

Senator Ferlo commended the Commission for its efforts to go out to the communities. He would be interested in knowing more about what sites PHMC operated has operated over the years. He would like the Sustainability Report to be viewed as a staff document because it may not include complete information and it was not something the Commission should formally adopt. He stressed his interest in the Fort Pitt Museum and the fact that two significant proposals were submitted. He wanted to make sure that the Commissioners have a chance to review all management agreements before moving forward especially for the Fort Pitt Museum.

In response to a question from Mrs. Klein, Ms. Franco said each agreement will be site specific with beginning and end dates.

Ms. Fisher seconded Senator Ferlo's comments; the work done by the Friends of the Fort Pitt Museum has been extraordinary considering it is a volunteer group. There are a lot of great ideas between the Heinz History Center and the Friends group.

Ms. Franco stressed that the partnership agreements that we are working on are not meant to exclude anyone. PHMC needs to identify an organization in each community to work with, but we hope that each of the operational models will involve more partnerships than we now have and lead to greater participation from the community. It is our intention to foster broader support and encourage new partnerships.

Ms. Fisher noted that having attended two of the public meetings, PHMC did a wonderful job in organizing the public meetings in a short time period.

Ms. Franco thanked legislators who were involved in the public meetings. Their involvement is part of the solution in moving forward. We want to keep the Commission involved with moving forward with the agreements.

Chairman Spilove asked if anyone from the public would like to speak to the Commission to please do so.

Craig Caba, Citizen, spoke to the Commission agreeing with Senator Ferlo's comments.

Michael Nixon, Historic Preservation Lawyer and Consultant and member of SaveFortPitt.org thanked Senator Ferlo and Ms. Fisher for their involvement with Fort Pitt and expressed hope for cooperation and collaboration among what is two competing non profit organizations seeking to step into the void that is anticipated.

Donn Neal, President of the Friends of Fort Pitt Museum thanked Senator Ferlo and Ms. Fisher for their comments regarding Fort Pitt and reiterated the Friends proposal to manage the site

Chairman Spilove called for a motion to accept the report and authorize staff to continue to negotiate with the parties identified in the report and also allow collaboration with other interested groups. On motion by Ms. Cohen, seconded by Mrs. Klein motion was approved.

## **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 18, 2009 MEETING**

Chairman Spilove called for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 18, 2009 meeting. On motion by Senator Ferlo, seconded by Mrs. Klein the minutes were recommended for approval.

## **IV. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

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

- Attended all Public Meetings for Joseph Priestley House, Fort Pitt Museum; flagship Niagara; Brandywine Battlefield Historic Site; Bushy Run Battlefield Historic Site; Conrad Weiser Homestead and the Visitor Center at Washington Crossing.
- Attended various historic marker dedications.

## **V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ms. Franco introduced Tom Leonard as the new Director of the Bureau of Management Services. Tom comes to the Commission with 16 years of management experience at IAC/Lear Corporation where he was formerly the Controller of the Carlisle manufacturing facility. Tom will oversee the Fiscal Office, HR Office, Architectural Service Division as well as coordinating the newly consolidated IT functions with the Office of Administration.

## **VI. OTHER REPORTS**

### **a) National Register Nominations**

Ms. Cutler reported that a total of ten National Register Nominations were reviewed April 7, 2009. The Newville Historic District and Hamburg Historic District were rejected due to inadequate documentation and the Ajax Metal Company's nomination was withdrawn by the preparer.

### **b) PHMC Policies Report**

Ms. Franco reviewed the PHMC Policies Report as part of the Strategic Plan 2008-2011 the Commission has made a commitment to review its policies on an annual basis at the June meeting. Our last update to the commission was June 18, 2008. Ms.

Franco made a correction to her report that the Reproduction Policy was passed June 21, 2006.

c) Washington Crossing Visitors Center

Mr. Miller participated in a meeting with Congressman Patrick Murphy to bring him up to date on the status of the Washington Crossing Visitors Center. PHMC staff and DGS have restarted the project and are proceeding to redesign the building to fit the current \$4.2 million available in construction funds.

**VII. COURTESY RESOLUTIONS**

Mr. Leighow reported that David Albright and Nicholas “Nick” Sovich are retiring. David joined the staff at the State Museum in November 1981 as part of the Security Staff in the Operations Division and “Nick” joined the staff of the commission as a custodial worker in January 1977.

Chairman Spilove called for a motion to approve the following Courtesy Resolutions for David Albright and Nicholas “Nick” Sovich. On motion by Representative Petri seconded by Ms. Fisher, the Courtesy Resolutions for David Albright and Nicholas “Nick” Sovich were approved.

Mr. Leonard reported that Galen Brown and Kent Steinbrunner are retiring. Galen began his service with the Commission in 1981 as a Maintenance Repairman 1 and Kent began his service with the Commission in 1976 as a Draftsman 2.

Chairman Spilove called for a motion to approve the following Courtesy Resolutions for Galen Brown and Kent Steinbrunner. On motion Ms. Fisher by seconded by Mrs. Klein, the Courtesy Resolutions for Galen Brown and Kent Steinbrunner were approved.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business to discuss at this time.

**IX. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no new business to discuss as this time.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Spilove adjourned the meeting at 11:00am.