

**PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 13, 2017
MINUTES**

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission met on September 13, 2017 at the Pennsylvania Military Museum in Boalsburg, Pennsylvania. The following Commissioners were present: Ophelia Chambliss, William Lewis, Alice Lubrecht, Nancy Moses – Chair, Kate Eckhart for Senator Joseph Scarnati, Robert Savakinas, David Schuyler, Ken Turner and Philip Zimmerman. Fredrick Powell and Senator Dinniman participated via conference call.

The following staff were present: Andrea Lowery, Brenda Reigle, Andrea MacDonald, David Carmichael, Beth Hager, Howard Pollman and Tyler Gum, Site Administrator for the Pennsylvania Military Museum. Heather Hu represented the Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation. Rodney Akers and Gerard Leone served as legal counsel. Jeff Stack represented the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Board and John Stevens represented the Pennsylvania Military Museum Board.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Nancy Moses, Chair called the meeting to order at 10:00am. Tyler Gum, Site Administrator for the Pennsylvania Military Museum welcomed everyone to the Pennsylvania Military Museum and the 28th Division Shrine. Tyler introduced John Stevens to everyone. John serves as board president.

At this time, Nancy asked everyone in the room and on the phone to introduce themselves.

II. APPROVAL OF JUNE 14, 2017 MINUTES

Nancy Moses called for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 14, 2017 meeting. MOTION: (Turner/Lewis) Motion to accept the minutes as presented from the June 14, 2017 meeting were approved. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion carried.

III. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Nancy reported that over the summer PHMC staff met with legislators to discuss the impact of a decrease in the keystone fund. The threat had not disappeared, last week PHMC was told that both the keystone and historic preservation fund are at risk of a reduction.

We do know that when we are facing a challenge there are people who are willing to help us including: historic sites and friend's groups; developers who benefit from tax credits; museum and archive visitors; commissioners, legislators and other state agencies. Nancy is honored that everyone at today's meeting have stepped forward to take on this challenge.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

a. State Historical Records Advisory Board Reappointments – David Carmichael reported on the following three candidates for reappointment to the State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB): James Beidler – Genealogy Consultant/Author (Berks County), Ed Galloway – Interim Assistant University Libraries for Archives and Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh(Pittsburgh) and Stacey Peeples – Curator, Lead Archivist, Pennsylvania Hospital (Philadelphia).

MOTION: (Chambliss/Savakinis) Motion to approve the candidates for reappointment to the State Historical Records Advisory Board as presented were approved. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion carried. (See Attached)

V. STAFF REPORTS

Executive Directors Report – Andrea Lowery reported when she interviewed for the executive director position there was a lot of talk about goals including expanding access, reaching a more diverse audience, increasing customer satisfaction, providing an experience for users that meets the 21st century expectations. Andrea believes these things matter because we have the PA State Archives where we have everything from the founding documents and the documents to

protect the most fundamental rights of Pennsylvanians to the poignant documents relating to 911. On an individual level, we have birth and death certificates and agency records that are critical in maintaining state government.

The State Historic Preservation Office reaches out into many communities through grants and historic markers.

The Historic Sites and Museums office draws students and families and become places for lifelong learning. All of these elements are critical into building a better Pennsylvania and provide an opportunity for us to look back and understand our rich history and help us find commonalities. We look to today to understand the world we live in and understand what it means to be a Pennsylvanian. It helps us look to the future to understand what we want Pennsylvania to be for our children and grandchildren.

These elements help us understand our core values as Pennsylvanians including tolerance, determination, optimism and passion. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission is an agency for all Pennsylvanians and that's why these things matter. Our reach and breadth allows us to collaborate and build partnerships widely. We touch every agency, every part of the state. We draw people into historic sites and museums. We draw people seeking information physically and virtually. We go out into the community and offer facts in a complicated and sometimes confusing world. We are uniquely positioned among state agencies to help people find common ground, explore their differences and create a Pennsylvania we want for future generations. Andrea thanked everyone for this opportunity and is excited to be a part of PHMC.

Legislative Report – Howard Pollman thanked bureau directors and members of their staff with their help in getting the word out and reaching out to legislators to emphasize the impact and importance in keeping the keystone fund.

State Historic Preservation Office – Andrea Macdonald provided an update on the disaster planning for historic properties initiatives and treatment and disposition of historic human remains throughout Pennsylvania.

At this time, Jeff Slack from the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Board addressed the commission on burials and cemeteries.

As many of you know, each state historic preservation program is required to have a qualified State Review Board. The Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Board, is charged with providing expert judgements about the historical, architectural and archeological significance of resources in the state as authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act and the State History Code. The Board serves as an advisory body to both the State Historic Preservation Office and the PHMC Commission.

Jeff provided an update on a matter of statewide importance that is under review by the Board's Committee on Burials and Cemeteries.

Last fall, members of the Board raised concerns about the treatment and disposition of historic human remains throughout the Commonwealth after hundreds of skeletons were discovered at a construction site on Arch Street in Philadelphia. It was mistakenly believed that a burial ground had been relocated when a church moved in the mid-19th century.

What became apparent as the dust figuratively and literally settled is the lack of clear regulations and procedures to provide guidance in these situations. Various officials at the local and state level, while often wanting to help, concluded that they lacked jurisdiction. As a result, at this site—and at countless other sites throughout the state—much of the historic record was lost as competing interests from families to developers to preservationists were left to battle in the press and in the courts.

While Arch Street is perhaps the largest case in recent memory, this is far from the only one. SHPO staff receive near-weekly calls asking what should be done with human remains unearthed during construction projects, as the result of erosion, or by property owners unaware that their land contains a family plot.

In response, the Board formed a special committee at its June meeting and the following motion was passed:

“In light of recent projects affecting historic burial places throughout the Commonwealth, the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Board moves to establish a study committee to investigate the current laws, policies, and practices affecting human burial places in Pennsylvania. The Committee will work with SHPO staff to characterize the issues affecting these places and report back to the State Historic Preservation Board.”

In the ensuing months, the Committee has advanced this issue by: continuing to monitor occurrences throughout the state and beginning to benchmark existing regulations and procedures in other states. The Committee has also been working closely with SHPO staff who have been:

- participating in public forums related to cemeteries and burial places
- working to create an updated PHMC policy on burials
- engaging PHMC’s legal counsel to clarify questions about state burial laws and cemeteries
- moving to develop a policy for consultation under the History Code
- monitoring the status of two House Bills (1019 and 1435) that clarify definitions of cemeteries
- reasonable access and financial assistance for maintaining cemetery grounds
- staff have also met with House members, including the sponsors of these two bills

In conclusion, it can be difficult enough to get limited funding and attention directed toward above-ground resources that people can see and understand. By their nature, below-ground resources, like human remains, can be more difficult for people to grapple with but they are equally important, and their protection is also part of our mandate.

In short, this issue has created widespread and passionate responses from the public along with requests for clearer regulations and procedures. Therefore, we plan to continue our fact finding and then work on a draft policy that will be presented to the Commission at a future meeting for adoption.

State Archives – David Carmichael reported on the third and final “Aunt Edna” posters. He shared design photos of the archives building and updated everyone on the building project. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2020 or early 2021. Naming opportunities are a possibility. In the future, David is planning for a digital archive with a vendor in the cloud.

State Museum – Beth Hager announced that the permanent exhibit at The State Museum of Pennsylvania featuring the history of the Pennsylvania turnpike has earned national recognition. The Leadership in History committee of the American association for State and Local History (AASLH) has selected The State Museum as its 2017 Award of Merit winner. The honor specifically recognizes the museum’s exhibit. Curt Miner, Senior Curator at The State Museum accepted the award in Austin, Texas.

The State Museum offered guests free general admission to the museum on Friday’s June 16 through August 25th featuring Learn at Lunchtime programs highlighting a variety of engaging discussions and presentations.

The State Museum was recently awarded by the Harrisburg Magazine “Simply the Best 2017” museum.

Goals for the museum include building adult visitation and membership, deepen the experience of school children and identify the State Museum as the place where we celebrate student achievement and strengthening security at the museum.

Historic Sites and Museums – Brenda Reigle reported her bureau is working on marketing plans with Penn State Center for Survey Research to develop an audience survey and marketing plan. The goal is to increase attendance and revenue at PHMC sites.

The goal of our standards program is quality control. We have lost more professional staff at our sites, now those sites are completely run by volunteers. We put our standards program together to maintain a high level of activity. Our groups are required to have ethics policies, whistleblower policies, financial controls, policy and procedure and would like to add interpretation and curatorial standards for our properties as well.

The 21st Century Museums Initiative was created about 6 months ago to identify new audiences, making sure our sites are relevant, engage new audiences and develop programs that show multiple perspectives and allow for that discourse and discussion at our museums. Commissioners Ophelia Chambliss and Robert Savakinas agreed to work on the 21st Century Museums Initiative.

VI. PENNSYLVANIA HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Heather Hu reported that the Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation (PHF) received a verbal commitment for a \$25,000 gift towards the Mammal Hall restoration from the Pollock Foundation to sponsor the Elk diorama.

The PHF is planning to submit a proposal to the Hall Foundation to fund membership to The State Museum for all 4th grade students within the Harrisburg School District.

The summer direct mail appeal went out in early July and has received about \$8,000 to date. Through the State Archives ongoing connection with Ancestry.Com, PHF received a \$3,000 gift to fund flash drives for the 2018 archives booth at the PA Farm Show.

PHF continues to manage an annual NHPRC grant on behalf of the State Archives and manage the Ft. Pitt Endowment on behalf of Ft. Pitt.

Glenn Holliman is now President of the Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation Board; David Schankweiler is Vice President; and Anne Yellott will remain treasurer.

The next board meeting will take place the same day as the December commission meeting. It is scheduled to begin at 1pm at The State Museum and encourage commissioners to attend. The PHF Board of Directors will hold a board retreat on Tuesday, October 17, 2017. The goals of the retreat are to better understand the role, case, and priorities of PHF so that we can most effectively support PHMC.

VII. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Alice Lubrecht represented the State Library and State Archives at the Federation of Genealogical Societies conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A speaker from Ephrata Cloister provided a lecture at the State Library during a lunch and learn session about Ephrata Cloister music. Staff from the State Library and State Archives will help plan for the 50th anniversary of the Governor's Mansion in 2018.

David Schuyler reported on the Collections Task Force. The task force was charged to assess how our collecting policy fulfills the mission of the commission. We were also asked to address the need to deaccession duplicative objects or collections that are not central to PHMC's mission. Members including David, are Nancy Moses, Philip Zimmerman, past Executive Director Jim Vaughan, Brenda Reigle, Beth Hager, David Carmichael, Andrea Lowery, Curt Miner and Mary Jane Miller.

At the first meeting, the task force discussed broad collection themes – big picture items. Everything from race and ethnicity to politics, work, social organizations, belief systems, commerce and industry and technology.

In June, Brenda met with senior staff of the Bureau of Historic Sites and Museums to discuss the collections policy. Staff generally liked the big picture themes the task force had discussed but expressed concern that they were not material culture focused. They were positive about developing a collections policy that reaches out to diverse audiences in the commonwealth.

The task force met again on July 6th to discuss the collections and deaccession policy. The Collections Advancement Project is progressing nicely, this database of everything in all PHMC properties to make possible a new level of intellectual control over the collections and enable staff to make truly informed decisions about accessioning and deaccessioning.

After the July meeting, David Schuyler wrote a summary of key discussion points for Nancy Moses. The first involves collections policy. PHMC's written policy dates from March 1, 1997. This document does not reflect what Curt Miner has explained is the driving force behind current collection policy that the newest accessions are exhibit driven.

The second involves deaccessioning. At the July meeting David was impressed with how much work the curators and staff have put into thinking about deaccessioning. A wise deaccessioning program would free up resources that PHMC desperately needs in other areas of its endeavors. He believes staff has carefully prepared plans for some deaccessioning, and that these should move forward, he does not believe we should move quickly on other aspects of the collection until the CAP project is complete.

A third theme in our discussion is to what extent the changing demographics of the commonwealth should influence collections policy. Brenda Reigle and her staff suggest undertaking a series of smaller exhibitions that reach out to diverse communities in the commonwealth and use those exhibitions both to build outreach and also to identify areas that PHMC might collect that we can reasonably expect will have historical value. David urges the commission to support Brenda's effort.

VIII. INTELLECTUAL DESSERT

Andrea Lowery discussed with commissioners the current events which occurred in Charlottesville, Virginia and the Southern Poverty Law Center. The Southern Poverty Law Center identified four confederate monuments/marker in Pennsylvania that were of concern. Two markers are state markers located in McConnellsburg, PA where in 1863, the first two confederate soldiers were killed and buried in Pennsylvania.

The first marker identified is Confederate Dead - “Two Confederate Soldiers killed June 29, 1863 in a skirmish with Union troops were buried here by local residents. The monument in their honor was erected by Daughters of the Confederacy.” PHMC is working with the Governor’s Office to revise the text and will replace the marker with new text to reflect a more historical, academically rigorous approach to the information conveyed.

The second marker identified is Last Confederate Bivouac – “A Confederate force under General Bradley T. Johnson camped here July 31, 1864 after raiding and burning Chambersburg. They were the last Confederates to camp on Pennsylvania soil.” Both PHMC and Governor’s Office has concurred that this marker is not problematic and that it is marking a troop movement and location

The other two markers are road names – “Confederate Road” which is a privately owned road and “Lee Park Avenue” in Luzerne County named after a Wilkes-Barre area developer, Washington Lee, no relation to Robert E. Lee.

The methodology used by the Southern Poverty Law Center was “in the event that it was ambiguous, they erred on the side of thinking that it was confederate related”. Andrea suggested to the Governor’s Office that they contact Southern Poverty Law Center and at least have “Lee Park Avenue” removed from the list.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Nancy Moses adjourned the meeting as 12:20pm.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

2017914_1 MOTION: (Turner/Lewis) Motion to accept the minutes as presented from the June 14, 2017 meeting were approved. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion carried.

2017914_2 MOTION: (Chambliss/Savakinis) Motion to approve the candidates for reappointment to the State Historical Records Advisory Board as presented were approved. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion carried. (See Attached)