

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION
JUNE 3, 2020
MINUTES

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission met on June 3, 2020 via Skype for Business. The following Commissioners were present: Nancy Moses – Chair, Ophelia Chambliss, William Lewis, Andrew Masich, Representative Robert Matzie, Fred Powell, Robert Savakinas, Kate Flessner for Senator Joseph Scarnati, David Schuyler, Kenneth Turner, Representative Parke Wentling, Philip Zimmerman and Glenn Miller (Department of Education).

The following staff were present: Andrea Lowery, David Bohanick, David Carmicheal, Beth Hager, Andrea MacDonald, Brenda Reigle, Beth Hager. Rodney Akers and Gerard Leone served as legal counsel, Robert McAvoy, Legal Intern and Glenn Holliman represented the Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation.

I. CALL TO ORDER

PHMC Chairwoman, Nancy Moses called the meeting to order at 10am. At this time, she asked everyone on the call to introduce themselves.

II. APPROVAL OF MARCH 4, 2020 MINUTES

Chairwoman Nancy Moses called for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 4, 2020 meeting. MOTION: (Turner/Chambliss) Motion to accept the minutes as presented from March 4, 2020 meeting was approved. 13 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

III. CHAIRWOMAN'S REMARKS

Chairwoman Nancy Moses reminded everyone that the mission of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission is to work in partnership with others to preserve the

commonwealth's natural and cultural heritage as a steward, teacher, and advocate for the people of Pennsylvania and the nation.

Chairwoman Nancy Moses read the following statement: "In 1968, I lived through the assassination of Martin Luther King, and the social unrest that followed. I was a college student in the center of Baltimore. Now, some 50 years later, I am experiencing the same intensity of social unrest that is following the murders of Trayvon Martin, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and countless other black people at the hands of law enforcement and white racists. This time I am living in the center of Philadelphia, our city double lockdown for the coronavirus and because of the rioting. My heart is breaking, but a breaking heart only goes so far. What is needed is action to fight against the inequities and exclusions that have shaped the commonwealth throughout its history. I believe we all can do our part. I believe that everyone on this call can make an important and permanent difference."

During today's meeting, commissioners will hear what PHMC staff are doing and intend to do in the future to assure that how we serve the public, what we collect and who we hire represents all Pennsylvanians.

In addition, staff will be sharing many of the accomplishments they have made over the few months during lockdown. Chairwoman Nancy Moses has observed remarkable speed and grace in which the commission's staff and its counsels have pivoted to a virtual new way of doing business. This is a tribute to its leadership, not only Andrea Lowery but all the Bureau Directors and other staff and their lieutenants.

Chairwoman Nancy Moses discussed a Post-COVID-19 future, its potential impact on the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, emerging trends, implications of those trends and opportunities for PHMC.

Emerging trends for the State Historic Preservation Office - relocation & return to small cities & towns; saving the old not buying the new. Opportunities include renovation of older housing stock and more historic preservation advocates.

Emerging trends for Historic Sites & Museums - Car travel & staycations; Post COVID fear of classroom crowding. Opportunities include school partnerships & outdoor classes and full schedule of community activities.

Emerging trends for the State Museum of Pennsylvania – limited entertainment options; people staying close to home. Opportunities include building repeat visitation, more regular small audience programs and tapping into underserved Harrisburg.

Emerging trends for the State Archives – aging population enjoy genealogy, more comfort with online activities. Opportunities include online and activities using Archives holdings and online classes geared toward seniors.

IV. CURRENT CONCERNS

Ophelia Chambliss led the discussion on current concerns. PHMC is a history collection group and must be aware of what language is used. Ophelia recently attended a peaceful protest in York hosted by young people that was diverse in gender, age, ethnicity and background.

Ophelia Chambliss noted that we are fighting a pandemic, a race war, and the highest unemployment numbers ever. These things have a huge impact on minority communities. It is important for us to continue our efforts in making sure that what we do now and the initiative we have with our diversity and inclusion policy have an impact going forward. Minority communities have long held that their history and stories have not been told. Now things being videotaped and recorded making people aware of how black people are being treated a certain way. We need to

keep that awareness because that is what is going to break down those difficulties and communication and teach it to everyone. We need to make sure that the people at the table sharing this information and having those conversations are represented because that's how we make sure we are using the right language and we are telling the story the right way. Since we started the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access initiative, all the departments have been making progress and have been doing what they can towards this initiative.

At this time, Andrea Lowery and each of the bureaus to shared what Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access initiatives they are currently working on.

Andrea Lowery reported on agency -wide initiatives including the DEIA action plan and how we better represent all Pennsylvanians. In addition, we are undertaking staff training to look at inherent bias to cultivate a better environment of inclusion at PHMC.

David Carmicheal reported on the following State Archives initiatives: Identifying and updating descriptions of collections within the archives that were overlooked relating to Native American, Latin and African American cultures. Archives staff are currently testing HistoryPin, a place for people to share photos, stories and connects communities and local history.

Beth Hager reported on State Museum initiatives that include: Year of the Woman exhibit, Game Changers exhibit, and an exhibit devoted to women's suffrage "Why Not in Pennsylvania?". The State Museum Master Plan is moving forward to look at reviving and revising the state museum. The State Museum is working on an entry exhibit that would introduce individuals and cultures of Pennsylvania.

Brenda Reigle, Historic Sites and Museums reported that her staff participated in two regional diversity workshops to raise awareness and to have staff think about bias. This workshop was facilitated by Cecile Shellman, a diversity consultant from the Pittsburgh area. Partnerships with

other state agencies include: Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services; the Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing and the Bureau of Supports for Autism and Special Populations.

Andrea MacDonald, State Historic Preservation Office, reported staff are working to identify and document places associated with African American experiences. In February 2020, the State Historic Preservation Board voted to approve the National Register Multiple Property Document Form for African American Churches and Cemeteries. This will help promote the listing of important places to the National Register of Historic Places. This fall, the SHPO office will have a partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and National Park Services Chesapeake Bay office and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to identify and survey other important places associated with African American experiences in Pennsylvania. This information will be recorded in the Cultural Resources GIS. The SHPO office continues to identify underrepresented themes in the Historic Marker Program.

IV. PHMC AND PHF REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS

PENNSYLVANIA HERITAGE FOUNDATION – Glenn Holliman, President of the Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation had joined the PHMC Commission meeting but had to leave early to attend another meeting at 11am. Andrea Lowery read the following statement on behalf of Glenn Holliman: “My regrets that I have to leave the meeting. The Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation report is included in your packet. I am very pleased to state our staff has remained active and committed to our mission of stewardship and philanthropic support for PHMC. As this situation changes, we remain committed to increasing the philanthropic support for the many activities and sites of PHMC. Best wishes and keep up the good work.”

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE - Andrea MacDonald reported on Advocacy Week 2020, where she and members of her staff met in Washington, DC with congressional members and their staff to educate them about the positive impacts of federal historic preservation funding.

SHPO staff transition to COVID-19 teleworking by staying connected and keeping historic buildings and places that are important to Pennsylvania communities are in the forefront of everyone's minds. Staff also developed a new process to accept emailed Environmental Review Project submissions and Keystone Grant panel meeting was held via Skype for Business.

HISTORIC SITES AND MUSEUMS – Brenda Reigle announced Walter Rybka is planning to retire July 17, 2020. Walter was instrumental in the development of the Flagship Niagara Development Plan and Site Administrator at the Erie Maritime Museum.

Historic buildings and grounds have been closed to the public since mid-March and have maintained a strong online presence. Sites launched #Hashtag campaigns and have been uploading museum collections online. PA Military Museum and Erie Maritime Museum collaborated Morse code messages for visitors and teleworking BHSM curators added nearly 1700 records to the public side of ARGUS in April.

STATE MUSEUM – Beth Hager reported that most of her staff is teleworking from home; security and operation staff come into the museum 7 days a week to protect the collections and facilities. Education and curatorial staff have also maintained an online presence on social media.

STATE ARCHIVES – David Carmicheal reported that construction on the new State Archives building has begun, the target date for completion is June 6, 2022. Staff are working from home, indexing records and writing Records Management Technical Leaflets. During the first week of the pandemic, staff developed Best Practices in Teleworking in terms of records management for

state agencies and staff have been able to answer between 70% -80% reference questions while working from home.

LEGAL - Gerard Leone reported on the interest of having a commission wide statement for collecting institutions and attorney general. We want PHMC to become a resource for collecting institutions if they are tempted to move objects from the public realm into private hands. More information will be sent to commissioners for discussion prior to the September commission meeting.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Executive Director Report – Andrea Lowery reported as of now, 6,579 records have been entered in ARGUS, a large increase from the beginning of the pandemic when 1,500 records had been entered. Staff continue to upload social media content. A COVID resource page was developed for historic preservation organizations, museums, historical societies, and other historical organizations across the state.

We are awaiting the Governor’s Office direction on reopening our historic sites that are currently in the “green” phase. Dauphin County is currently in the “yellow” phase where staff continues to telework from home. Once the capitol complex goes to the “green” phase, Andrea anticipates calling some employees back but probably not taking them off telework completely.

With the resumption of construction projects across the commonwealth, some of PHMC’s projects have been restarted. The construction of the Archives building is underway, and the State Museum escalator project is finished. We are working through some capital projects; smaller projects are restricted to life safety construction projects and emergencies.

On May 29, 2020 Governor Wolf signed a 5-month budget for all agencies. This short budget will allow the commonwealth to reassess where it is financially and act accordingly with their budget measures for the second half of the year. PHMC was flat-funded for this initial 5-month

period. General Government Operations have been funded at \$8,981,000; Cultural and Historical Support Grants at \$833,000. Keystone fund information pending.

Legislative Report - Howard Pollman reported on SB 1108 – COVID-19 Relief Bill that includes \$20 million for museums and funding. He continues to track bills that impact the distribution of special funding including Keystone Funds and Historic Preservation Funds.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Jim Vaughan Tribute - Chairwoman Nancy Moses called for a motion to approve the Resolution for Jim Vaughan. MOTION: (Masich/Turner) Motion to the resolution as presented was approved. 13 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention

VI. TASK FORCE REPORTS

Strategic Planning – Andrea Lowery reported that PHMC internally continues to work as a team to develop our priorities

VII. ADJOURNMENT

PHMC Chairwoman, Nancy Moses adjourned the meeting at 12:30pm

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

20200603_1 MOTION: (Turner/Chambliss) Motion to accept the minutes as presented from March 4, 2020 meeting was approved. 13 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

20200603_2 MOTION: (Masich/Turner) Motion to the resolution as presented was approved. 13 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention