

**PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM
COMMISSION DECEMBER 2, 2020
MINUTES**

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission met on December 2, 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, 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, Howard Pollman, Scott Doyle and Elizabeth Rairigh. Rodney Akers and Gerard Leone served as legal counsel. 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 SEPTEMBER 9, 2020 MINUTES

Chairwoman Nancy Moses called for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 9, 2020 meeting. MOTION: (Turner/Lewis) Motion to accept the minutes as presented from September 9, 2020 meeting was approved. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

III. CHAIRWOMAN'S REMARKS

Chairwoman Nancy Moses thanked PHMC staff on their work throughout this pandemic by reaching audiences with virtual programs and grants. COVID-19 hasn't stopped PHMC staff from experimenting with new media, learning new skills, imagining new ways connecting history

with contemporary issues and events.

Chairwoman Nancy Moses recognized two outgoing PHMC Commissioners, Senator Andrew Dinniman and Senator Joseph Scarnati.

IV. PHMC AND PHF REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE - Andrea MacDonald reported that the pandemic created an opportunity for the State Historic Preservation Office, staff in all three locations (Hope Lodge, Keystone Building, and Fort Pitt) were able to quickly transition to telework and virtually engage with partners and communities throughout Pennsylvania. SHPO's digitization on work in preparation for PA-SHARE allowed staff to transition more easily to teleworking because resource files were available online.

The transition to virtual content has provided staff with greater opportunities to participate in educational and professional development events that they would have been unlikely to attend in person because of distance, cost, or time commitment. The work of the PA SHPO continued with little change or interruption.

Certified Local Government Grants – Andrea MacDonald reported that her office receives annual funding from the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) for their operation, and they are required to pass through at least 10% of that funding to Certified Local Governments as subgrants. For FFY 2021, the PA SHPO is anticipating an increase in our total HPF grant. The final award amount will not be available until early 2021. Our FFY 2020 award was \$1,359,198, so the required 10% was \$135,920. We anticipate level funding or a modest increase and have set aside funding for additional grants, scholarships, and training to reach our anticipated 10% threshold.

Funding for the following certified local governments are recommend: City of Lancaster,

Lancaster County; City of Erie, Erie County; Tredyffrin Township, Chester County; Borough of Milford, Pike County; City of Philadelphia; and East Marlborough Township, Chester County. A small amount of money will be set aside for mini-grants and scholarships.

MOTION: (Powell/Turner) Motion to approve the recommended Certified Local Government Grants as presented from December 2, 2020 meeting was approved. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

Cultural and Historical Support Grants – Andrea MacDonald reported that the purpose of the program is to provide general operating support to Pennsylvania museums and official county historical societies that are not directly supported by other state agency operating support programs. An eligible museum must have an annual operating budget exceeding \$100,000 (excluding capital and in-kind services) and at least one full-time professional staff person (or approved equivalent).

PHMC received 157 applications. 155 of the applicants are eligible. This is an increase of 2 eligible applicants from Fiscal Year 2019-2020. The number of counties also increased from 57 to 58 of the overall 67 counties. Grants are awarded on a formula based on a percentage of operating budget with a maximum grant of \$40,000 and a minimum grant of \$4,000.

MOTION: (Turner/Zimmerman) Motion to approve the Cultural and Historical Support Grants as recommended was approved. 8 in favor/0 opposed/3 abstentions (The following commissioners abstained from voting: Robert Savakinus - Lackawanna Historical Society; Andrew Masich - Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania; and William Lewis – Luzerne County Historical Society)

Historical Marker Review - Andrea MacDonald reviewed with PHMC Commissioners the results of the Historical Marker Evaluation. The Historical Marker program is one of PHMC's most popular programs and the words cast into the markers have deep meanings for

many Pennsylvanians. She expects staff will continue evaluating marker text and subjects to address plaques and markers that lack historical context, contain inaccuracies, or references that could be perceived as culturally inappropriate.

Over 2500 markers were evaluated, with markers assigned High, Medium, Low or No priority for review. The report that was submitted summarizes those results. No Commission action is required at this time, as according to PHMC's Historical Marker Policy, the Historical Marker Panel will review this list and make recommendations to the Commission. It is anticipated that the Panel recommendations will be presented to the Commission for action at its June 2021 meeting.

New historical marker nominations were due on December 1st. Staff are currently processing new nominations for the panel's review. The Historic Marker Panel will meet on February 10th to review all new nominations. Recommendation for those new markers will be presented to the commission at the March 2021 meeting.

Following the review of the new marker nominations, PHMC marker staff will proceed with implementing the updated Historical Marker Policy involving the potential revision or retirement of priority markers. Staff will begin working through the high priority markers for review, performing research and consulting with local partners. Staff will present findings in a report for the Historic Marker Panels review in early Spring 2021. Staff will consult with the review panel on the initial recommendations to be presented at the June 2021 meeting. Further recommendations presented for action will be presented at a quarterly basis or as needed.

HISTORIC SITES AND MUSEUMS – Brenda Reigle reported that teleworking can be both an advantage and disadvantage. The museum grounds are open to the public for people to walk around but the buildings remain closed.

Many staff miss the person to person contact with visitors and look forward to

returning to sites, but teleworking has provided undistracted time to many—and the results in terms of increased digital programming and a dramatic increase in sharing BHSM collections on public ARGUS have been tremendous. We've been able to do more staff diversity training and advance 21st Century Museums goals with our Conversation series.

Time for grant writing resulted in PHMC being awarded nearly \$250,000 in Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) CARES funding to produce digital assets.

Retirement Resolution for David Dunn – Brenda Reigle reported that Dave joined the PHMC in 1990 as the Site Administrator at the Somerset Historical Center. In 1997 Dave became the director of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania where he achieved the opening of Stewart Junction Railroad Education Center. Dave then moved to be director of the State Museum of Pennsylvania in 2010, managing collections, developing permanent and temporary exhibits.

In 2016 Dave returned to the Bureau of Historic Sites and Museums as Chief of Special Projects, overseeing a major collections inventory at Landis Valley Village and Farm Museum; assisting with other site collection inventories; and working with Bureau staff on our 21st Century Museums initiative.

MOTION: (Powell/Zimmerman) Motion to approve the Retirement Resolution for David Dunn was approved as presented. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

STATE MUSEUM – Beth Hager reported that most State Museum staff members continue to telework at home due to the pandemic with a small number of security and operations staff reporting to the building. Over the past 9 months, the State Museum has been

able to expand its digital programming and social media presence. The Education department coordinated efforts to make sure that audiences had access to staff curatorial and interpretive experts via a variety of virtual programs and social media offerings. The Archaeology Workshop was held virtually in October, each Friday at noon a lecture series was offered. The workshop was extremely popular with approximately 100 people from across Pennsylvania and beyond participating each week.

The Art of the State exhibit opened virtually on September 13th. The Artist Conversations program was held as a Learn at Lunchtime on November 20th, it was the museum's first live program from a gallery and was attended by approximately 40 participants.

STATE ARCHIVES - David Carmicheal reported that construction continues at the new State Archive building. Archives staff served 2.8 million people online between March and September of 2020.

State Historic Records Advisory Board Members – David Carmicheal reported on the following nominations to the board: Dominique Luster, Carnegie Museum of Art; Robert Stackeley, Senator John Heinz History Center; and Celia Caust-Ellenbogen, Swarthmore College.

MOTION: (Powell/Turner) Motion to approve the State Historic Records Advisory Board Recommendations were approved as presented. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

Retirement Resolution for Delores “Dee” Vega – David Carmicheal reported Dee started working for the commission in 1999. She is directly responsible for microfilming hundreds of volumes and tens of thousands of individual historical records. Dee welcomed learning how to use new equipment in the Archives and took on the task of digitizing thousands of rolls of microfilm so that these records could be available to the public via the internet.

She has been a tremendous asset to the archives and will be truly missed by all her co-workers.

MOTION: (Turner/Lewis) Motion to approve the Retirement Resolution for Delores “Dee” Vega was approved as presented. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Executive Director Report – Andrea Lowery reported that PHMC employees continue to work; 124 people are working from home; 21 people are remotely and in person and there are 42 people working on site. She noted that the agency is carrying a number of vacancies; the agency’s current total complement is 206.

Last week, Governor Wolfe signed the budget. PHMC is allocated \$12,169,000 for the remainder of the year, a decrease of \$405,000 over the previous year and \$1,167,000 for Cultural & Historical Support Grants, making that program whole at \$2,000,000.

PHMC’s Senate Appropriations Committee Hearing has been scheduled for Wednesday, February 17, 2021.

All historic sites and museums remain closed to visitors. We will discuss reopening after Charter Day.

PHMC Strategic Planning is complete; Andrea will report on at the March 3 2021 meeting.

Legislative Report – Howard Pollman reported that HB2812 was signed by Governor Wolf that includes the language transferring the Highlands Mansion to the Highlands Historical Society. Howard provided an overview of the bills he tracked during the 2019 – 2020 Legislative session. If the bills are not passed before the end of this legislative session, they will need to be reintroduced in the next session for further consideration.

PHMC will not hold an in-person Charter Day event in 2021, we are looking to do something virtually.

PENNSYLVANIA HERITAGE FOUNDATION – Glenn Holliman reported that

the Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation continues to provide support to the commission and has expanded their presence on its website and other social media outlets. Glenn hopes that when things start to reopen the foundation can begin to rebuild its presence and increase its membership. Chairwoman Nancy thanked Glenn and members of the board for their continued support.

V. NEW BUSINESS – PHMC Commission meeting dates for 2021 are March 3rd, June 2nd, September 8th, and December 8th.

VI. PROJECT UPDATES

State Museum Master Plan Update – At this time, Andrea Lowery introduced and welcomed Philip Chen and Steven Gerrard from Ann Beha Architects; and Meghan Lehnar and Greg Matty from Gallagher and Associates to the meeting.

When Andrea started her position as Executive Director, she saw the needs of the State Museum and believes Pennsylvanians deserve a State Museum that tells the whole story of Pennsylvania. The master plan that we are developing will allow the building to shine and meet the expectations of today's visitors and deliver high quality exhibits that are relevant.

Ann Beha Architects and Gallagher and Associates have been engaged to develop a plan that can be implemented over a number of years. We are building into the plan flexibility depending on fundraising capacity and timing. We are planning to execute using state funds that will be augmented as they can by private funds. At this time, Andrea gave an overview of today's presentation and the project team addressed existing conditions and planning ideas for the State Museum.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

PHMC Chairwoman, Nancy Moses adjourned the meeting at 12:18 pm. At this time, the two

students Katherine Lee and Dillon Scott from the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra performed a seasonal melody.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

2020122_1 MOTION: (Turner/Lewis) Motion to accept the minutes as presented from September 9, 2020 meeting was approved. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

2020122_2 MOTION: (Powell/Turner) Motion to approve the recommended Certified Local Government Grants as presented from December 2, 2020 meeting was approved. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

2020122_3 MOTION: (Turner/Zimmerman) Motion to approve the Cultural and Historical Support Grants as recommended was approved. 8 in favor/0 opposed/3 abstentions (The following commissioners abstained from voting: Robert Savakinus - Lackawanna Historical Society; Andrew Masich - Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania; and William Lewis – Luzerne County Historical Society)

2020122_4 MOTION: (Powell/Zimmerman) Motion to approve the Retirement Resolution for David Dunn was approved as presented. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

2020122_5 MOTION: (Powell/Turner) Motion to approve the State Historic Records Advisory Board Recommendations were approved as presented. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

2020122_6 MOTION: (Turner/Lewis) Motion to approve the Retirement Resolution for Delores “Dee” Vega was approved as presented. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

