

**PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION  
SEPTEMBER 14, 2021  
MINUTES**

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission met on September 14, 2021, in person and via ZOOM. The following Commissioners were present: Nancy Moses – Chair, Christie Martone represented Senator Michele Brooks, Ophelia Chambliss, Senator Tim Kearney, William Lewis, Andrew Masich, Fred Powell, Phillip Zimmerman, Representative Robert Matzie, Ken Turner, Representative Park Wentling, Robert Savakinus, and Susan Banks (Department of Education).

The following staff were present: Andrea Lowery, David Bohanick, David Carmicheal, Beth Hager, Andrea MacDonald, Melissa Mann, Howard Pollman. 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 commissioners and staff to introduce themselves.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chairwoman Nancy Moses called for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 2, 2021 meeting. MOTION: (Powell/Zimmerman) Motion to accept the minutes as presented from the June 2, 2021 meeting was approved. 13 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

**III. CHAIRWOMEN'S REMARKS**

Chairwoman Nancy Moses welcomed everyone to today's meeting and reported that after today's commission meeting and lunch, commissioners will have an opportunity to tour the 9/11 Exhibit in the State Museum of Pennsylvania: "Witness to History" featuring Col. Paul Evanko's head of Pennsylvania State Police, actual handwritten field notes from the morning of 9/11. She asked other commissioners to share their memories regarding the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on the United

States. At this time, Chairwoman Nancy Moses called for a moment of silence to remember the victims, first responders, and their families.

#### **IV. PHMC AND PHF REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS**

**STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE** – Andrea MacDonald welcomed four new archaeologists at the PA SHPO office: Casey Hanson, Sara-Ladd Clark, Taylor Napoleon, and Justin McKeel.

The State Historic Preservation Office report lists nominations to the National Register of Historic Places that will be considered by the PA Historic Preservation Board on Tuesday, October 5, 2021. Several of the nominations are a result of the SHPO's proactive efforts to identify underrepresented themes in Pennsylvania.

Moving forward with implementing the new PHMC Historical Marker Policy, staff developed a schedule to help balance the new marker nominations with review of existing markers. The deadline for Historical Marker nominations will move from December 1st to June 1<sup>st</sup>; marker recommendations will be approved by the Commission annually at its September Commission meeting. Recommendations for marker revisions or retirements will be presented to the Commission annually at its March Commission meeting.

#### **Marker Panel Recommendations Reevaluations**

Andrea MacDonald reported that the first evaluation of PHMC Historical Markers under the Historical Marker Policy, the PHMC Historical Marker Review Panel met to evaluate five markers. Under the policy, the Commission is to vote on the Panel Recommendations for Revision and Replacement and/or Retirement. The first five evaluations are organized under a single slate of recommendations for the commission's consideration. Supporting documentation for each marker was included in commission packets.

William Lewis commented that the process is very thorough. The marker review panel received extensive background material on each marker and then met to review each marker. The recommendations were all unanimously passed by the marker panel.

Andrea MacDonald reported that the slate of recommendations for markers under consideration are grouped under the following categories of action:

- Marker is to remain an active marker and not be retired under Section 11 of the Historical Marker Policy: Anna Wagner Keichline
- Marker/Plaque is revised and replaced under Section 9 and current marker retired under Section 11 of the Historical Marker Policy: General Anthony Wayne and Site of Western State Penitentiary
- Marker/Plaque is to be retired under Section 11 of the Historical Marker Policy: Forbes Road-Fort Duquesne Plaque and Woodrow Wilson.

Chairwoman Nancy Moses called for a motion to approve the Marker Panel Recommendations Reevaluations as presented.

Representative Parke Wentling asked for clarification on markers that were already removed and what it is the commission is voting on. Andrea Lowery referred to the Historic Marker Policy that PHMC may remove a marker if the property owner on which an Historical Marker is located requests its removal. Two markers have been removed; one was removed by the property owner (DCNR) and the second marker the property owner, Bryn Mawr College requested removal of the marker.

Representative Parke Wentling asked for clarification on how the markers to be evaluated were identified. Andrea MacDonald reported that a few years ago, PHMC Marker staff worked with an intern to perform a review based on keyword search and reading of texts that could be perceived as outdated or offensive. Staff then took a more comprehensive review utilizing other historians within the agency to evaluate all marker text. The public can also request review. The five markers, the commission is voting on today are a result of PHMC receiving a direct inquiry from the property owners or expression of concern from the public.

Representative Parke Wentling expressed concerns regarding the removal of the Woodrow Wilson marker and revision of marker text based on presentism. Staff clarified the reasoning for the removal and that modification of language was to add historical context, emphasizing that the markers being revised will be reinstalled.

Ophelia Chambliss commented that the Commission needed to be responsive to community concerns and to be sensitive to problematic language. She feels that the process allows the community to be engaged in the process while ensuring historical context and accuracy are provided.

MOTION: (Zimmerman/Chambliss) Motion to accept the Marker Panel Recommendations Reevaluations as presented. 12 in favor/1 opposed (Representative Parke Wentling)/0 abstention

#### **New Act 167 – Narberth Historic District**

Andrea MacDonald reported that in accordance with the requirements of the Historic District Act, the Borough of Narberth has requested that the PHMC certify the historical significance of the Narberth Historic Districts for the purpose of enacting a local historic preservation ordinance and establishing a Board of Historical Architectural Review (HARB).

MOTION: (Lewis/Powell) Motion to accept the Historic District Act Certification for Narberth as presented were approved. 13 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion carried.

#### **Resolution – Bryan Van Sweden Retirement**

Andrea MacDonald thanked Bryan Van Sweden for his work administering State and Federal historic preservation programs for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and wishes him well during his retirement.

Chairwoman Nancy Moses called for a motion to approve the following retirement resolution for Bryan Van Sweden:

WHEREAS, Bryan Van Sweden has served as an Historic Preservation Specialist, administering State and Federal historic preservation programs for the Commonwealth of

Pennsylvania since 1992; and,

WHEREAS, Bryan Van Sweden has advised and assisted Federal and State agencies and local governments in carrying out their historic preservation responsibilities; and,

WHEREAS, Bryan Van Sweden has provided the public with information, education, training, and technical assistance in historic preservation; and,

WHEREAS, Bryan Van Sweden served as the first Keystone Historic Preservation Grant Manager, and was instrumental in developing the Commonwealth's first electronic grant application, which became a model for other agencies and states; and

WHEREAS, in that capacity Bryan Van Sweden assisted with hundreds of projects, totaling nearly 23 million dollars which leveraged another 71 million in matching funds; and

WHEREAS, Bryan Van Sweden also served as Acting Grant Division Chief, and twice as Acting Preservation Services Division Chief; and

WHEREAS, Bryan Van Sweden has served as the Central Region's Community Preservation Coordinator for over ten years; and

WHEREAS, Bryan Van Sweden is the PA SHPO's liaison with the Heritage PA Association, the umbrella organization for Pennsylvania's 12 Heritage Areas, as well as a member of the South Mountain Partnership Leadership Committee; and

WHEREAS, Bryan Van Sweden has supported the responsibilities of the State Historic Preservation Officer with the National Park Service's Certified local Government Program by assisting municipalities with successful certification under the provision of Section 101(c) of the National Historic Preservation Act; and

WHEREAS, Bryan Van Sweden has fostered co-operative relationships between the State Historic Preservation Office and countless Pennsylvania municipalities. His assistance has helped many communities preserve their historic environment; and,

WHEREAS, Bryan Van Sweden has advanced the protection of Commonwealth's historic communities during his leadership with the certification of new historic districts under the Pennsylvania Historic District Act; and,

WHEREAS, Bryan Van Sweden has used his extensive knowledge of Pennsylvania architecture to assist with Determinations of Eligibility far too numerous to count;

WHEREAS, Bryan Van Sweden, through his leadership, has advanced the programs and promoted the values that aid in the preservation of the historic resources of Pennsylvania; and,

WHEREAS, Bryan Van Sweden has announced that he will retire from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, effective September 11, 2021;

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved, that the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission wishes to recognize the extraordinary personal and professional contribution of Bryan Van Sweden to the preservation of Pennsylvania's cultural resources and extends warm wishes for his retirement.

MOTION: (Zimmerman/Lewis) Motion to approve the retirement resolution for Bryan Van Sweden was approved. 13 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

**HISTORIC SITES AND MUSEUMS** – PHMC Chairwoman Nancy Moses introduced Melissa Mann. Melissa was recently selected as the Director of the Bureau for Historic Sites and Museums; Melissa previously worked as the Site Administrator at Drake Well Museum. Melissa Mann provided a brief report to commissioners regarding the reopening of the sites and programming. In late June, sites and museums increased their operating parameters to include group tours, facility rentals and limited outdoor events. There has been a decline in volunteers as the pandemic continues.

Historic sites continue to hold virtual programming with a variety of speakers on relevant topics. Ephrata Cloister hosted a session of their ongoing Virtual Ephrata Academy series. BHSM continues to collaborate with the State Library of Pennsylvania on a monthly series called: PA History, Read It and See It. Each month features a fun and factual investigation into one of our historic sites. BHSM also hosts an ongoing program; What's in a Theme: PHMC Virtual Collections Showcase, a monthly multisite series of events that started in December 2020.

**STATE ARCHIVES** – David Carmicheal reported that throughout the pandemic the staff at the State Records Center continued to provide records to state agencies, who use those records to provide essential services to their own customers. The SRC staff's consistent and dedicated customer service kept their portion of the 'supply chain' operating without a hitch.

A total of 70 applications were received for the Historical and Archival Records Care Grants (HARC). A list of proposed recipients to HARC and nominations to the State Historic Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) will be brought before the commission for approval at the December

meeting. David Carmicheal encouraged commissioners to email him possible nominations to SHRAB board.

The Digital Archives Project and the construction on the New State Archives building continues to remain on schedule.

**STATE MUSEUM OF PENNSYLVANIA** – Beth Hager reported that following two months of limited hours, the State Museum of Pennsylvania returned to a regular schedule in July 2021. Despite low visitation to the museum, sales at museum shop are doing well.

In person programs in Nature Lab resumed over the summer, Learn at Lunchtime presentations continued in an online Zoom format with hybrid Zoom and in person programs. Curiosity Connection and the Planetarium continue to remain closed due to the growing impact of the Delta variant of the Coronavirus.

The Archaeology Workshop Hidden Stories: Uncovering African American History Through Archaeology and Community Engagement is scheduled for Saturday, October 30<sup>th</sup>. Currently, we anticipate offering the conference virtually via Zoom as well as in person.

Art of the State exhibition opens on Sunday, September 26<sup>th</sup>. We received 2,217 entries from 626 Pennsylvania artists. The awards ceremony will be held virtually.

## **EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

**Executive Director Report** – Andrea Lowery reported that emergency telework ended for the Commonwealth of PA and employees are now reporting back to the workplace. The Commonwealth moved to a long-term permanent form of telework; about half of our staff are telework eligible.

Andrea and the bureau directors continue to work with the Independent Fiscal Office (IFO). PHMC is up for review in April 2022. The IFO is looking at PHMC in terms of performance-based budgeting to ensure that we are using the funding allocated that is meaningful.

Andrea thanked Charlie Fox for his service as acting bureau director for Historic Sites and Museums. She is excited to have Melissa Mann on board as director. The Office of Administration referred a list of 54 candidates, 29 applicants (three internal) were interviewed. Melissa is a proven administrator, passionate professional, respected mentor, and valued colleague.

**Keystone Budget** - We are preparing for next year's budget FY 2022-23; and will be submitted late September/early October. The Keystone budget is not an actual number that we received based on funds that we are given, it is anticipated number that could fluctuate throughout the year. We anticipate \$12.7 million for this year, \$1.8 million will go towards payroll; \$635,000 will be transferred to GGO and \$2.6 million towards the grant program; the remaining funds goes towards operations. Our complement last year was 207, this year it is 213.

Representative Parke Wentling asked Andrea Lowery about her participation on the Environmental Quality Board and on what basis she makes her vote. Andrea responded that she is a voting member, and her vote is based on her professional judgment as Executive Director of PHMC.

**Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation** – Glenn Holliman reported on the activities of the Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation (PHF). Glenn encouraged commissioners to contact him with possible nominations to the board. The board is planning a fall retreat and hope to find resources to hire a part time grant writer. PHMC Chairwoman Nancy Moses thanked the Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation for their continued support to the commission.

## **V. OLD BUSINESS**

Gerard Leone, Assistant Chief Counsel reminded commissioners that the Historic Marker Policy was adopted by the commission on September 9, 2020. Requests for revision or retirement of a historic marker can come from any citizen of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. All requests will be reviewed by the Historic Marker Panel. Members of the Historic Marker Panel are appointed by the Commission.

Revisions that correct spelling errors, grammar or dates can be managed by staff without Commission approval. Markers proposed for revisions not covered under subsection 9 will be reviewed by the Historic Marker Panel. Recommendations will identify elements that include, but are not limited to, existing inaccuracies, lack of historical context, or references that could be seen as inappropriate, and provide proposed direction to changes in content. If a property owner requests the removal of a historical marker on its property, the Commission staff may remove it. The Commission can approve the recommendations by a vote of at least two thirds majority of those voting and present.

Representative Parke Wentling asked for clarification on why PHMC met with the House Democratic Tourism & Recreation Committee and not with the Republican members. Howard Pollman reported that PHMC responded to a request from the House Democratic members inviting PHMC to an informational meeting on the programs and activities of PHMC as they relate to tourism development. Howard is working with staff of the House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee staff to schedule a meeting with the Republican members of the committee to update them on the activities of PHMC. The meeting is expected to be held when session resumes in the fall.

Representative Parke Wentling asked for a status update on Conneaut Lake State Park and PHMC's involvement with the Blue Streak roller coaster. Howard Pollman reported that the park's previous owner received a \$12,500 state grant from the commission. That covenant requires any future owner to consult with PHMC before they make any changes to the park. PHMC is investigating the matter to see what recourse we have. Several commissioners noted their concern about not receiving prior notice about the matter before reading it in the newspaper.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

Exhibition Policy Committee – Philip Zimmerman reported to the commission he and Nancy Moses met with Andrea Lowery and senior exhibits staff on September 9<sup>th</sup> to discuss next steps within the State Museum Master Plan regarding its exhibits. The committee felt most of the improvements are built around visitor enhancements and the exhibition components were not incorporated into the master plan. The committee’s role in the State Museum exhibitions is policy related only. The committee voiced questions such as “Should the entire museum be reinstalled all at once?” and “Which exhibit components should stay and which should be replaced.” The exhibits staff had similar reactions and have gone through similar reinstallation iterations over the past decade, essentially marking them as changing exhibitions. At the conclusion of the meeting, the committee suggested the exhibits staff consider writing a narrative of how the exhibit spaces be addressed. The Exhibition Policy Committee will meet with the senior exhibits staff in a few weeks, senior exhibits staff can begin the complex process of mapping out what will eventually become a written exhibition program. We anticipate circulating a draft of the narrative to commissioners before the next commission meeting.

Senator Tim Kearney reported that he was pleased to represent the commission at a historic marker dedication on September 1<sup>st</sup> in Media, PA and despite the weather, about 150 people were in attendance.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

PHMC Chairwoman, Nancy Moses adjourned the meeting at 11:45am.

## **SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

202109\_1      MOTION: (Powell/Zimmerman) Motion to accept the minutes as presented from the June 2, 2021 meeting was approved. 13 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

202109\_2      MOTION: (Zimmerman/Chambliss) Motion to accept the Marker Panel Recommendations Reevaluations as presented. 12 in favor/1 opposed (Representative Parke Wentling)/0 abstention

202109\_3      MOTION: (Lewis/Powell) Motion to accept the Historic District Act Certification for Narberth as presented were approved. 13 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion carried.

202109\_4      MOTION: (Zimmerman/Lewis) Motion to approve the retirement resolution for Bryan Van Sweden was approved. 13 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.