

**PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 7, 2022
MINUTES**

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission met on September 7, 2022, in person and via ZOOM. The following Commissioners were present: Nancy Moses – Chair; Fred Powell – Vice-Chair, Ophelia Chambliss, Senator Tim Kearney, William Lewis, Andrew Masich, Philip Zimmerman, Robert Savakinus, Representative Park Wentling, Susan Banks (Department of Education) and Christie Martone represented Senator Michele Brooks.

The following staff was present: Andrea Lowery, David Bohanick, David Carmichael, Charlie Fox, Andrea MacDonald, Melissa Mann, and Howard Pollman. Rodney Akers served as legal counsel. Mark Markosky represented the Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation.

I. CALL TO ORDER

PHMC Chairwoman, Nancy Moses called the meeting to order at 10 am. At this time, she asked commissioners and staff to introduce themselves.

II. CHAIRWOMAN’S REMARKS

Chairwoman Nancy Moses welcomed everyone to the meeting and remarked that commissioners are from different parts of Pennsylvania with different interests and political affiliations but when everyone sits around the table, we represent all past, present, and future Pennsylvanians. There is much that can divide us but it's history that can bring us together. She is proud to serve as a PHMC Commissioner and that everyone shares the responsibility to ensure the integrity of the historical record, the facts, and the truth. The Commission was able to secure 70 million dollars to be earmarked for the State Museum of PA. To date, the State Museum of PA has never spent more than \$7 million on an exhibit or visitor amenity. Efforts in the past to launch major comprehensive renovations and all of them have failed. This time, this won't fail because we have what it takes, commissioners and an executive director who has managed multi-million-dollar projects larger than the State Museum of PA. We have the top museum architects in the county and skilled staff who will work to make this happen.

At the December Commission Meeting, Nancy would like each commissioner to receive two minutes to speak about their concerns, impressions, and service on the commission. She thanked commissioners for their service.

III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Andrea Lowery gave a brief update on the budget. The House and Senate passed a budget with a spending package of \$45.2 billion, and Governor Wolf signed it on July 8th. This budget represents a 2.9% increase over the last fiscal year. Within this budget, PHMC received GGO funding of \$21.764M. This is an increase of \$614K, or 2.9% over the funding we received for Fiscal Year 20-21 (\$21.15M). Our budget continues to include a \$2 million line item for the Cultural and Historic Support Grants.

Within the Fiscal Code, \$15 million is appropriated to support "nonprofit arts and culture organizations, local arts and culture districts, and arts and culture professionals" to assist in their recovery from the impact of the pandemic. This funding is supported by American Rescue Plan Act money and is a one-time funding that will be distributed by the Commonwealth Financing Authority through DCED.

PHMC complement was increased by two this year and is now 216. Those positions provided archivists for the digital archives and digital records center.

It is anticipated that PHMC will receive up to \$15 million from Keystone Funds for preservation and long-term work.

Andrea and staff continue to work with JacobsWyper Architects in Philadelphia, PA to help us examine what the best use of the existing archives building is, what our business needs are and what programming would look like in the existing building. We have scheduled a meeting on October 4th with our consultants JacobsWyper Architects for an update on the Archives Building Reuse Study. PHMC Commissioners are invited to attend in person or virtually via ZOOM.

DGS is working to surplus the property of the State Hospital grounds in Harrisburg. Currently, PHMC has collections stored at the State Hospital and has secured warehouse space in Mechanicsburg, PA to move those artifacts from the Cherrywood facility at the Harrisburg State Hospital to the new warehouse space.

Over the summer, PHMC hosted 13 interns in its Summer Keystone Program. Interns worked in various bureaus including the State Museum, and the State Historic Preservation Office in a variety of capacities: curatorial, collections management, preservation, education, and interpretation. This year was the first year interns were compensated.

Andrea is currently conducting interviews for a Director of the State Museum of PA and hopes to have a candidate selected by the December Commission Meeting. She thanked Charlie Fox for stepping in as Acting Director of the State Museum of PA.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Chairwoman Nancy Moses called to hear a motion to approve the minutes from the June 1, 2022 meeting. There was no discussion on the minutes.

Chairwoman Nancy Moses called for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 1, 2022 meeting. MOTION: (Masich/Savakinus) Motion to accept the minutes as presented from the June 1, 2022 meeting was approved. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY – Chief Counsel, Rodney Akers reported that other state government agencies have a public comment policy for when members of the public come to speak at public meetings. The Public Comment Policy is designed to make sure the PHMC has a formal public comment period during its public meetings of the Commission. This policy was raised at the June commission meeting and was tabled for further discussion. Chief Counsel Rodney Akers has since met with commissioners regarding the Public Comment Policy which has been updated. The policy was emailed to all commissioners for review.

Chairwoman Nancy Moses called for a motion to approve the Public Comment Policy. MOTION: (Chambliss/Masich) Motion to approve the Public Comment Policy was approved. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

RETIREMENT RESOLUTIONS – Andrea Lowery reported that retirement resolutions are for PHMC employees who have retired with at least 10 years of service. This quarter, PHMC has three employees who have retired: Todd Galle, Craig Benner, and Beth Hager.

Andrea Lowery reported that Beth Hager retired in June 2022 and was a consummate museum professional and the Director of the State Museum of Pennsylvania. Beth prepared herself for a career in the museum profession by obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and art history from West Virginia University and obtaining a Master of Arts degree in American history and museum studies from the University of Delaware. She began her career in 1984 as the Curator of History at the Huntington Museum of Art in Huntington, West Virginia, and went on to become producer and executive producer of historical documentaries at public television stations in Morgantown, West Virginia, and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

In 2002 Beth began her service to PHMC working in both the State Museum and the Pennsylvania Heritage Society as the Director of Development where she raised funds for projects including the Marshall Creek Mastodon with the Buy-a-Bone campaign and procuring \$3 million in major project funding from the federal Teaching American History and Institution for Museum and Library Services;

In 2010 Beth became the Chief of Education and Outreach for the State Museum of Pennsylvania and established programs we still enjoy today including Learn at Lunchtime, the National Geographic Giant Map Exhibit and StoryTime;

In 2014 Beth became PHMC's Director of Strategic Initiatives, leading a variety of museum projects including the restoration of Mammal Hall and overcame her fear of birds to curate *A Fondness for Birds: Pennsylvania's Alexander Wilson*.

In 2016 Beth became the Bureau Director of the Bureau of the State Museum of Pennsylvania, and continued to work passionately, always engaged through her hard work.

Now, therefore, be it resolved in recognition of her twenty years of service to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission commends Beth Ann Hager for her professionalism on the occasion of her retirement.

Melissa Mann reported that the Bureau of Historic Sites and Museums has had two retirements: Todd Galle and Craig Benner. Todd Galle served with PHMC for 30 years, most recently at Pennsbury Manor. While at Pennsbury Manor, Mr. Galle cultivated donors and added significant items to the site's collection including those with provenance to William Penn.

He conducted extensive research and became the sites history expert on William Penn as well as Pennsbury Manor. Todd helped make the collection accessible to the public, enacted best practices in collections care and management; and carefully stewarded the site's collections through two moves during his time at Pennsbury Manor. He also aided Pennsbury Manor in maintaining the standards necessary to achieve reaccreditation with the American Alliance of Museums.

The second retiree is Craig Benner who served 18 years with PHMC and retired on June 3, 2022. He worked at multiple sites, most recently at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania. Where he showed exemplary customer service to all he interacted with. During his tenure at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, he accrued an impressive historical and institutional knowledge of Pennsylvania's railroad history. He strove to make the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania more accessible by translating print materials into other languages greatly expanding the site's reach to international audiences.

Chairwoman Nancy Moses called for a motion to approve the retirement resolutions for Beth Hager, Todd Galle, and Craig Benner. MOTION: (Savakinus/Powell). The motion to approve the retirement resolutions for Beth Hager, Todd Galle and Craig Benner was approved. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

PA HERITAGE FOUNDATION MEMBERSHIP RATE INCREASE – Mark Markosky, Secretary of the PA Heritage Foundation (PHF) gave a brief report on the activities of the foundation. The PHF supports PHMC to raise funds, provides administrative and managerial support for its non-profit partners, and publicizes PHMC's historic sites, and programming. The Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation Board of Directors and staff are energized to execute that mission. PHF is currently made up of 14 members and 2 PHMC Commissioners.

Several committees were created to help support PHF and with a growing diverse board with professional expertise; PHF is preparing to increase its ability to support PHMC with its projects and programs. PHF is currently understaffed and underfunded to execute this plan. PHF anticipates the need for at least one part-time office staff member and one part-time development coordinator. The current budget does not allow PHF to add additional positions. PHF continues to plan fundraising events including a Sip & Savor Fundraising Event on October 2, 2022 and anticipates a VIP Reception and Open House at the new PA State Archives building. Mr. Markosky reported that the proposed increase in membership fees would help cover the cost of operating rates in the management program.

Chairwoman Nancy Moses called for a motion to approve the proposed membership rate increase for the PA Heritage Foundation Reciprocal – Historical Society rates for 2022-2023: Heritage - \$32, Individual - \$47, and Family - \$64. MOTION: (Savakinus/Chambliss). Motion to approve the membership rate increase for the PA Heritage Foundation Reciprocal – Historical Society rates for 2022-2023 as presented were approved. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

V. REPORTS

State Historic Preservation Office - Andrea MacDonald gave a brief update on the final report for the Deindustrialized Communities Market Study (DCMS). The study is one component of PA SHPO's investment in the region as part of the Shell petrochemical plant mitigation. Other PA SHPO projects include a preservation plan and design guideline for Beaver Borough and historic resource surveys of the communities selected for this study.

The DCMS explores the economic development and community revitalization opportunities presented through the implementation of a preservation-focused design ethic in twelve deindustrialized riverfront municipalities in the Monongahela River and Beaver & Ohio River valleys in southwestern Pennsylvania.

The study was guided by significant public input from the community, and SHPO engaged with consultants to develop an online tool where people could provide feedback.

The study concluded with recommendations and implementation strategies for each of the communities. There is a context for each community describing its history, land use patterns, and key demographic and economic conditions that may impact future growth. It also includes an analysis of municipal regulations which is important because it can help determine what may hinder economic and community development and outlines agencies who are currently investing and supporting community development in the region. Another chapter is devoted to market segments and explores the role historic preservation plays in supporting the economic development of these former industrial properties including housing, retail, and entertainment commercial office market as well open space and recreation.

The report outlines recommendations and opportunities to be explored for catalytic development. It identified commercial corridors of great potential for redevelopment and also identified key historic buildings that could act as catalysts. The study concludes with recommendations and implementation strategies for each of the communities. The next steps are to further disseminate the plan and to work with the communities on the implementation strategies. We will reengage the focus group to plan out what the next best strategy is for moving this forward.

PHMC Commissioner Andy Masich would like the Heinz History Center to be included in the next round of consultation with stakeholders.

Historic Sites and Museums – Melissa Mann reported that it has been a busy time of year for the Bureau of Historic Sites and Museums. She updated commissioners on visitation numbers for the fiscal year 2021-2022. Paid attendance: just under 132,000 for PHMC-administered sites which represents 86% of the paid attendance for the fiscal year 2018-2019; event attendance this year was over 19,000 people which represents 89% of the event attendance for the fiscal year 2018-2019. School tour attendance was just under 19,000 students which represents 56% of the school tour attendance for the fiscal year 2018-2019.

Melissa Mann gave a brief report on a couple of projects moving forward in the next fiscal year. The PA Military Museum will soon undergo a capital project to address the building envelope and HVAC issues and is currently working to pack the collections to a temporary storage location in Mechanicsburg, PA.

The Brig Niagara will derig over the next few weeks in preparation for phase one of a major project to remove and replace one side of the ship waterways. The project is anticipated to take the entire off-season to be completed. The Erie Maritime Museum is currently in the process of moving its collections out of collection storage to prepare for HVAC upgrades. As part of our bureau standards program, we are updating collections plans at sites and looking at how staff evaluates interpretation at our sites.

State Archives – David Carmicheal reported on the construction of the new state archives building. The project completion will be delayed due to a supply chain issue as the contractor is waiting for the last of 12 boilers. We expect the last of the 12 boilers to be installed by the end of December and the move to the new building will take place in the new year. However, beginning in December 2022, staff will be able to go into the new building periodically to help begin labeling 54,000 shelves.

Archives staff continue to work on the Archives Research Central Hub “ARCH”, an online finding system that allows patrons to order their records in advance of arriving at the archives. The Digital Archives and Records Center (DADRC) is also a critical project that is underway; DADRC will allow the commonwealth to preserve electronic records – an ever growing need. We are currently finalizing the contract with the cloud vendor who will operate the digital archives. Once the contract is signed, we have a 16-month implementation period.

In October, the archives will hold its annual Archives and Records Management Seminar. As of December 31, 2022, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) will only accept electronic records. The speaker, Arian Ravanbakhsh, NARA Records Management Policy Specialist, will discuss the initiatives, the issues encountered, and how they were addressed. He will offer his perspective to ensure that records being created electronically today are preserved for the future.

David Carmicheal asked commissioners for suggestions for nominees to the State Historic Records Advisory Board by November 1st. He will send all commissioners a list of all the people currently on the board and people who are leaving at the end of the calendar year.

State Museum of PA – Charlie Fox, Acting Director of the State Museum of PA reported that the State Museum has made a lot of progress with recent exhibits and upcoming programs. Attendance numbers continue to increase but visitation is not quite back to pre-pandemic levels. The Curiosity Connection and Planetarium recently reopened to the public in July 2022.

Infrastructure issues at the State Museum of PA will be addressed in the upcoming capital project. In the short term, we are focused on repairs to the planetarium, audio-visual repairs, upgrades, and repairs to exhibit fixtures. These improvements will allow the museum to continue operations for the next five years while the capital project work is being completed.

The State Museum’s annual art exhibition, *Art of the State* is scheduled to open to the public on Sunday, September 11, 2022. Museum staff continues to take organized tours through the exhibit *A Place for All*. Work is underway on the State Museum’s next changing exhibits. The first will feature historic vehicles with ties to the history of energy production and use – *energy in motion*. This will be followed by the long-awaited gallery exhibit exploring the 50-year career of Thaddeus Mortimer “T.M.” Fowler, who produced more bird’s eye views of American cities and towns than any other artist.

This year, the State Museum will offer a Veteran’s Day program. Staff are in the process of evaluating programs to see which to reintroduce following the pandemic. The first will be the return of the Great Pumpkin Day program. The State Museum will not offer the Holiday Marketplace due to fewer employees working in the downtown office buildings. Preparations are underway for the 2022 Annual Archaeology workshop to be held on Saturday, October 29th.

The Morris Arboretum in Philadelphia serves as a center for botanical research and is creating a database of all plant specimens held in museums within the Mid-Atlantic states. State Museum natural history staff are currently working with Morris Arboretum to develop a place to include the State Museum’s collections.

Legal Report – Rodney Akers gave a brief report on the proposed Conflict of Interest Policy. It is a policy that is being prepared for commission approval and will address issues of ethics, code of conduct, and

best practices throughout state government that may come up occasionally with commissioners, staff, and members of the public.

Legislative Report – Howard Pollman reported that HB 2343- Mather Mill transfer was approved and signed into law. The Bureau of Management Services will oversee the finalization of the transfer of Mather Mill from PHMC ownership to private ownership. SB 822 – Abandoned Museum Property introduced by Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill was voted out of Senate State Government Committee and referred to the House Appropriations Committee. This legislation would allow more efficient use of museum funds and assist museums in conserving, displaying, and, when necessary, ethically disposing of abandoned, unclaimed, or unsolicited property.

The end of this year’s legislative calendar marks the end of the current legislative session. Any bills not acted on by the legislature before this year’s session concludes will need to be reintroduced in the next legislative session.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Andrew Masich paid tribute to the recent passing of David McCullough. David McCullough was a spokesperson for American history, known for his association with the Smithsonian Program, and American Experience documentaries, and for his many publications including two Pulitzer Prize-winning books “Truman” and “John Adams”. David McCullough received the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his accomplishments. Mr. McCullough was passionate about people knowing their history so they could make good decisions in the present and plans for the future. As we approach the 250th anniversary of the United States, David saw an opportunity to promote knowledge of and interest in American history and civics. Commissioner Masich believes that it is up to the commissioners to carry on the good work of David McCullough through the preservation and study of history. Commissioner Masich thanked the commission for the opportunity to pay tribute to David McCullough.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

PHMC Chairwoman Nancy Moses adjourned the meeting at 11:40 am.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

2022097_1 MOTION: (Masich/Savakinus) Motion to accept the minutes as presented from the June 2, 2022 meeting was approved. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

2022097_2 MOTION: (Chambliss/Masich) Motion to approve the Public Comment Policy as presented was approved. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

2022097_3 MOTION: (Savakinus/Powell) Motion to approve the retirement resolutions for Beth Hager, Todd Galle and Craig Benner was approved. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.

2022097_4 MOTION: (Savakinus/Chambliss) Motion to approve the membership rate increase for the PA Heritage Foundation Reciprocal – Historical Society rates for 2022-2023 as presented were approved. 11 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention.