



Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2024
3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Location: State Archives offices (17 Elkins Lane, Augusta, ME) and Zoom

Commission Members Present: Kate McBrien, Julia Gray, Kirk Mohney, Bernard Fishman, Peter Merrill, Alison Maxell representing for Lori Fisher; Gregory Pierce (for Governor Mills), Abbe Levin, Kelli Deveaux, Robin Talbot, Jamie Kingman-Rice, Shenna Bellows

Commission Members Absent: Marcia Minter, Richard LaBelle, Earle Shettleworth

Members of the Public in Attendance: Christina Bear, Frank Rodriguez, Steve Warren, Kim Smith

Staff in Attendance: Sarah Hansen

Introduction

Secretary Bellows welcomed the Commissions, and the public attendees acknowledged a quorum.

Approval of October 9, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Bernard Fishman moved to accept the meeting minutes, and Peter Merrill seconded. The Commission unanimously approved the minutes from October 9, 2024.

Biennial Supplemental Budget Request Update

Secretary Bellows informed the commission that there have been no significant updates since October regarding the biennial supplemental budget request. The Budget Office is currently preparing the budget for Governor Mills to present to the legislature in January, and the commission will be notified at some point—possibly before the presentation—about whether the full amount of the request will be accepted. Secretary Bellows emphasized that the state is facing revenue stagnation, which has made it necessary to manage expectations regarding funding availability.

MOT Maine Travel Atlas Project Funding Proposal

Sarah presented a proposal for the Maine Travel Atlas project, which aims to highlight 250 special places/people/objects in Maine, including historic sites, cultural landmarks, natural resources, and notable people. The goal is to develop a multimedia campaign, engaging local communities to create content and promote these sites through videos, photography, and social media, encouraging both

visitors and residents to explore the state. Sarah thanked Abbe and Kate for their contributions and support in developing the proposal. Sarah informed the Commission that she will be meeting with Carolann Ouellette from the Maine Office of Tourism (MOT) next week to discuss collaboration. The project is currently in the conceptual phase, with plans to refine details based on feedback. The proposed a budget of \$250,000 for the initiative, acknowledging the significant effort involved, including gathering input from local communities. The Commission expressed general support for moving forward with the project, and it will be revisited once more details are finalized in the next meeting

Branding

a. Draft brand identity

The Commission discussions about the branding and identity for the Semiquincentennial Commission, with a focus on creating a clear, recognizable visual identity. Sarah presented a draft logo, developed in collaboration with the firm Arnett Muldrow, which features clean fonts and colors that reflect the state's identity, such as blue and green. The design aims to be versatile for various uses, including the website and social media.

Bernard raised concerns that the term "Semiquincentennial" may not be widely understood and suggested incorporating a clearer reference to America's 250th anniversary. While the Commission has been cautious due to the trademark on "America's 250th," they are exploring ways to integrate this theme into the branding without violating trademark regulations. Sarah emphasized the importance of ensuring the event's purpose is clear, and there was consensus on incorporating elements such as "1776 to 2026" in the design.

The Commission also discussed the potential use of a star or pine tree in the logo, with some members expressing a preference for the star, as it evokes elements of both the U.S. flag and the state's identity. The Commission agreed to proceed with the current design direction, with some adjustments, particularly regarding the incorporation of clear references to the 250th anniversary. Sarah will return to the designers to refine the branding and initiate work on the website and social media platforms. A motion was made to move forward with this direction was made by Shenna and seconded by Bernard; the motion was unanimously approved.

b. Draft criteria

The commission discussed the draft branding criteria for the use of its logo and branding. The criteria included the requirement for groups to request approval before using the logo, ensuring that their events or programs align with the commission's core goals of connecting, sharing, and learning. Specific information about the event, including guidelines and the intended use of the logo, would need to be submitted for review.

The criteria stressed that any use of the logo must be approved by the commission beforehand, with no alterations allowed to the logo itself. This approval process would serve as a safeguard to ensure that the branding is used appropriately and in alignment with the commission's objectives.

During the discussion, Bernard suggested changes to the wording of the document. He proposed revising the term "offensive" to something like "commonly offensive" or "normally offensive," to address the subjective nature of what could be considered offensive. Additionally, Bernard pointed out that the document referred to conflicts with the commission's values, but since those values hadn't been explicitly defined, the reference needed clarification. The Commission agreed to amend this by

aligning it with the commission's stated goals or pillars. With this change, Bernard moved to approve the criteria, which was seconded by Peter; approval was unanimous.

Kate mentioned that the Attorney General's office had reviewed the criteria to ensure legal compliance, with a request for a final review when the agreement for logo use is formalized. The Commission discussed and unanimously approved the document with the suggested amendments, Sarah will circulate the updated version to ensure the changes were accurately reflected.

Semiquincentennial Survey

Sarah provided updates on the Semiquincentennial survey, explaining that it was sent to over 200 historical societies in Maine, as well as several state agencies and cultural organizations, including Maine Archives & Museums (MAM) and the Cultural Alliance of Maine (CAM). Sarah also mentioned that the survey was shared through social media and encouraged members to circulate it further. The survey has only received twelve responses so far. Sarah confirmed that she would make the survey's distribution database available in the shared Google Drive for transparency and collaboration. All agreed to extend the survey close date to January 15 and commission members agreed to share with their networks.

2025 Meeting Dates

The Commission discussed the 2025 meeting dates and confirmed that the current schedule is working well. They agreed to continue meeting every other month on the second Wednesday of each month at 3:00 PM for an hour and a half. There were no objections to this timing.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourns at 3:54pm. The next meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2025, at 3:00 PM.