

Michigan Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

February 11, 2015

Michigan Historical Center

702 West Kalamazoo Street, Lansing, MI

Commission Room

Commissioners in attendance: Joe Calvaruso (by phone), Joan Capuano, Jack Dempsey, Brian James Egen, Kimberly Johnson (by phone) Richard Micka, Susan Safford (by phone), Thomas Truscott and Larry Wagenaar.

Staff: Sandra Clark, Michelle Davis, Janell Keyser

Others: Mason Christensen

Dempsey welcomed Mason Christensen to the meeting. Mason was recently featured in the *Detroit Free Press* and *Lansing State Journal* for his Michigan history Twitter feed, "Michigan's Past." Mason uses the Twitter feed (Twitter.com @michiganhist) to share historical photos he gathers from various archives all across the state of Michigan. It is a good way to share Michigan's history with a largely more youthful audience. The Commission thanked Mason for his volunteer effort and commitment toward sharing Michigan's history.

President Dempsey called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m.

Approval of Agenda: On a motion by Egen, seconded by Micka, the agenda was approved without changes.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: On a motion by Wagenaar, seconded by Capuano, the December 4, 2014, meeting minutes were approved with minor changes.

The Commission proceeded to review of initiatives from the prior two meetings:

Looking Ahead:

- Director Clark reported that the state's budget is not where it was expected to be. On February 11, 2015, the Governor will deliver the state's budget message, which is expected to have very few general fund increases. In order to advance the Preservica, the recent retirement in a clerical position in the Archives will be filled with an archivist who can focus on that project.
- **Swainson Award**
The Swainson Award press release was issued on February 3, 2015, and the website has been updated. Notification of this award is being sent to various professional government groups across the state including the Michigan Municipal League, the Michigan Townships Association, and the Michigan Association of Counties. The DNR Legislative Liaison will notify all Legislative leaders and Clark will distribute the short paragraph about the award to the Commissioners for their use as well.

Sharing the Real Stories of Michigan:

- **Michigan Heritage Leadership Council and Heritage Trail Coordinator**
 - ◆ Daniel Spegel has been hired as the new Heritage Trail Coordinator and began working on January 20, 2015.
 - ◆ The Michigan Heritage Leadership Council will meet on February 18, 2015.
- **Marker Committee Report/Cost of Markers**
 - ◆ Prior to the meeting, Calvaruso distributed the February 6, 2015, Marker Committee meeting minutes. The meetings focus was about marker pricing. Johnson provided a great deal of research including photos that illustrate areas of concern related to marker upkeep. The next marker committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 24, 2015. A discussion took place on the proper procedures for installation and landscaping/architecture guidelines. Commissioners agreed that marker pricing should encourage the use of markers with a different text on each side, the replacement or repair of damaged markers, and provide pricing that would encourage sustainability of the program by increasing the marker fund.
- **Marker Fund and Status Report**
 - ◆ The Marker Fund report was distributed prior to the meeting. The report reflects \$26,302 of available funds. The balance does not reflect the two denied marker application fees that still need to be refunded; Ottawa Reformed Church and Industrial Works. The Marker Fund has grown from approximately \$9,000 to \$26,302 in the past couple of years.
 - ◆ The Marker Status report was distributed prior to the meeting. It was noted that it is great to see the progress being made and the backlog being handled.
- **Public Process Improvement**
 - ◆ Application Process – With the purposed relocation of the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO), Clark recommended a review of the entire historical marker process. The Commission believes continued SHPO involvement is needed only on marker applications that relate to buildings. Capuano moved that the Commission recommend that the Michigan Historical Center be the manager of the historical marker program and the SHPO be consulting partners when necessary, Wagenaar seconded the motion, and the motion passed. Another step toward application improvement is to combine the two marker applications into one application with an extra piece for cemeteries. Clark would like to move toward the Kentucky model for continued application improvement. Prior to the next Commission meeting, Clark will circulate a draft application for review in order to obtain approval at the April 2015 Commission meeting.
 - ◆ Public Relations – Clark shared *The Times Herald* article “ ‘Outrage Machine’ throws a rod in Port Huron” regarding the misinformation surrounding the Port Huron Statement marker. Micka distributed a newspaper article that appeared in *The Monroe News* about recent marker approvals. Johnson mentioned that a Google search for Michigan Historical Markers often results in directing the user to a nonworking website. Clark will look in to ways of addressing this concern. She is also working with the DNR GIS trail effort to add a marker layer.

➤ **Conservation Heritage Trail Markers**

- ◆ “The Story of Where” has incorporated information on certain sites that can become part of the Conservation Heritage Trail. The Michigan Historical Center has \$10,000 set aside for additional Conservation Heritage Trail markers. Conservation Heritage Trail markers will follow the same process as any other Michigan Historical Markers.
- ◆ Johnson asked where the original 91 markers erected by the Commission using \$50,000 of funds appropriated by the legislature fall in terms of priorities. The majority of these markers are located on state-land and did not have private sponsor involvement. In addition, there are four markers that the Commission erected in 1947 that were also not funded by private sponsors. The concern is restoration if there is no private sponsor to care for a marker. Clark mentioned this as an area where the Marker Fund may play a role. It will be important to prioritize where the Commission wants to begin using the Marker Funds. One idea brought forward was to contact local governments and ask for their assistance in identifying these markers and their current appearance.
- ◆ Micka brought up the potential of having the Great Lakes Commission mark their major restoration projects as they are completed. Clark and Dempsey will prepare a letter suggesting this.
- ◆ The upgrade to the Center database is targeted for completion by mid-March 2015.

➤ **Tribal Heritage:**

Clark recently met with a legislator to discuss more ways to formally involve Native Heritage in state history programs. Dempsey mentioned he had several times reached out to those connected to Native American organizations. Clark will update the Commission on the future progress of this topic.

➤ **Approval of Marker Texts:**

Keyser presented four new marker texts for Commission review and approval

- ◆ **Michelson Memorial United Methodist Church, Grayling, Crawford County**
- ◆ **Norwegian Lutheran Church/Leer, Long Rapids Township, Alpena County**
- ◆ **Port Huron to Mackinac Race/Yacht Clubs and World War II, Port Huron, St. Clair County**
- ◆ **Treaty of Spring Wells, Detroit, Wayne County**

The new marker texts were reviewed and approved separately. Capuano moved to approve the Michelson Memorial United Methodist Church marker text with minor modifications; Truscott seconded, and the text was unanimously approved. Wagenaar moved to approve the Norwegian Lutheran Church/Leer marker text; Egen seconded, and the text was unanimously approved. Capuano moved to approve Port Huron to Mackinac Race/Yacht Clubs and World War II marker text with minor modifications; Truscott seconded, and the text was unanimously approved. Truscott moved to approve Bayview Yacht Club purchasing a second duplicate marker of the Port Huron to Mackinac Race/Yacht Clubs and World War II to be placed at the Bayview Yacht Club property, Johnson seconded the motion, and the motion carried. The Commission confirmed its approval via email poll of the Treaty of Spring Wells marker.

- **Approval of Marker Applications:** Janell Keyser provided written background on two new marker applications:

◆ **Buchanan North and West Neighborhoods Historic District**

The application was submitted by Buchanan Preservation Society with a proposed location of 313 W. Front St., near the intersection of Front and Detroit Streets in Buchanan.

The Buchanan North and West Neighborhoods Historic District is significant for its association with Buchanan's residential planning and development, as well as its social history. It contains distinctive examples of many of the architectural styles and forms that appear in the Midwest and nation during the unique periods of significance. Also, the Historic District includes a large number of small home styles erected as infill and in groups for the city's growing labor force during the first half of the 20th century. In general, the homes and other buildings demonstrate a range of mid-nineteenth through mid-twentieth century residential architecture, as well as a small number of institutional, religious, public and commercial styles.

Keyser recommended approval of this marker application.

◆ **Croswell House**

The application was submitted by Lucy Wolcott Barnum Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution with a proposed location of 228 North Broad Street in Adrian.

The Croswell House is the structure most closely associated with Charles M. Croswell, Michigan's Governor from 1877-1881. Croswell's uncle, Daniel Hicks, a carpenter, built the house in 1841. Croswell purchased it from Daniel Hicks' estate on April 18, 1853. The governor's second wife and widow, Elizabeth Musgrave Croswell Merrill, donated the house to the Lucy Wolcott Barnum Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution in 1927 as a memorial to Governor Croswell. The home is built in the Greek Revival upright and wing style.

Keyser recommended approval of this marker application.

Egen moved to approve both marker applications as recommended; the motion was seconded by Capuano, and they were unanimously approved.

- **Requests to move/replace markers:**

- ◆ Request to replace the State Capitol marker with new text – Lansing, Ingham County. Capuano moved to approve the marker text with slight modifications; Truscott seconded, and it was unanimously approved.
- ◆ Birth of Kiwanis marker – Detroit, Wayne County – Clark spoke with the developer of the building to which the Birth of Kiwanis marker was attached. He reported that the plan is to reinstall the marker in the same place. Dempsey indicated the inappropriateness of doing so and that he would make additional contact.

It was noted that a future Commission meeting agenda topic will be how to further encourage historical markers for Gladwin and Missaukee counties.

Discussion Item: Status: “Educational Achievement – Dec. 4, 2014 meeting”

- History and Michigan’s K-12 curriculum
In December 2014 Clark and Wagenaar attended the State Historical Administrator’s Meeting (SHAM). They concluded that state history is taught at many grade levels. Clark recently met with Jim Cameron from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) regarding current efforts to make all of Michigan history taught at the 3rd grade level. MDE has also expressed its concern with this plan. Clark noted the need to get Michigan’s history in front of Michigan school children at various grade levels by offering it as examples related to national topics. There is an effort to educate students on civil rights history that could benefit from Michigan examples. DNR is placing more emphasis on education throughout the department. Clark will continue to work with MDE to represent the Center and the Commission on the teaching of history in Michigan schools and keep the Commission apprised.

Updates:

- Grant House – A kick-off meeting was held at the Detroit Education Public School Academy with the architectural firm selected for the move of the Grant House. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 11, 2015, at 10:00 a.m.
- Civil War Sesquicentennial
 - ◆ Egen proposed the need for a comprehensive list of the various initiatives and events that took place throughout Michigan over the past several years that relate to the Civil War Sesquicentennial. For the next Commission meeting, Egen will come with a plan for this project.
 - ◆ An evening event will be held on Monday, April 13, 2015, at The Henry Ford featuring Doris Kearns Goodwin. Also at this event, for the first time ever, Lincoln’s chair will be brought out of its case for public display. On Wednesday, April 15, 2015, The Henry Ford Museum will be open for free and the Lincoln chair will be out on display once again with programming around it. Egen invited commissioners to attend.
 - ◆ The Civil War Remembrance event will be held at The Henry Ford from May 23-25, 2015. Egen is working on having the reproduction of the Abraham Lincoln funeral train as part of this event. Egen suggested Commission partnership for this event.
 - ◆ Dempsey reported that the Governor signed the bill to have I-375 Highway designated as the 102nd United States Colored Troops Memorial Highway.
 - ◆ Egen distributed an aggressive timeline for the Michigan Monument at Antietam. The Michigan Civil War Association, a non-profit group formed to assist with this project, recently acquired its 501(c)3 status. He noted that a 400 square-foot easement has been acquired on private property that is adjacent to the battlefield. The next step is monument design and funding.
- Milliken/Adams/Kelley (MAK) Award – Capuano reported on the current status of creating a portable permanent exhibit display for the MAK award. Clark presented the Commission with a sketch of the proposed MAK display. Discussion followed on possible items of interest to include in the video portion of the MAK display. Any suggestions or ideas should be submitted to Capuano. Capuano proposed moving the Mackinac Island meeting to a later in the year to better accommodate schedules. Davis will work with the Mackinac State Historic Parks for possible available dates. The decision was made to postpone issuing the MAK press release and the award announcement since the Mackinac Island meeting will be take place later in 2015.

- Capitol Park – Attached is the update distributed prior to the meeting.
- Southeast Michigan Fresh Water project – Clark reported that the DNR was awarded a \$31,000 grant by The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan to create a general audience book manuscript about Detroit’s role as the hub of the Great Lakes. The project is underway.

Old Business/Commissioner Reports:

- Distribution of 2014 Annual Report and Approval of Process for 2015 Report – Clark reported that the 2014 Annual Report was distributed to the Governor’s Office and to the Commission prior to the Commission meeting. The Commission approved using the current Annual Report process for 2015.
- Women’s Hall of Fame – Commissioner Wagenaar noted that the re-nomination for Elizabeth Adams was completed for the Women’s Hall of Fame.
- Wagenaar shared with the Commission a brochure for the Local History Conference scheduled for March 13-14, 2015. He also noted that the *2015 Michigan History Directory* is now available online and may be purchased by visiting the Historical Society of Michigan’s website, www.hsmichigan.org.
- Micka circulated several items. He noted the 1812 Commemorative event “Grand Pacification Ball” scheduled for March 28, 2015, at the Detroit Historical Museum and the “19th Annual Mid-Winter Civil War Grand Ball” scheduled for February 21, 2015, at the Central United Methodist Church in Lansing.
- Truscott noted a recent article regarding the Michigan Historical Center that appeared in the February 9, 2015, *Lansing State Journal*, “Michigan Historical Museum getting \$1-million upgrade” and the February 8, 2015, *Detroit Free Press*, “Museum to Get Historic Update.”

Public Comment: None

The next meeting was scheduled for April 15, 2015. **It has been rescheduled to Thursday, April 16, 2015.**

Egen moved to adjourn the meeting, Truscott seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.



Sandra S. Clark, Executive Secretary