

Michigan Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

June 23, 2015

Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum
303 Pearl Street NW, Grand Rapids, MI
Michigan Room

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

Excused Absence: Larry Wagenaar

Staff: Sandra Clark, Michelle Davis

Others: Mark Hoffman, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Chief Administrative Officer; Elaine Didier, Director of Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum

President Dempsey called the meeting to order at 11:12 a.m.

Approval of Agenda: Micka made a motion to approve the agenda with the following additions: Item 3 - Report of the Nominating Committee; and item 8 - Heritage Leadership Council and the Director's Report. The motion was seconded by Calvaruso and was unanimously approved.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Truscott made a motion to approve the April 16, 2015, meeting minutes as amended; the motion was seconded by Johnson, and was unanimously approved.

Legislative Information:

- **Mark Hoffman** – Mark Hoffman reported that the DNR is working with the Governor's Office and component boards and commissions on legislation needed to bring compiled law into alignment with various Executive Orders and long-time appropriations boiler plate. The process will start with primary enabling acts. This includes amending the Michigan Historical Commission Act 271 of 1913 to reflect the changes that have occurred. The DNR Executive Division is working with the Governor's Office and legislative writers on a draft that will be shared with commission members for comment later this summer. The goal is to have the clean-up taken up by legislators in late fall 2015 or winter 2016. Once the 1913 act is updated, additional efforts could focus on the Michigan Historical Markers Act 10 of 1955 and other legislation. Mark Hoffman will be the point of contact for the Commission, and Trevor VanDyke, head of the Legislative Office for DNR, will work with the legislature.
- **Nominating Committee** – Micka gave the nominating committee report. The committee nominated Jack Dempsey to continue serving as the President of the Commission and nominated Joanne Capuano as Vice President of the Commission. It thanked Kimberly Johnson for her service as the Vice President of the Commission. Truscott moved to approve the nominations; the motion was seconded by Calvaruso, and was unanimously approved with Dempsey abstaining.
- **Committee and Workgroups** – The Committee and Workgroups list was distributed. The September 1, 2015, meeting will include a discussion of committee and workgroup tasks and membership.

- **Reappointments** – On April 28, 2015, Brian Egen was reappointed to the Michigan Historical Commission for a term expiring on May 21, 2019.

Marker Program Approvals:

- **Approval of Marker Applications and Texts** - Clark reported there are no new marker texts or applications for approval. Rebecca Schmitt has been selected as the new Eastern Michigan University marker research assistant and will begin working with marker text and applications in July 2015.
- **Status of Agreement with State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Its Implementation** – The agreement has been implemented; paperwork is being completed. The tradition of the handwritten State Register will continue with clear documentation that from this point forward any listing in the State Register is based solely on eligibility for a Michigan Historical Marker and does not imply preservation approval. Currently, all marker files are in the process to be transferred to the Archives of Michigan with a completion goal of fall 2015. This will allow public access to all marker files. It was noted that Janell Keyser did an exceptional job of working on the marker program in her two years with the program.

Sharing the Real Stories of Michigan:

- **Marker Committee Recommendations** – Calvaruso reported on the Marker Committee minutes from the June 19, 2015, meeting.
- **Marker Fund** - The Marker Fund report was distributed prior to the meeting. It was requested that the fund reserve of \$10,000 be added at the end of the report along with the spendable balance. The Go-Daddy.com expenses are for the purchase of the new historical marker online url, michiganhistoricalmarkers.org. The \$10,000 provided by DNR is available to draw upon for markers with the natural resource theme but it is not shown on of the Marker Fund report. Dempsey requested a meeting to create an action plan for the Conservation Heritage Marker project.
- **Marker Status Report** – The Marker Status report was distributed prior to the meeting. Commissioners should let Mary Patrick know which marker dedications they are willing to attend. Once the new EMU marker intern begins working on marker applications and texts, a special Michigan Historical Commission meeting may be necessary in order to obtain Commission approval.
- **Public Process Improvement** - Application Process – On-line application materials were distributed prior to the meeting. Commissioners were asked to review the application and provide any final comments to Clark by June 30, 2015.
- **60th Anniversary Commemoration**
 - ◆ Discussion took place on the idea of promoting the 60th Anniversary Commemoration in-line with the *USA Today* “Make a Difference Day” that is scheduled for October 24, 2015. Volunteers will be encouraged to clean-up and assess the condition of markers in their communities.
 - ◆ As part of the marker website development process, local history groups will be asked to help assess local markers and obtain up-to-date marker photos.
 - ◆ Discussion of 60th Anniversary activities included targeting the original 91 markers, particularly those on Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)

and DNR property. Assessment should include a recommendation of whether to retire, replace, restore or relocate damaged markers.

- ◆ “The Story of Where” and marker website work is being done in-house. The completion goal is the end of September 2015. Once the system is up and running, it will allow markers to be sorted in multiple ways.
- ◆ Calvaruso, Dempsey and Clark will finalize an action plan for the Marker Program 60th Anniversary Commemoration. The Action Plan will be distributed for review prior to the September 1, 2015, Commission meeting.

Commissioners discussed receiving all agenda/meeting related items in a more-timely and organized manner. It was agreed that the meeting materials will be sent five days prior to the meeting date. The items will be grouped by agenda topic. Commissioners will need to have any reports to Michelle Davis seven days prior to the Michigan Historical Commission meeting. It was agreed that Commissioners will print all of their own materials for each meeting.

Request for Resolution for Tashmoo Bottle message

- A written request was made to the Commission asking for a resolution regarding the 100th anniversary of the Tashmoo Bottle message. Clark prepared a draft resolution for the Commission’s review. Calvaruso made a motion to approve the Tashmoo Bottle resolution as amended; the motion was seconded by Egen, and was unanimously approved.

Historic District Study Committee Reports

- A.J. Gill House Local Historic District, Grand Rapids
- Van Riper Property Boundary Modification, Portage
- Fort Wayne, Detroit
- Fleming Goodrich House (319 Crane Avenue), Royal Oak

Truscott made a motion to accept the four Historic District Study Committee Reports; the motion was seconded by Capuano, and was unanimously approved.

Updates:

- Grant House – The preliminary review of moving the Grant House has been completed by the architect. The next step is for Clark, Johnson, and Nancy Garvin to meet in order to finalize the agreement with the Detroit Edison Public Academy.
- Civil War Sesquicentennial/Antietam monument
 - ◆ Egen reported there is a Civil War Sesquicentennial Partners meeting scheduled for July 3, 2015. Egen will ask the partners for assistance in preparing a template to gather a list of all of the Civil War Sesquicentennial activities that took place in Michigan. The plan is to have all of the information assembled by the end of 2015. Egen will compile the information into a report to submit to the Commission in 2016.
 - ◆ Dempsey and Egen have co-authored a book titled “Michigan and Antietam” due out August 31, 2015. All of the proceeds will be donated to the monument fundraising effort.
 - ◆ Egen is planning to announce the Monument project in September 2015.

- ◆ For the September 1, 2015, Commission meeting, Egen will draft a resolution recognizing the Civil War Sesquicentennial Partners.
- Milliken/Adams/Kelley (MAK) Award – Capuano reported that Egen prepared a video of the MAK Award event held at the Henry Ford in October 2014. Clark will have an update to Capuano in a few weeks on the Michigan Historical Center’s plans for the MAK installation in the Center. A press release went out on June 2, 2015, seeking MAK Award nominations for 2015. All nominations are due by July 1, 2015. The subcommittee will meet in July to go over the nominations and have a report for the Commission.
- Capitol Park – Dempsey reported that Dr. Cindy Hales, Michigan History Foundation Director, recommended the Capitol Park Funds be sent to a community foundation where the corpus can grow. Dempsey contacted the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, which was specifically recommended by Dr. Hales, and an agreement is in the process. Once the paperwork has been signed, Dempsey will share the details with the Commission.
- Heritage Leadership Council – At this time, the Council’s main focus is on trails. The first public meeting on the Kal-Haven Trail was held on June 18, 2015. A meeting is scheduled for July 23, 2015, on the Copper Heritage Trail. Also there is staff involvement with the Huron River Trail and the Haywire snowmobile trail in the Upper Peninsula. Johnson asked about the status of the DNR \$250,000 trail grant program that was mentioned during the previous Commission meeting. Clark reported that with the midyear fiscal budget cuts the amount was significantly reduced and the decision was made that the funds will be used for trail segments that are part of the Iron Belle Trail. Hoffman praised the work Clark has done with the trails.
- Director’s Report – Clark distributed the report prior to the meeting. As part of the Kellogg Foundation grant, on Saturday, July 18, 2015, community groups will meet in Lansing in order to share information they have obtained regarding the 19th century history of people of color.

Old Business/Commissioner Reports:

- Safford attended her first marker dedication on Sunday, June 21, 2015, for the Aldo Leopold and Les Cheneaux conservation marker. She also offered to organize a tour of Emmet County when the Commissioners come to the Straits area for the September 2015 meeting. Safford and Davis will work out the details.
- Micka reported that the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) came to Monroe on June 11, 2015, and Micka thanked them on behalf of the Commission for their support. On June 23, 2015, Monroe had the largest gathering of Native Americans on the River Raisin Battlefields in two hundred years. Founder’s Day in Monroe took place. The June 19, 2015, *Mysteries at the Museum* TV show featured the aluminum staircase from the Fall of Saigon that is displayed at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum. He distributed several other items of information.
- Prior to the meeting, Dempsey shared his retrospective of serving on the Commission for the past eight years.
- The Governor John B. Swainson Awards ceremony has been scheduled for Monday, August 3, 2015, in the Capitol Rotunda at 12:00 noon.

Public Comment: None

The next meeting is scheduled for September 1, 2015, on Mackinac Island.

Safford made a motion to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Egen, and the meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra S. Clark". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Sandra S. Clark, Executive Secretary