

## Michigan Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

June 13, 2018

Michigan History Center  
702 W. Kalamazoo Street, Lansing  
Commission Room

**Commissioners in attendance:** Laura Ashlee, Joe Calvaruso (by phone), Timothy Chester, Brian James Egen, Delia Fernandez, Eric Hemenway (by phone), Susan Safford (by phone), Thomas Truscott, and Larry Wagenaar (by phone).

**Staff:** Sandra Clark, Michelle Davis and Heather Lehman

**Members of the Public:** Carlos Alvarado, Pere Marquette Memorial Association

President Calvaruso called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

**Approval of Agenda:** Safford moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Truscott, and was unanimously adopted.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Chester moved to approve the April 18, 2018, meeting minutes; the motion was seconded by Safford, and was unanimously adopted.

**Election of Officers:** Commenting on his hectic work schedule and travel, Calvaruso suggested that he and vice-president Egen exchange roles. The nominating committee agreed, and Ashlee moved to elect Egen as president and Calvaruso as vice-president; the motion was seconded by Truscott, and was unanimously adopted with Egen and Calvaruso abstaining.

Safford thanked Calvaruso for his outstanding service to the Commission during his tenure as president.

Calvaruso turned the meeting over to Egen.

Introductions were made and the commission welcomed new commissioner Delia Fernandez. Fernandez is an assistant professor in the History Department at Michigan State University and core faculty in Latino Studies. She is currently doing research on Latinos in Michigan in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Marker Program:**

- **Approval of Marker Applications** – Written background information was provided on three new marker applications. (Appendix A)
  - ◆ **Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary, Ira Township, St. Clair County**
  - ◆ **Michigan Governor's Residence, Lansing, Ingham County**
  - ◆ **Simeon Perry Farmstead, Grand Blanc Township, Genesee County**

Chester moved to approve the Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary application and the Simeon Perry Farmstead application and to decline the Michigan

Governor's Resident application; Safford seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.

Chester asked if it is a Commission practice or policy to not name a living person on historical markers. Clark confirmed that it is a Commission policy.

- **Approval of Marker Text** – Five new marker texts were presented to the Commission for review and approval.
  - ◆ **Criffield-Whiteley House/Harry and Sara Ethel Whiteley, Dowagiac, Cass County**
  - ◆ **Grosse Pointe Shores Village Hall, Grosse Pointe Shores, Wayne County**
  - ◆ **Ladies Library Association/Ladies Library Building, Traverse City, Grand Traverse County (Replacement)**
  - ◆ **Temple No. 1/Masjid Wali Muhammad, Detroit, Wayne County**
  - ◆ **The War of 1812 in Detroit/War of 1812 Grave Site, Detroit, Wayne County (Replacement)**

Chester moved to approve the Criffield-Whiteley House/Harry and Sara Ethel Whiteley marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Truscott, and the text was unanimously approved. Safford moved to approve the Grosse Pointe Shores Village Hall marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Ashlee, and the text was unanimously approved. Truscott moved to approve the replacement marker for the Ladies Library Association/Ladies Library Building text as amended; the motion was seconded by Ashlee, and the text was unanimously approved. Chester moved to approve the Temple No. 1/Masjid Wali Muhammad marker text; the motion was seconded by Ashlee, and the text was unanimously approved. Wagenaar moved to approve the replacement marker for the War of 1812 in Detroit/War of 1812 Grave Site text as amended; the motion was seconded by Safford, and the text was unanimously approved.

- **Marker Committee Report** - Commissioner Safford reported verbally on the marker committee's evaluation of the Michigan Historical markers on Mackinac Island and those commemorating the Great Lakes. The committee divided the Mackinac Island markers into the following categories:
  - ◆ **High Priority:**
    - The Indian Dormitory and Old Agency House markers: both talk about Schoolcraft. The recommendation is that the Indian Dormitory focus on that building and its uses over time, and the Agency House tell the story of Schoolcraft, including Native perceptions and the 1836 and 1855 treaties.
    - Skull Cave: remove and eventually replace it with a marker discussing Mackinac Island as a Native American burial ground and sacred space.
    - Biddle House: include Agatha Biddle's role.
    - Mackinac Island: add the island's significance to the Anishinaabe, as well as the French, the British and the Americans.
    - Round Island: add a second side about the Odawa village where they grew corn and sold it to the fort.

- ◆ Mid Priority:
  - The military markers could all use more detail about the Native role in battles, including identifying the tribes and about their agency in the story of the island. They include the Battlefield of 1814, British Landing, Fort Holmes, the British Cannon and Historic Fort Mackinac. Historic Mackinac also includes the term “Middle West.”
  - Market Street: add names of the tribes involved.
- ◆ Low Priority:
  - Grand Hotel: question asked “is it the world’s largest summer resort or one of the world’s largest summer resorts?”
  - Mission House: “metis” is not a US term, but a Canadian term and is uncomfortable to some Native people.
  - Wawashkamo: Need to check on whether this word means “Crooked Tree” as indicated in the marker.
- ◆ Markers that raised no questions:
  - American Fur Company Store
  - Hubbard’s Annex to the National Park
  - Island House
  - Little Stone Church
  - Mackinac Conference
  - Mission Church,
  - Sainte Anne Church
  - Scout Barracks
  - Parade Ground
  - Trinity Church
- ◆ Markers that have been removed:
  - The Beaumont Memorial
  - Early Missionary Bark Chapel
  - Lake View Hotel
- ◆ Opportunities for new markers to tell more of the story include:
  - A marker on the mainland telling the story of Pontiac and the takeover from the British
  - A marker on the mainland about Charles Langlade and his role in the War of 1812
  - Three markers about the Indian Removal Act of 1826 placed in the southwest part of the state, the northern part of the Lower Peninsula and at Fort Wilkins

The committee determined that all of the Great Lake Markers need more information. They make it appear that the Great Lakes were discovered for the first time in the mid-seventeenth century 1600s and that no one else lived here before that. They should also include some geological information.

The committee also recommended that a group of historians with expertise in various aspects of the relevant history be convened to recommend and review content of new or replacement markers.

The commission agreed that the next step would be to involve Phil Porter in further discussion of the Mackinac Island markers. Clark will contact him and the committee will follow up with him.

➤ **Reports**

- ◆ The Marker Status report was distributed prior to the meeting. Clark noted that Heather Lehman, EMU Marker Assistant, has started working with the marker program. She said that in order to keep the marker program moving forward, she may need to call a special telephone meeting to discuss marker applications and texts prior to the August Commission meeting. Safford noted that she recently attended two marker dedications: May 28, 2018, Norwood School, Charlevoix, Charlevoix County and June 9, 2018, Tawas Point Light Station, East Tawas, Iosco County. Wagenaar noted his attendance at the marker dedication for the Grace Episcopal Church, Holland, Ottawa County on June 10, 2018. Truscott noted his attendance at the marker dedication for the First Congregational Church, Frankfort, Benzie County on May 20, 2018.
- ◆ The Marker Fund Report was distributed prior to the meeting. Clark will move forward with transferring the funds from the Michigan History Foundation to the State of Michigan account.

**Historic District Study Reports:**

- Prince Hall Grand Lodge Historic District, Detroit

Ashlee recused herself prior to any discussion. Truscott moved acceptance of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge Historic District Study report; Fernandez seconded the motion, and it was unanimously.

**Milliken/Adams/Kelley (MAK) Award:** Chester requested that a third commissioner join the MAK committee. Commissioners should let him know if they are interested. Clark will work with the committee on a call for nominations for the MAK award with a deadline of July 31, 2018. The call will be shared through commissioner and staff contacts and communications from the Historical Society of Michigan and the Center. Clark will also see that the website is updated.

Ashlee asked about the Swainson Award. Clark recommended that the commission return to it next year. The commission agreed that the MAK committee should handle both the MAK and Swainson awards in the future and be renamed the Awards committee.

**Director's Report**

- The Director's report was distributed prior to the meeting. Clark noted that the temporary Marbles Arm exhibit will become a permanent exhibit in Escanaba. The Pigeon River Country opened its exhibits Memorial Day weekend, with more than 350 visitors attending. The Archives of Michigan is ready to install the oral history sound proof booth referred to as a Whisper Room. This was possible because of private funding.

Ashlee asked about the Grant House. Clark noted that she is awaiting a response from Eastern Market on the draft Memorandum of Understanding. Clark will need to ask for an extension from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. She recently learned that the paint on the outside of the building is lead based.

**New Business:** No new business was discussed.

**Public Comment:** Carlos Alverado, president of Pere Marquette Memorial Association, addressed the commission about historical marker S278 erected in 1966. He noted his understanding is that the Michigan Association of Civil Rights Activist (MACRA) has sent a letter to the commission asking for the removal of two historical markers, one located in Frankfort and the other in Ludington. Mr. Alverado explained that the reorganization of the Pere Marquette Memorial Association was done in order for the community to support the memorial and park where the Ludington marker is located. In April of this year, the Pere Marquette Memorial Association secured a purchase agreement for this site from Pere Marquette Township. Final papers will be signed in the next couple of weeks.

The Pere Marquette Memorial Association was the original recipient of the land donated by a family to create a site to commemorate the possible site of Father Marquette's death. Mr. Alverado stated his interpretation of the markers in question: that they convey to people that there is a controversy and a tradition, and there is substantial evidence that Father Marquette died somewhere along the shoreline of Lake Michigan. There are two competing sites and this is indeed part of the history of the lakeshore.

On behalf of the Pere Marquette Memorial Association and the community of Mason County, Mr. Alverado respectfully requested the commission to not remove the marker from the Ludington site.

Chester asked for clarification about the current ownership of the land and the site where the marker is located. Mr. Alverado explained that the Pere Marquette Memorial Association received the bequest in 1934. It took approximately 20 years to raise the funds to build the monument. In 1955, after the dedication of the memorial, the State of Michigan took ownership of the site with the intention of making it part of the DNR parks. A few years later, the city of Ludington took back the memorial. A couple of years later the memorial was transferred to Mason County. In every transfer it was clear that the land would be maintained as a memorial and if it ever stopped being as such, it would revert back to the family that originally donated the land. The land went back to the City of Ludington and in 1971 to Pere Marquette Township. Pere Marquette Township built a boat launch around the base of the memorial with State funds. The reconstituted Pere Marquette Memorial Association has raised \$800 for the real estate transaction to take back ownership of the site. Mr. Alverado concluded that this is a real estate issue and not a constitutional issue. Mr. Alverado expressed his appreciation for what the commission does for the community and offered to come back for a future meeting if needed.

Clark noted the other information and correspondence shared with the marker sub-committee and the full commission. The topic will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Ashlee asked whether the resolution for Mary Patrick had been completed. Clark noted that it had.

Chester moved to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Calvaruso, and the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

  
Sandra S. Clark, Executive Secretary

Michigan Historical Marker Application Synopses  
Michigan Historical Commission  
June 13, 2018

**Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary**

**Applicant:** Paul Torney

**Marker Location:** At front entrance of the church - corner of M-29 and Church Rd., 9764 Dixie Highway, Ira Township, St. Clair County

**Requested Marker Type:** Large, two-post, different text each side

In 1679, Father Louis Hennepin planted a wooden cross in the Anchorville area and brought the first known Catholic influence to the region.<sup>1</sup> During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, numerous Catholic settlers immigrated to Anchor Bay, MI. The settlers were originally pastored by missionary clergymen, but in 1849 pioneer Etienne (Stephen) Rose donated land for the establishment of a new church. Under the authority of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit, the Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary was founded in 1853. Reverend Charles Chambille became the first pastor of the parish. In addition to an ornate wooden church, the parish included a school, a cemetery, and a rectory.

Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary thrived under a number of pastors until 1917, when the original wooden church, the school, and the rectory burned down in a fire. Father James Downey, the pastor at that time, oversaw the reconstruction of all three buildings. Albert Rose, the grandson of Etienne (Stephen) Rose, played a large role in designing and building the structures. By 1918 both the church and the school were back in use. The new brick church featured a cruciform architectural floor plan. In 1921, the church bell was cast, engraved with the names of 70 people who donated to its creation. This bell still rings in the belfry today. The church's grotto was built in 1953, to celebrate 100 years since the church's founding. Local church parishioners hauled stones from their farms to build the structure.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The marker program staff does not advise the inclusion of this fact, as there was no primary source documentation to support it. Additionally, a wooden cross and plaque cross in front of the church already cites the incident.

<sup>2</sup> The applicants wished to include the names of two living gentlemen, as well as a quote spoken by one of these men. The marker staff will inform them that this is not commission policy.

### **Michigan Governor's Residence**

**Applicant:** Curt Brockhaus and Joana Brockhaus

**Marker Location:** 4305 Appletree Lane, Lansing, Eaton County

**Requested Marker Type:** Small, one-post, same text each side

This house was one of the first built on the Mar Moor subdivision in Delta Township, Eaton County. Built in 1959, it was leased by Governor John Swainson during his term of office, 1961-1963.

SHPO review did not find the house to have architectural significance.

Staff does not recommend it as meriting a historical marker.

### **Simeon Perry Farmstead (or House)**

**Applicant:** Grand Blanc Charter Township

**Marker Location:** 5078 Perry Road, Grand Blanc Township, Genesee County

**Requested Marker Type:** small, one-post, different text each side

In 1825 Simeon Perry came to Grumlaw, which would become Grand Blanc Township, with his father, Edmund, sister Eliza, and cousin Roland. They built a log house on land his father and cousin had purchased the previous year. His father and sister returned to Avon, New York, that fall and brought the rest of the family to Michigan the next year.

After helping his father establish his farm, Simeon married Sarah Cartwright in 1828, purchased this land in 1829 and built the central part of this house in 1834. The original hand-hewn wood that formed the post-and-beam frame and other materials used in the classic Greek Revival style structure remain at its core. The east wing was probably added not long after the house was built; the west wing is of more modern construction.

In the early years, travelers referred to this area as "Perry Settlement" because, like so many Yankees of that time, many members of the extended family bought contiguous land. Simeon sold his land to his son-in-law, William Green, in 1873. It passed through several other hands before Grand Blanc Charter Township purchased it for a park in 2002. The township Historical Commission then convinced the township to retain the house and committed to its renovation as a community gathering place.

Simeon and many other members of the family are buried in the adjoining Perry-McFarlen Cemetery. The Perry and McFarlen families, related by marriage, established the private cemetery in the 1830s. The cemetery association turned it over to the township in 1987 to ensure its continued maintenance and operation.