

Michigan Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

June 20, 2019

Post Operative Meeting Room

Mackinac Island, MI

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

Staff: Sandra Clark, Michelle Davis, and Heather Lehman

Members of the Public: Phil Porter and Steve Brisson, Mackinac Island State Parks

President Egen called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

Introductions were made and Phil Porter, Director of the Mackinac Island State Parks, welcomed the commission to Mackinac Island. Phil stated that the relationship between the Mackinac Island State Parks Commission and the Michigan Historical Commission dates back many years and he intends to carry-on that working relationship to promote and move forward Michigan History.

Approval of Agenda: Chester moved to approve the agenda; the motion was seconded by Wagenaar and was unanimously adopted.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Ashlee moved to approve the April 18, 2019, meeting minutes as amended; the motion was seconded by Safford and was unanimously adopted.

Marker Project:

The commission discussed the marker replacement plan that was shared by the marker committee prior to the meeting. The committee agreed to revise the draft plan and incorporate the commission's suggested changes and additions. The committee will then share the revised draft plan. The commission then discussed possible funding options for a project of this nature. It was agreed that prior to seeking any funding or community engagement, it is essential to have a concrete outline that can be used as a case statement. It is also important to have manageable goals for a project of this size. Breaking this project into phases will allow communities to engage and invest in local projects that are a part of the larger statewide project. The Mackinac Island and Great Lakes markers can be viewed as Phase I. This will provide communities with examples of funding, the assessment process, community involvement on the rewriting process and the final outcome.

➤ **Mackinac Island**

Prior to the meeting, the marker committee distributed conceptual texts for five of the Mackinac Island markers that were previously listed as high-priority makers requiring revisions. The texts were offered for discussion, not final approval. Phil and Steve participated in the discussion:

- ◆ **Henry R. Schoolcraft/Indian Dormitory and Old Agency House** – After discussion, the commission agreed to create one two-post marker with different text on each side that will focus on the broader story of the Washington D.C.

Treaty of 1836 and the Indian Agency House and Indian Dormitory that were built as a result of the Treaty.

- ◆ **Mackinac Island** - Ashlee stated the committee has spoken with Tammy Frazier, Mackinac Island City Council, regarding the Mackinac Island marker revision. Ms. Frazier stated that the council is not willing to commit to helping with this project until they know the anticipated cost to the City for their portion of involvement and have an opportunity to review the text. After discussion, the committee agreed to work toward expanding the marker to different text on each side. The text should meld the Euro-American and Native American stories and not separate them with one on each side of the marker. One important fact to share is that the Island was a National Park for 20 years.
 - ◆ **Skull Cave** – Phil stated the original marker will be removed. After discussion, the commission agreed the marker should be retitled to focus on Native cultural practice. It will include one or two sentences relating to the story of Alexander Henry and be placed at the Skull Cave site.
 - ◆ **Biddle House** – Steve suggested referencing the house as one of the oldest structures on the Island. It is likely one of the oldest structures in the Midwest. He also thought one sentence should note the French architecture. Phil and Steve agreed to draft a text and forward to Hemenway for the next step in the process.
- **Great Lakes**
The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has agreed to pay for the replacement of the Great Lakes markers that are located in their rest areas. This will take care of four out of the five Great Lakes markers. Funding will need to be found for the Lake Erie marker.

Marker

- **Request to relocate:**
- ◆ **Vandenberg Center/Arthur Hendrick Vandenberg marker – Grand Rapids, Kent County, L1438**
The commission reviewed a request to relocate the Vandenberg Center/Arthur Hendrick Vandenberg marker. Truscott moved to approve relocating the Vandenberg Center/Arthur Hendrick Vandenberg marker to 200 Monroe Avenue in the renovated open plaza on the corner of Monroe Avenue and Lyon Street with the understanding that the marker error will be corrected prior to the reinstallation; Wagenaar seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.
 - ◆ **The Detroit Medical College – Detroit, Wayne County, S287**
The commission reviewed a request to relocate The Detroit Medical College marker. Safford moved to approve relocating the marker to 3800 Woodward Avenue near Mack Avenue; Ashlee seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.
- **Delisting of State Historic Sites** – Clark presented a list of three sites that need to be delisted from the State Register of Historic Sites. Chester moved to approve delisting the three sites from the state and local registers of historic sites as presented (Appendix B); Safford seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously:
- ◆ **Terney House, Roscommon, Roscommon County, L631**

- ◆ **Clinton Valley Center (Eastern Michigan Asylum/Pontiac State Hospital), Pontiac, Oakland County, S437**
- ◆ **East Hall – Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo County, S510**
- **Approval of Marker Applications** – Written background information was provided on one new marker applications. (Appendix A)
 - ◆ **Shiras Park at Picnic Rocks, Marquette, Marquette County**
Wagenaar moved to approve the Shiras Park at Picnic Rocks marker application; Fernandez seconded the motion and it was adopted on a vote of seven to one.
- **Approval of Marker Texts** – four new marker texts were presented to the Commission for review and approval.
 - ◆ **Covington School, Covington Township, Baraga County**
 - ◆ **John Taylor, Holt, Ingham County**
 - ◆ **Broughton House, Franklin, Oakland County**
 - ◆ **Territorial Road, Canton, Wayne County**

Truscott moved to approve the Covington School marker text with a possible amendment; the motion was seconded by Safford and was unanimously approved. Ashlee moved to approve the John Taylor marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Truscott and was unanimously approved. Chester moved to approve Broughton House marker text; the motion was seconded by Fernandez and was unanimously approved. Safford moved to approve the Territorial Road marker text as amended; the motion was seconded by Chester and was unanimously approved.
- **Reports**
 - ◆ The Marker Status report was distributed prior to the meeting. Commissioners need to notify Davis of any marker dedications they would like to attend. Davis stated that four of the five conservation markers have been ordered.
 - ◆ The Marker Fund Report was distributed prior to the meeting.

Staff Reports

- **2019-2020 Budget** – Clark stated that the House of Representatives is proposing cuts to the general fund budget including \$200,000 from the Michigan History Center. She encouraged commissioners to let their legislators know that they support the Governor’s recommendation for the DNR general fund budget. The commission discussed the potential impact of budget cuts and ways to limit that impact.
- **Grant House** – Clark stated that a press release was issued last week stating that the house will be moved to Eastern Market. Eastern Market is managing the move of the Grant House. Laura Raisch is eager to help with fundraising efforts for the move and renovation of the house.
- **Straits Heritage/Father Marquette** – Clark shared the preliminary plan for the site with the commission and noted the previous night’s public meeting held to share the plan with the St. Ignace community was well received. The fundraising campaign is an ongoing process with the first-year goal being right on track. To date, a site name has not been finalized, but a decision will be needed very soon.
- **StoryCorp** – Clark noted the project is underway and training has taken place. Fernandez stated that she had the opportunity to do a StoryCorp interview with her mom and

thoroughly enjoyed the process. She recommended everyone give it a try if the opportunity occurs.

- The Director's report was distributed prior to the meeting. Clark noted that the Museum is opening a new special exhibit called the Secret Lives of Michigan Objects. This summer the exhibit asks visitors what they would like to see and know more about in the final exhibit, which will open in September. Clark stated that the Center is receiving an American Association of State and Local Histories Award of Excellence for the States of Incarceration special exhibit.

Business Updates

- On behalf of Amy Arnold, State Historic Preservation Office, Ashlee thanked the commission for its support of the idea for a Civil Rights State Historical Marker for Aretha Franklin. However, the Civil Rights Committee decided to not move forward with the idea because Aretha Franklin's career was launched elsewhere and not with a Michigan Recording Studio. They also questioned the Chene Park location.
- Egen asked for an Award's Committee update. Chester stated that the committee agreed to rethink the entire awards program in order to make sure it is not being used for development reasons only. If the committee agrees to move forward with any awards, policies, purpose, and criteria need to be established, as does an annual calendar. The committee will meet and then update the commission.
- Truscott reported on the marker dedication for Pulver Brothers/Filling Station in Lansing.
- Egen shared a photo from the Temple No. 1/Masjid Wali Muhammad marker dedication that he attended.

Election of Officers – The nominating committee moved to elect Egen to continue as president. The motion was unanimously adopted with Egen abstaining. The nominating committee moved to elect Chester as vice-president; the motion was unanimously adopted with Chester abstaining.

Committee Updates: None

Public Comment: No public comment.

Commissioner Comments: Wagenaar distributed a brochure for the Michigan History Conference that will be held on September 27-29, 2019, in Ludington. The Upper Peninsula History Conference is scheduled for June 28-30, 2019, in Escanaba and has 255 people registered. He also shared that the Michigan Historical Society has purchased a new headquarters located on the west side of Lansing on Westshire Drive.

Egen thanked everyone that was able to travel to Mackinac Island and noted his appreciation for the great deal of planning that is required to make this happen. He also commented on how important it is for commissioners and staff to have time to get to know each other and share ideas.

Clark thanked Davis and Giffin for all of their efforts in making the plans for the trip.

The next meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on September 19, 2019, and will be held at Mann House Historic Site, 205 Hanover Street, Concord.

Safford moved to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Truscott, and the meeting adjourned at 3:12 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra S. Clark". The signature is written in black ink on a white background. The first name "Sandra" is written in a larger, more prominent script, followed by "S." and "Clark". The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Sandra S. Clark, Executive Secretary

Michigan Historical Marker Application Synopses

Michigan Historical Commission

June 20, 2019

Shiras Park at Picnic Rocks

Applicant: Diane Kordich

Marker Location: Shiras Park, 1300 Lakeshore Blvd, Marquette, MI.

Requested Marker Type: Large, two-post, different text on either side.

George Shiras III was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in 1859. He first developed an interest in wildlife at the age of eleven when his father took him hunting and fishing in the Marquette area. As a part-time resident of Marquette from his childhood until his death, Shiras became a philanthropist for the city in his later years. In 1931, he donated land at Picnic Rocks on the shore of Lake Superior “for public park purposes.” In 1937 he founded the Shiras Institute to support “beautification, recreation and cultural activities in the City of Marquette.” Shiras died in 1942 and was buried in Marquette’s Park Cemetery.

Shiras received his law degree from Yale in 1883 and practiced law in Allegheny for several years. He was a member of the Pennsylvania legislature from 1889-90 and served on the U.S. House of Representatives from 1903-05.

Near turn of the twentieth century, Shiras became known for his innovative wildlife photography. Along with his guide, John Hammer, Shiras developed flash equipment that allowed them to capture animals in their natural habitat like no one had before. He achieved some of the first clear photographs of wildlife at night by moving slowly in a boat and flashing his camera toward any sign of wildlife. He also linked bait to trip wires that set off cameras and caused animals to take their own pictures. Shiras won a gold medal at the world exposition in Paris in 1900 and the grand prize at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904 for the photographs these techniques produced. Some of his best-known images were captured in the Marquette area.

In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt wrote Shiras and asked him to consider compiling his photographs and notes on wildlife behavior into a book. Roosevelt relentlessly pushed Shiras toward this request until his death in 1919. Shiras finally published a book in 1936 entitled *Hunting Wild Life with Camera and Flashlight*.

In addition to being a successful photographer, Shiras contributed significantly to wildlife conservation. While serving in the United States Congress (1903-05), Shiras introduced a bill that would protect migratory birds from being killed, caught, or sold. A variation on his bill was signed in 1918 as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Shiras also protected game by proposing a 1925 Michigan gun law that prohibited hunters from carrying guns outside of hunting season. Shiras photographed wildlife all over the country, and in 1908 he discovered a new species of moose at Yellowstone. The alces alces shirasi, or “Shiras Moose,” is the smallest subspecies of moose in North America.

Recommend approval. If this application is approved, we recommend titling the marker “George Shiras III” rather than “Shiras Park at Picnic Rocks.”

Delisting Items from the State Register of Historic Sites

The Michigan Historical Commission is charged with maintaining the State Register of Historic Sites. When a historic building is destroyed or so altered as to remove its historic significance, we require, by law, that the marker be removed. In most cases the State Register listing should also be removed at that time. At this time, we propose that the following sites be delisted from the State Register of Historic Sites.

Site No.	Date Listed	Name	Location	Reason for Delisting
L631	8/24/1978	Terney House	Roscommon Roscommon County	Structure demolished; marker salvaged in 2015
S437	9/17/1974	Clinton Valley Center (Eastern Michigan Asylum/Pontiac State Hospital)	Pontiac Oakland County	Structure demolished; marker salvaged in 2001
S510	10/09/1978	East Hall – Western Michigan University	Kalamazoo Kalamazoo County	Modifications to the structure altered its historic significance; marker will be salvaged in 2019