

Michigan Freedom Trail Commission

Meeting Minutes

Location: In-person & Virtual meeting

Date: March 4, 2022

Roll call

Present for the Michigan Freedom Trail Commission:

- Amanda Campbell, Chair
- Melinda Babarskis
- Rochelle Danquah
- Roy Finkenbine
- Jamon Jordan
- Deidre Mayweather
- Robin Peebles
- Pricilla Robinson
- Jason Young

Present for the Michigan History Center staff:

- Sandra Clark
- Tobi Voigt
- Sheri Giffin

Guests:

- Leslie Pielack, Director of the Birmingham Museum
- Alina Johnson, Detroit JCS

Meeting Minutes

Campbell called the meeting to order at 11:06 a.m.

Finkenbine moved to approve the agenda; Babarskis seconded the motion, and it was approved.

Robinson moved approval of the December 17, 2021, minutes; Mayweather seconded the motion, and the minutes were adopted unanimously.

Public Comment:

Leslie Pielack reported on the Network to Freedom site nomination for Elijah S. Fish and George B. Taylor Burial Sites at Greenwood Cemetery. George Taylor was a freedom seeker from Kentucky who settled with his wife Eliza in Birmingham in 1856. Abolitionist Elijah Fish co-founded the Oakland County Anti-Slavery Society. The accepted National Network to Freedom nominations will be announced soon.

Alina Johnson introduced herself and noted her interest in nominating sites around Detroit.

Signage Grant:

Giffin reported on the signage grant. Seven applications have been received. The QR code and landing page have been postponed until the State of Michigan website upgrades are completed. The introductory history drafts for the landing page are in the review process.

Heritage Gathering

The commission requested that the same individuals who served on the Heritage Gathering subcommittee last year do so again this year. The commission decided to host both virtual sessions throughout the month and a one-day conference similar to last year. The commission also discussed possible topics and themes.

Reports from Standing Committees:

Cultural & Heritage Tourism:

Peebles is still gathering information about the National Park Service passport program.

Preservation & Support:

Campbell noted the 2022 goal of the subcommittee is the signage grant.

Sites Identification, Facilities & Programs:

Danquah and the Sites subcommittee are working on multiple nominations: Reverend Charles Foote, Southfield Reformed Presbyterian Church, Moline Paris, Abram Powers and Selina Powers.

Current Business:

Permanent International UGRR Month:

Finkenbine continues to meet with the national committee to encourage individual states and provinces to designate September as international Underground Railroad month. Clark will continue to work on the Michigan resolution.

MHC Staff Updates

Clark announced that Tobi Voigt is now the MHC Director of Museums.

Voigt noted that Laurie Perkins' research on Lenawee County will be part of a new exhibit at Walker Tavern. Laurie's presentation was part of the 2021 Heritage Gathering in Ann Arbor.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Danquah moved to adjourn the meeting; Mayweather seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 1:03 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra S. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Sandra Clark, Chairperson