

Michigan Freedom Trail Commission

Meeting Minutes

Location: Michigan History Center, Lansing

Date: February 23, 2024

Roll call

Present for the Michigan Freedom Trail Commission:

- Melinda Babarskis, Chair
- Rochelle Danquah
- Roy Finkenbine
- Kimberly Holley
- Jamon Jordan
- Jason Young

Virtual for the Michigan Freedom Trail Commission:

- Amanda Campbell Crawford
- Priscilla Robinson

Present for the Michigan History Center staff:

- Sandra Clark
- Sheri Giffin

Guests:

- Erdel Moore, DURH
- Alberta Raxford, Greater Christ Baptist Church
- Alejandra Breve-Ferrari, Grand Rapids Community College

Call to Order

Babarskis called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

Finkenbine moved approval of the November 17, 2023, meeting minutes; Danquah seconded the motion, and the minutes were adopted unanimously.

Public Comment:

Reverend Alberta Rayford, an associate pastor at Greater Christ Baptist Church, introduced herself along with her sister Ederl Moore, both from Detroit. Both expressed interest in learning and the work of the commission. Alejandra Breve Ferrari, an economics professor at Grand Rapids Community College, was interested in resources and archival information for an upcoming book.

Standing Committees:

The commission reviewed and discussed the updates to the committee descriptions. The Preservation and Support committee was removed. The Heritage Gathering and Webinars committee was created to focus on the annual conference and the vision for virtual presentations throughout the year. The Education committee changed focus to include age-appropriate information for schools and community learning. The changes were adopted as amended.

Heritage Gathering & Webinars: The commission set the Heritage Gathering date for September 21 at the Michigan History Center in Lansing.

Sites Identification: Danquah reported that nominations are progressing. An additional possible nomination for Chain Lake is possible.

New Business:

The commission discussed involvement with the Chicago to Detroit Freedom Trail project. As the state commission chartered with researching and teaching the Michigan freedom seeker stories, the commission is open to working with the project and interested in learning more about its current activities.

Staff Updates:

Babarskis announced the Library of Michigan addition of David Votta as Special Collections Manager.

Clark reported on the new and future hires: Archaeology section with three new archaeologists, administration with a communications coordinator and an outreach director.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:12 p.m.