

# Michigan Freedom Trail Commission

## Meeting Minutes

Location: Michigan History Center, Lansing

Date: November 15, 2024

### **Roll call**

Present for the Michigan Freedom Trail Commission:

- Amanda Campbell Crawford
- Rochelle Danquah
- Roy Finkenbine
- Kimberly Holley
- Adelaide Lancaster
- Nicole Ly

Virtual for the Michigan Freedom Trail Commission:

- Priscilla Robinson

Present for the Michigan History Center staff:

- Sandra Clark
- Sheri Giffin

Guests:

- Ashley Deming, Michigan Maritime Museum
- Scott Koenig, Michigan Department of Education (MDE)

### Call to Order

Danquah called the meeting to order at 11:08 a.m.

### Approval of Agenda

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

## Approval of Minutes

Finkenbine moved approval of the August 2, 2024, meeting minutes as amended; Campbell Crawford seconded the motion, and the minutes were adopted unanimously.

## Approval of Nominations

Campbell moved that Danquah serve as chair and Lancaster as vice chair. Holley seconded, and the motion passed.

## Public Comment:

Deming shared the 2026 theme for Michigan Maritime Museum, "Whispers on the Water". They are focusing on minority contributions to maritime culture and history. The museum requested suggestions for any organizations or individuals willing to share their UGRR maritime knowledge. Finkenbine suggested John Olacsek from the Dossin Great Lakes Museum and Danquah mentioned Larry McClellan due to his recent book.

Koenig presented an opportunity to join MDE on their webinar initiative. The webinars are focused on sharing comprehensive knowledge that teachers can use in their classrooms. Lancaster and the Education committee will be the point of contact of any interested commissioners.

## Standing Committees:

Cultural & Heritage Tourism: Holley is working on recruiting an inter-generational committee. The commission offered suggestions for organizations and people who may be interested in joining the work of the committee. Ly offered to join the committee. The goal is to present a plan at the beginning of the year.

Heritage Gathering & Webinars: Giffin shared a summary of the 2024 Heritage Gathering from the attendee surveys. The committee hopes to have the 2026 in Battle Creek, with opportunities such as a tour of the Battle Creek/Marshall area. The conference is scheduled for September 6, 2026. The committee also has worked on the webinar series with a few presentation suggestions and two documentaries to share.

Education: Lancaster reported that the education committee has been awarded a grant from ASALH (Association for the Study of African American Life and History). The grant is for a teacher workshop focused on place-based learning based on a MHC booklet featuring the life of John Felix White. The committee has started to work on logistics on the conference.

Sites Identification: Clark gave an update on the successful nominations submitted by the University of Michigan (U M) interns highlighting Perry Sanford and Eratus and Sarah Hussey. U M is planning on continuing the partnership with the Freedom Trail Commission in 2026. She invited suggestions of sites with some beginning primary source documentation for those students. Commissioners also reviewed the list of possible nominations for next year's interns.

### New Business:

Finkenbine outlined the origins of the Truth-Haviland Humanitarian Award. Presentation of the award would coincide with the Heritage Gathering each year. At the next meeting, the commission will consider renewing this award.

### Staff Updates:

Clark mentioned a new historian employee who is currently dedicated to the historical marker program, but will be doing other research and writing for center and DNR parks projects as well.

### Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 12:46 p.m.