

Michigan Freedom Trail Commission

Meeting Minutes

Location: Virtual meeting

Date: May 14, 2021

Roll call

Present for the Michigan Freedom Trail Commission:

- Amanda Campbell, chair, Alcona County, Harrisville, MI
- Neil Barclay, Wayne County, Detroit, MI
- Angela Dillard, Washtenaw County, Ann Arbor, MI
- Rochelle Danquah, Oakland County, Farmington Hills, MI
- Roy Finkenbine, Wayne County, Livonia, MI
- Jamon Jordan, Wayne County, Detroit, MI
- Robin Peebles, Eaton County, Lansing, MI
- Pricilla Robinson, Wayne County, Detroit, MI
- Jason Young, Washtenaw County, Ann Arbor, MI

Present for the Michigan History Center staff:

- Sandra Clark, Ingham County, Holt, MI
- Rachel Clark, Ingham County, Mason, MI
- Tobi Voigt, Ingham County, Lansing, MI
- Sheri Giffin, remote/traveling

Meeting Minutes

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

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

Young moved approval of the February 5, 2021, minutes; Dillard seconded the motion, and the minutes were adopted unanimously.

Public Comment:

Tracy Payovich, a Clements Library staff member, introduced herself and indicated an interest in learning more about the Freedom Trail Commission and volunteer opportunities.

Reports from Standing Committees:

Cultural & Heritage Tourism:

Peebles summarized and the goals and priorities outlined in the committee report.

Preservation & Support:

Campbell proposed a web-based series to highlight recent scholarship. The commission will put together an ad hoc committee to work with MHC staff to consider logistics.

Campbell and Clark will submit a Network to Freedom grant to fund a first round of signs identifying properties as part of the Michigan Freedom Trail (MFT) and the national Network to Freedom (NTF).

Young asked about the possibility of creating an ArcGIS Storymap and a partnership with the education committee to explore the opportunities with the tool. Clark encouraged the teams to also connect with NTF's Storymap project.

Education:

Dillard reported on the recent education committee meeting, which included representatives from the Detroit River Story Lab project. The education committee discussed working on an international curriculum and presenting at the Heritage Gathering.

Dillard also shared the idea of developing a traveling exhibit on the UGRR that is modelled on the States of Incarceration exhibit. The traveling exhibit would encourage each location to add a panel specific to that community. This could be a partnership involving Detroit River Story Lab, University of Michigan and MHC.

Sites Identification, Facilities & Programs:

For the Michigan Freedom Trail registry, Danquah recommended making clear the automatic acceptance of NTF site applications to the MFT. The commission's only concern was obtaining the full documentation about the site either from the applicant or from the NTF. Danquah will inquire with NTF.

Danquah met with Misty Jackson on the idea of a database of sites. The commission had concerns on the implementation of the idea and decided to table their involvement with it due to lack of commission resources at this time.

Danquah submitted a proposal for the National Humanities Conference in the FTC's name. The proposed session would be a panel discussion with three commissioners and a historian. The proposed session would be called "Stories of Resistance in Michigan".

Current Business:

UGRR Month Proclamation:

Finkenbine reported on the national committee that is encouraging neighboring states to push for gubernatorial proclamations. Finkenbine is also working with a committee focused on a presidential proclamation. A focus of the national committee is international designation, including sovereign indigenous nations, as well as state and national efforts. Clark offered to assist with efforts to connect with Michigan's federally recognized Indian Tribes.

Heritage Gathering 2021:

Dillard offered an update on the committee's work and suggestions. The commission approved the plan for the September virtual series "Rescuing Freedom in 1847", along with timeframes for various presentations and activities during the October 2 in-person conference day. The committee will review the public proposals after the June deadline. The commission agreed to invite Kim Simmons and others involved in the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of Gateway to Freedom International Memorial to the Heritage Gathering. The Heritage Gathering committee will work on the details.

New Business:

Support an Intern: due to limited time, the idea was presented for future discussion.

Nelson Hackett Commemoration Event: Finkenbine reported on a plan to have a web-based presentation. He asked the FTC to serve as a sponsor. The commission agreed.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.



Sandra Clark, Chairperson