

Ohio Commission for the U.S. Semiquincentennial
Approved Meeting minutes – Quarterly meeting Western
Reserve Historical Society – Cleveland History Center
Cleveland, OH
September 14, 2023

Commission members present:

- Doug Preisse (co-chair), Van Meter-Ashbrook
- Christy Davis, Ohio Local History Alliance-immediate past president,
- Kathryn Dean-Dielman, Lorain County Historical Society-board president
- Kelly Falcone Hall, Western Reserve Historical Society-executive director
- Steve Hambley, Medina County Commissioner
- Nancy Hollister, former Governor/Lt. Governor
- State Representative Adam Holmes
- Melinda Huntley, Ohio Travel Association-executive director
- Adam Levine, Toledo Museum of Art-director
- Glenn Miller, County Commissioners' Assn. of Ohio-board president
- State Representative Joe Miller
- Charley Moses, Ohio History Connection-board president
- Kim Murnieks, Office of Budget and Management-director
- Paul Oyaski, former mayor of Euclid
- Elizabeth Pierce, Cincinnati Museum Center-executive director
- Sharetta Smith, mayor of Lima
- Samantha Turner, Youngstown City Council
- Sarah Wickham, TourismOhio-director
- Mackensie Wittmer, National Aviation Heritage Area-executive director

Absent: Michael B. Coleman (co-chair) IceMiller, State Sen. Hearcel Craig; John Fleming, PhD, museum professional; Thomas Hankins, Sons of the American Revolution/Committee to Rebuild Fort Laurens; Vincent Keeran, Ohio Senate Clerk; Sharon Kennedy, Chief Justice, Ohio Supreme Court; Megan Kvamme, Muskingum County entrepreneur; State Sen. George Lang; Ted Strickland, former Governor of Ohio and former member of Congress; Ginger Warner, Ohio Arts Council-chair; Megan Wood, Ohio History Connection-executive director

Staff: Todd Kleismit, executive director
Jodie Engle, managing director
Chris Hurtubise, communications director
Taylor Tomu, community engagement specialist
Abby Reynolds, executive assistant

Guests: Gabe Angulo, Librarian, Western Reserve Historical Society; Rebecca Asmo, Executive Director, Ohio Humanities, Dennis Barrie, Director of Experience Design, Western Reserve Historical Society; Cherie Bandy, Chief of Staff, University Circle, Inc.; Charles Bluestone, Bluestone Law Group; Caryn Candisky, Executive Director for Government Relations, Cleveland State University; Donna Collins, Executive Director, Ohio Arts Council; Ina Cox, African American History Archivist, Western Reserve Historical Society; Faye Drohan, chief Marketing Officer, Cleveland Institute of Music; Steve George, Chief Advisor to the CEO, Ohio History Connection; Robert Horner, Administrative Director, Supreme Court of Ohio; Peter Kelley, Board Chair, Western Reserve Historical Society; Christine Kohls, Principal, Raising Results, LLC; Chris Kuhar, Executive Director, Cleveland Metro Parks; Susan Leininger, State Regent, Ohio Society- Daughters of the American Revolution; Angie Lowrie, Director, Cleveland History Center; Sean Martin, Curator for Jewish History, Western Reserve Historical Society; Arin Miller-Tait, Director of Community Education, University Circle, Inc.; Christina Moody, Public Programs & Events, Western Reserve Historical Society; Chris Nehring, State Vice Regent, Ohio Society-Daughters of the American Revolution; Emily Poznaco, Chief of Staff, Western Reserve Historical Society; Ann Sindelar, Library Reference Supervisor, Western Reserve Historical Society; Jennie Vasarhelyi, Chief of Interpretation, Education & Visitor Services, Cuyahoga Valley National Park; Jennell Vick, Executive Director, Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center; Dawn Wayt, VP of Marketing & Sales, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame; Tori Weisberg, ELI Program Associate, University Circle, Inc.; Regennia Williams, Distinguished Scholar of African American History and Culture, Cleveland History Center; Sonia Winner, President & CEO, Cleveland Museum of Natural History; Deb Yandala, President & CEO, Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

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CALL TO ORDER: Commission Co-Chair Doug Priesse called the Commission meeting to order at 10:40 am.

Co-Chair Priesse called attention to the site of the meeting. Peter Kelley, Board Chair of the Western Reserve Historical Society (WRHS) and Kelly Falcone-Hall, President & CEO of WRHS and America 250-Ohio Commission member shared welcome remarks and information about WRHS.

Co-Chair Doug Priesse welcomed Commission member Sarah Wickham, Director of TourismOhio, to her first meeting.

Abby Reynolds took the roll in Commission Secretary Megan Wood's absence. There were (18) commissioners, (45) guests were present, (11) commissioners were absent. Ms. Reynolds confirmed the presence of a quorum. Co-chairman Priesse asked if there were any corrections or discussions of the minutes from the June 16, 2023 Commission meeting that were distributed. There were none.

MOTION: Kathy Dean-Dielman made a motion to accept the minutes from the June 16, 2023 meeting. Seconded by Nancy Hollister. The motion passed.

Executive Director's Report

Todd Kleismit gave his executive director's report. Highlights included:

- Personnel Update
 - Abby Reynolds, executive assistant.
- Since we last met
 - Staff met with a group of tribal representatives to discuss how to most effectively work with tribes that have Ohio ties.
 - AM 250-OH had a presence at the Ohio State Fair for two days; staff are planning for full participation 2024-2026.
 - Staff collectively gave 27 presentations over the summer and formed a new partnership with Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure. Discussions are underway to theme a bike route in 2026 with U.S. Route 250.
 - Director Kleismit, Co-Chair Priesse, Kimberly Murnieks and Steve George met with Governor & Mrs. DeWine to provide an update on the Commission. The Governor continues to be very supportive.
 - The World Heritage Committee is currently convening in Saudi Arabia to approve Ohio's first nomination to the UNESCO World Heritage List – the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks.
 - Chris Hurtubise represented AM 250-OH at the AASLH National Conference in Boise, Idaho where 26 of 32 state commissions and the national commission convened. Ohio is one of the leaders among the state commissions in terms of preparation.

Update on Commission Priorities

- America 250-Ohio Communities

Taylor Tomu provided a brief update on the launch of AM 250-OH Communities, which is a key

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part of the Commission’s priority of achieving 88-county engagement.

- The initiative is in partnership with the County Commissioner’s Association of Ohio. Municipalities at all levels across the state can apply to become an AM 250-OH Community.
- This special designation offers many benefits and incentives for participating. The goal is to have at least one AM 250-OH Community designation in each county and 250 overall by 2026.
- Public Awareness
Chris Hurtubise provided several updates related the Commission’s Public Awareness initiative.
 - Fahlgren Mortine is the Commission’s new public relations partner. Earned media and increasing the Commission’s reach across the state will be their focus.
 - The AM 250-OH website is close to launching. Commissioners will receive a link to review next week and can send their feedback to Ms. Hurtubise.
 - The “Ohio’s 250 Favorite Things” promotion will launch in October on social media. This promotion will build out the Commission’s social media, increase engagement, and build community partnerships.
 - Elizabeth Pierce previewed the 4th Grade History Pass program currently in development. This pass will give Ohio 4th graders free admission to history museums across the state.
- Committee Updates
The Commission staff are recommending transitioning from 10 committees to six. This decision was informed by conversations and feedback from Commission members and stakeholders. The six committees are: 88 County Engagement, Education, Public Awareness, Under-Told Stories, Philanthropic Partners, and Signature Events & Programming.
 - Discussion ensued about the Committees and what certain committees would be responsible for.
 - Kathy Dean-Dielman recommended that the Committee Co-Chairs meet regularly to share key updates and help keep everyone informed.
- Launching a new grants program
Director Kleismit presented a proposal to roll out a grants program to fund local projects around the state.
 - The Commission team is proposing distributing half of the Commission’s state support (\$1M in FY24) to fund local grant projects and is proposing partnering with Ohio Humanities to administer the grants program.
 - Rebecca Asmo, Executive Director of Ohio Humanities, provided a brief overview of Ohio Humanities and their grantmaking expertise.
 - Jodie Engle provided a brief overview of the FY24 grants program timeline. There will be two grant cycles in FY24 and two applicant categories: 1) up to \$5,000 and 2) \$5,000 - \$50,000.
 - Ohio Humanities will administer the program and the Commission will make award decisions. A grants panel composed in part by Commissioners will make recommendations to staff and the Co-Chairs, who will make final award decisions.
 - Ms. Engle introduced a committees list worksheet and asked Commissioners to identify their top committee assignment preferences and if they are interested in serving on

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the grants panel.

- Discussion ensued and Director Kleismit asked Commissioners to send him feedback and questions.

Proposed Strategy & FY24 Budget

Director Kleismit reviewed the strategic framework and budget document included in the meeting packet.

- Director Kleismit gave a brief overview of the Commission’s strategic initiatives and major deliverables in the current fiscal year through 2026 and eight key deliverables and program launches the staff are planning for FY24.
- Ms. Tomu gave a brief overview of the Next Gen Citizens pilot launch in 2024. This will involve an activity passport that engages grades 4 – 12 and encourages them to discover resources in their communities.
- Director Kleismit provided an overview of the FY24 budget and gave an explanation of the different budget categories.
 - The FY24 budget is \$2M, and 60% of the budget is allocated for grants, programs, projects and initiatives across Ohio.
 - Director Kleismit called special attention to the \$63,310 in carryover funds from FY23. The staff will be proposing using \$52,000 of the carryover funds to hire a fundraising consultant to generate private dollars and build capacity for the Commission’s work.

MOTION: Nancy Hollister made a motion to approve the Resolution 2023-08, the resolution to approve the FY24 Commission budget. Seconded by Steve Hambley. The motion passed.

MOTION: Samantha Turner made a motion to approve the Resolution 2023-09 to create the AM 250-OH grants program and sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Ohio Humanities. Seconded by Melinda Huntley. The motion passed.

MOTION: Charley Moses made a motion to approve the Resolution 2023-10 to contract for a private fundraising consultant. Seconded by Joe Miller. The motion passed.

The next Commission meeting will take place on Friday, December 15, 2023 at the Huntington Center Building in Columbus. Commissioners are invited to tour staff offices before the meeting, and the meeting will convene at 10:30 am on the Horizon Level, FI 36.

MOTION: Kimberly Murnieks moved to adjourn. Seconded by Kathy Dean-Dielman. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 12:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Abby Reynolds on behalf of Commission Secretary, Megan Wood.