

**Ohio Commission for the U.S. Semiquincentennial**  
Meeting notes – First organizational meeting  
Governor’s Cabinet Room | Ohio Statehouse  
*Tuesday, March 1, 2022*

*Commission members present:*

- Doug Preisse (co-chair), Van Meter-Ashbrook (*Governor appointee*)
- Michael Coleman (co-chair), IceMiller (*Governor appointee*)
- Tom Chema, Ohio History Connection board president (*statute ORC 149.309*)
- State Sen. Hearcel Craig (D-Columbus) (*Senate appointee*)
- Kelly Falcone Hall, Western Reserve Historical Society executive director (*Governor appointee*)
- Dr. John Fleming, retired museum professional (*Governor appointee*)
- State Rep. Adam Holmes (R-Nashport) (*Senate appointee*)
- Melinda Huntley, Ohio Travel Association executive director
- Vincent Keeran, Ohio Senate Clerk (*Senate public appointee*)
- Montgomery County Comm. Debbie Lieberman (*statute ORC 149.309*)
- Matt MaLaren, Tourism Ohio director (*statute ORC 149.309*)
- State Rep. Joe Miller (D-Amherst) (*House appointee*)
- OBM Director Kim Murnieks (*Governor designee*)
- Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O’Connor (*statute ORC 149.309*)
- Elizabeth Pierce, Cincinnati Museum Center executive director (*Governor appointee*)
- Hon. Ted Strickland, former Governor (*Governor appointee*)
- Ginger Warner, Ohio Arts Council board president (*statute ORC 149.309*)
- Mackensie Wittmer, National Aviation Heritage Area executive director (*Governor appointee*)
- Wendy Zucal, Ohio Local History Alliance immediate past president (*statute ORC 149.309*)
- Burt Logan (secretary, ex-officio), Ohio History Connection executive director (*statute ORC 149.309*)

*Absent:* Thomas Hankins (*Senate public appointee*), Sen. George Lang (represented by aide Ryan Hennigan)

Guests: Gov. Mike DeWine, Steve George, Dr. Hasan Kwame Jeffries, Amanda Wright Lane, Laurel Dawson, Cheryl Subler, Pete LuPiba, Charisse Burgess, Ricky Madrid, Todd Kleismit

Governor Mike DeWine made brief remarks to thank each of the Commission members for their service and that he looked forward to seeing the results of the Commission’s work.

Commission Co-Chair Doug Preisse called the Commission meeting to order at approximately 12:45 pm. Burt Logan, in his ex-officio role as secretary, called the role and announced that there was a quorum. Mr. Preisse and Co-Chair Michael Coleman gave introductory remarks. Mr. Coleman emphasized his previous work as the mayor of Columbus convening the City of Columbus Bicentennial Commission that started in 2007 and commenced in 2012. He emphasized the process of bringing people together to achieve something significant. Securing funding for the Commission was noted as an important early goal. Committees inclusive of lots of Ohioans should be created soon. Commission members were reminded that a comprehensive report of activities is due to the Governor and legislative leaders on September 30, 2022.

Commission members took turns introducing themselves to their fellow commissioners. This included C. Patrick Denier, assigned by the Ohio Attorney General's Office to represent the Commission on legal matters. Mr. Denier is the assistant section chief in the Executive Agencies section of the Attorney General's Office. Stephen George was also present and joined the Commission by invitation. Mr. George, executive director of the Ohio Bicentennial Commission, has been asked to serve as an informal advisor to the Commission. There was discussion of future Commission meetings. There was consensus that early June and mid-September dates would be best. Specific dates will be proposed soon.

Mr. Preisse referred to the statutory section (ORC Section 149.309) of the Commission's charge that allows for the appointment of an executive director. He said that he and Co-Chair Coleman would like to appoint Todd Kleismit to this role and said that he knew most commission members were already familiar with Mr. Kleismit. A short bio of Mr. Kleismit was provided. Mr. Preisse added that Todd is uniquely qualified to serve in this role. With the support of Burt Logan and the Ohio History Connection, Mr. Preisse said, Mr. Kleismit is able to assume the responsibilities of the Commission's work while additional funding is sought to fund the Commission and hire a staff. The Commission voted unanimously in support of the decision.

Commission members were encouraged to follow up with Mr. Kleismit if they had questions. The meeting adjourned at approximately 2 p.m.