

Ohio Commission for the U.S. Semiquincentennial
Meeting notes – Quarterly Commission Meeting
Adena Mansion & Gardens | Chillicothe, OH
Friday, June 10, 2022

Commission members present:

- Doug Preisse (co-chair), Van Meter-Ashbrook (*Governor appointee*)
- Michael B. 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*)
- Kathryn Dean-Dielman, Lorian County Historical Society (*Senate public appointee*)
- Kelly Falcone Hall, Western Reserve Historical Society executive director (*Governor appointee*) #
- Dr. John Fleming, retired museum professional (*Governor appointee*)
- Tom Hankins, Sons of the American Revolution/Committee to Rebuild Fort Laurens (*Senate public appointee*)
- Nancy Hollister, former Governor/Lt. Governor (*Chief Justice appointee*)
- State Rep. Adam Holmes (R-Nashport) (*House appointee*)
- Melinda Huntley, Ohio Travel Association executive director (*statute ORC 149.309*) #
- Vincent Keeran, Ohio Senate Clerk (*Senate public appointee*)
- Montgomery County Comm. Debbie Lieberman (*statute ORC 149.309*)
- Matt MacLaren, Tourism Ohio director (*statute ORC 149.309*)
- 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 chair (*statute ORC 149.309*)
- 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*) #

Denotes participation was virtual

Absent: Sen. George Lang, State Rep. Joe Miller, Mackensie Wittmer (Governor appointee/National Aviation Heritage Area executive director), Paul Oyaski (Senate appointee/former mayor of Euclid)

Staff: Todd Kleismit, Executive Director
C. Patrick Denier, Assistant Attorney General

Guests: Steve George, Charisse Burgess, Ricky Madrid, Donna Collins, Tony Rucci, Megan Wood, Charley Moses

Commission Co-Chair Doug Preisse called the Commission meeting to order at approximately 1:05 pm. Following introductions, Kathy Styer, executive director of Adena Mansion & Gardens, thanked the Commission members for coming to Adena and expressed thanks to those who joined a tour earlier in the morning. Ohio History Connection Board Member Melody Young, executive director of the Ross County-Chillicothe Convention & Visitors Bureau, also welcomed the Commission members and noted

some special events this summer in Ross County. Commission members all received a bag of information from the CVB.

Todd Kleismit took the roll call: 21 Commission members present. Four Commission members were absent. Co-chair Preisse asked if there were any corrections or discussions of the minutes from the March 1, 2022 Commission meeting that were distributed. Seeing none, Ginger Warner made a motion that was seconded. The minutes of the March 1 meeting were adopted unanimously on a voice vote.

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

- The Commission has secured a state appropriation of \$500,000 for FY 2023, which begins July 1, 2022. The line items goes to the Ohio History Connection and Mr. Kleismit reminded the Commission that employees of the Commission are employees of the Ohio History Connection.
- Mr. Kleismit continues to transition out of his former role as the Ohio History Connection's director of community and government relations. Now with state funding secured, he will become 100 percent dedicated to the work of the Commission. He will be setting up an office on the 35th floor of the Rhodes Office Tower, working alongside the staff of the Office of Budget and Management.
- Mr. Kleismit shared that he intends to use his role to help "bring people together," to work in bipartisan, inclusive ways. He encouraged the Commission members to envision a big block party among neighbors.
- Some recent activities were highlighted: visiting Fort Laurens and speaking roles for some of the commission members at Schoenbrunn Village in Tuscarawas County; Mr. Kleismit and the co-chairs spoke to Leadership Ohio in May.
- Commissioners are invited to Marietta July 13 for the annual event to commemorate the anniversary of the Northwest Ordinance, passed on that date in 1787 by the old Continental Congress. Todd will give remarks – at the invitation of Nancy Hollister and others – and hopes that some of the Commissioners will join him and Nancy to make a day of it.

There was a brief discussion of the branding and grant agreement that was proposed by the national America 250 team. The national team has encouraged all states to adopt a somewhat unified look with the ability to make some changes to a tagline of "America 250-OH," adaptive to each state's initials. Signing the grant agreement with the national team comes with a \$10,000 grant. There was some preference among commissioners to spell out "Ohio" instead of using the abbreviated "OH."

Co-Chair Preisse invited America 250 Foundation CEO Joe Daniels (participating remotely) to proceed with his remarks to the Commission. Mr. Daniels shared his perspective about the national America 250 effort and mentioned his previous work at the 9/11 Museum. He talked about a new campaign to introduce America 250 to the American public – Discover America 250 – that will highlight special events and activities across the country between now and this winter. He said he hopes that everyone involved will leave an "emotional legacy" for the America people by the end of 2026. He discussed a possible World's Fair in Philadelphia in 2026 that would be in tandem with all of the other states. Mr. Daniels acknowledged that the national organization has had some negative press in recent months and that they have worked hard to address those challenges.

Following Mr. Daniels remarks, the four staff from America 250 that were participating remotely logged off. There was additional discussion about the branding and adopting some form of the logo, as presented. Commissioners agreed that they wanted to spend more time considering logo options. The decision was made to come back with recommendations for the September Commission meeting. Mr. Kleismit asked the Commission for authority to move ahead on using the phrase “America 250-Ohio,” and Commissioners agreed to that, minus the use of a logo or visual. Mr. Kleismit will discuss this with the national America 250 team.

Mr. Kleismit described the idea behind the “summer listening tour,” which is to host several town hall-style forums to introduce the new commission to the public and media this summer. Mr. Kleismit said he intends to give a short PowerPoint presentation at various locations around Ohio (libraries, historic sites, etc.) to discuss the work of the Commission and to solicit input from regular Ohioans and community leaders. He will ask Commissioners from each region to serve as “event captains” to help locate the right venues, help build an audience, host the event, etc.

Draft copies of proposed committees were shared with Commission members. Mr. Kleismit emphasized that this was a work in progress and that he wanted Commissioners to know the direction things were moving. The intent is to have a co-chair model for each committee – one co-chair is a Commission member and the other is a member of the public not serving on the Commission. It was recommended that the committees try to meet at least twice over the summer and to feed recommendations for the report due to state leaders September 30, 2022. Names had been “penciled in” on various committees and that now was the time to provide feedback on committees, their charges, the names on committees, etc. There was some discussion of committees. A resolution that identified 11 committees and to adopt the committees structure was presented as Resolution 2022-02, summarized below:

Proposed Committees: Philanthropic Partners Committee
Celebration and Signature Events Committee
K-12 Education Committee
Museums, Arts Organizations and Cultural Institutions Committee
Communications, Public Relations and Marketing Committee
88-County Public Engagement Committee
Travel, Tourism & Economic Development Committee
Scholarship Committee
Management Committee (*internal for Commission members only*)
Commemoration Committee
Showcasing Committee

Tom Chema made a motion to adopt Resolution 2022-02. Nancy Hollister seconded the motion. The Resolution was adopted unanimously by a voice vote. Each committee will have a specific charge to identify its purpose. Commissioners were encouraged to send Mr. Kleismit their input as soon as possible.

A proposed budget for the \$500,000 state appropriation was shared with Commission members. Resolution 2022-03 was presented to charge the Management Committee and the Executive Director with the fiduciary responsibility and oversight for the FY 2023 budget. The Resolution sets the Executive Director’s salary and gives him the authority to hire additional staff (in consultation with the Management Committee) as necessary. Following some brief discussion, Elizabeth Pierce made a motion

to accept Resolution 2022-03 and Nancy Hollister seconded the motion. The Resolution passed unanimously on a voice vote.

The Commission was reminded that the comprehensive report is due to state leaders September 30. The next quarterly Commission meeting should be held in mid-September to review a preliminary draft of what will be contained in the report. The Commission agreed to set the date in July for the September meeting at a strategic time and venue. Mr. Kleismit will work with the co-chairs to set a date that will be communicated in July. Mr. Kleismit suggested that it might be beneficial to couple the next Commission meeting with an event associated with Ohio Open Doors and asked Steve George to share some information about that. Mr. George described the Ohio Open Doors events as locally driven with the intent of having the organizations that are in charge of landmark buildings and places “open their doors” to the public with a free event of some kind during the 10-day stretch of September 9-18.

In other business, Commissioner Tom Hankins reported some good news from the recent state capital budget: \$330,000 allocated for Fort Laurens, the Ohio History Connection site in Tuscarawas County, funds that will be matched locally. The funding will go to reconstruct the fort, either partial or fully.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.