



THE COUNTY OF CHESTER



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HYBRID Working Meeting
America250PA Chester County Commission
GSC CCPC Suite 270 Conference Room

March 2, 2023

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Jane Dorchester; Fernando Fonseca; James Garrison; Bruce Mowday; Brian O'Leary; Krystine Sipple; Mark Slouf; Robert Williams.

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: David Blackburn; Mary Sue Boyle; James Christ; Conor Hepp; Malcolm Johnstone; Paul Kahan; Winifred Moran Sebastian; Beverly Sheppard; Karen Simmons; Randell Spackman; James Ziegler.

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Barbara Cohen; Nicole Flamer; Kieran Francke; Susan Hamley; Michelle Kichline; MaryFrances McGarrity; Alexander Parham; Clifford Parker; Heather Reiffer.

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Beth Cunliffe; Laura DeMatteo; Gene Huller; Sally Warren.

VISITORS PRESENT IN PERSON: Brandi Levine.

VISITORS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Peter Benton.

CALL TO ORDER:

The America250PA Chester County Commission meeting, held at the Government Services Center, Room 259 in Suite 270 and via Zoom video/audio on Thursday, March 2, 2023, was called to order at 4:00 PM by David Blackburn.

ACTION ITEMS:

Election of a Second Vice-Chair. Ernie Holling has resigned effective March 1, 2023, from the commission and this leaves a vacancy in the role of Second Vice-Chair. Mr. Blackburn asked if there were any nominations for a new Second Vice-Chair. No responses.

A MOTION TO RE-ESTABLISH THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE, CONSISTING OF: BRIAN O'LEARY, NICOLE FLAMER, KRYSTINE SIPPLE, AND KAREN SIMMONS, WAS MADE BY MR. O'LEARY, SECONDED BY JANE DORCHESTER, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

Other commission members are welcome to join the Nominating Committee.

Approval of Minutes.

Discussion about keeping meeting minutes much more focused and limited to motions, approvals, major discussions. Approved minutes are posted on the CCPC America250PA webpage.

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 5, 2023 MINUTES WAS MADE BY BEVERLY SHEPPARD, SECONDED BY WINIFRED MORAN-SEBASTIAN, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION ITEMS:

Additional Committee Chair and Working Meetings.

Mr. Blackburn addressed the concern for this commission to expand meetings to more than once a quarter. The four additional working meetings, which will be hybrid, are: March 2, June 1, Sept 7, Dec 7, 2023, from 4 – 6 pm, in addition to regular committee meetings set for Jan 5, April 6, July 6, and Oct 5, 2023. Following Sunshine Laws, these additional meetings will be open to the public and advertised.

RFP: Professional Management for America250PA Chester County Commission.

Mr. Blackburn presented an update on the Request for Proposal (RFP) for a Professional Manager/Contractor to support and coordinate the work of this organization. Commission members discussed possible staff approaches of respondents and how this work will relate to the Heritage Tourism Plan work currently being done by Heritage Strategies, LLC.

Mr. O’Leary added that the RFP is being finalized and requests assistance with:

- 1) Administration of the 250th Commission,
- 2) Support of communications and outreach,
- 3) Management of events, and
- 4) Coordination of fundraising

The selected management entity will work closely with the board. Board members then discussed the nature of this role, how the role will evolve over time, the possibility of a shorter contract length, the possibility of event management, and the role of the county government in relation to the management entity.

The RFP process will take a minimum 45 to 60 days and will be managed by the county planning commission. The final contract will be with the County Commissioners. Mr. O’Leary welcomed ideas now from the commission on the duties for this role and noted that the RFP process must follow formal County rules.

The hired Contractor/Project Manager will technically report to Mr. O’Leary, who will seek input on performance from the Officers and overall Commission of America250PA Chester County.

Proposed Facilitation of April 6, 2023 250th Commission Meeting for Strategic Framework.

Ms. Sheppard stated the need to redefine the primary purpose of this Commission, which will build the foundation to participate in Chester County 250, Pennsylvania 250, and national America250 programs. She would like this commission to revisit the county, state, and national

websites to realign our goals. Participation on a wide scale and reaching a diverse audience are crucial values established by the national and state programs. She noted that committees have been working in silos to-date, and the Commission needs to have well-established goals, focus, and structure, including a centralized workplan and timetable that enable the committees to develop their own workplans.

Ms. Sheppard said that the Commission needs to develop its elevator speech and build on that for a full campaign, which will give us consistency in our outreach. Ms. Sheppard welcomed ideas from the commission to prepare for the April 6, 2023 meeting which Ms. Sipple will facilitate. The goal is to develop a clear mission, goals, timeline, and process for vetting ideas that visualizes 2026 and then we work backward. Ms. Simmons suggested using Idealized Design methods to reach these goals. Mr. O’Leary added a need to delineate specific goals for 2023.

Robert Williams suggested gathering the Pennsylvania 250 goals before the April meeting to see avenues of alignment. Even if this commission does not align with activities at the state level, it can align with the values. Ms. Sheppard suggested applying Conor Hepp’s idea of identifying existing events at a broad variety of historical organizations in the county to provide a foundation for building toward 2026.

Committee Reports.

Heritage Sites – Mark Slouf reported that committee members are reviewing a list of all active historical sites for the Heritage Tourism Plan. The draft presentation of two of the Plan’s heritage themes, the Philadelphia Campaign and Iron and Steel, will be shared with the committee. He is very pleased with Heritage Strategies.

Partnership – Ms. Simmons reported that committee members are flushing out the taxonomy of heritage-related and non-heritage related partners. Once the Commission’s core values are established, she sees great links to the non-heritage partners. She is planning a resource e-manual to share with partners to overlay with their existing programming.

Communications & Marketing – James Garrison reported that the committee has established a Newsletter subcommittee with first publication slated for later this year, but they still need to decide audience, content, and funding. The Committee has opened social media accounts, Facebook and Instagram, as “@CHESCO250”. The Committee also hosts a SharePoint site, which is accessible to all Commission members. The Committee’s strategic retreat was held on January 21, 2023 and discussion included identifying key words for the Commission’s mission statement and looking at the national and state America250 websites for guidance. Mr. Garrison asked Commissioners to read the draft mission statements and prepare to discuss them at the April 6, 2023 meeting.

Education – Ms. Sheppard reported on a meeting with history teachers and elementary school teachers at the Chester County History Center to discuss curriculum development. The goal is long-lasting educational outreach beyond the America250 events. The committee is also considering “listening sessions” around the county to hear from a diverse population about what they want and need Chester County to be.

Program & Event – Randell Spackman shared that the committee is compiling a list of current events in the county that could be elevated for America250 events. Mr. Hepp added that, instead of starting with 2026 and moving backwards to plan, we could look at what is already planned for 2023 and start to promote America250 now.

Development – Ms. Simmons reported that the committee has a list of the largest corporations in Chester County and is deferring until after the strategic planning discussion at the April 6, 2023 250th Commission meeting to develop a case statement and start donor cultivation meetings.

Old Business.

Ms. Slouf asked about the mechanism to vet and add new members to the committees. Ms. Sheppard added it would be best if this process was as simple as possible. Mr. Blackburn commented that adding members to each committee would best be decided by each committee individually. Mr. Blackburn will communicate the option to vet new committee members to all committee chairs.

New Business.

Mr. Slouf mentioned an idea for a soft kick-off event for America250PA Chester County that could be tied into the April 13, 2023 Marshallton Conservation Trust’s “Souper Supper” and Spring Meeting at the Marshallton Inn. Mr. O’Leary said all commission members can share news about our work. The commission then discussed the need to develop a presentation about the 250th Commission to get the word out in the County.

Mr. Garrison and Laura DeMatteo developed an article that will appear in the 2023 CCATO Official Directory that discusses the 250th Commission from the municipal perspective.

Mr. O’Leary mentioned the Second Vice-Chair vacancy and invited any Commission member to apply if they are interested. Ms. Simmons asked if we have to fill the vacancy. The Bylaws say that we do have to fill the vacancy immediately.

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:50 PM WAS MADE BY MS. SIMMONS, SECONDED BY MS. DORCHESTER, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

Respectfully submitted,

David Blackburn, Chair

DB/BNL/saw