



THE COUNTY OF CHESTER



COMMISSIONERS
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Josh Maxwell
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PLANNING COMMISSION
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HYBRID Working Meeting
America250PA Chester County Commission
GSC CCPC Suite 270 Conference Room

June 1, 2023

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON: David Blackburn; Jane Dorchester; Fernando Fonseca; James Garrison; Brian O'Leary; Beverly Sheppard; Mark Slouf; Robert Williams.

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Mary Sue Boyle; James Christ; Barbara Cohen; Susan Hamley; Conor Hepp; The Honorable Michelle Kichline; MaryFrances McGarrity; Winifred Moran Sebastian; Bruce Mowday; Alexander Parham; Heather Reiffer; Karen Simmons; Krystine Sipple; Randell Spackman; James Ziegler.

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Nicole Flamer; Malcolm Johnstone; Paul Kahan; Clifford Parker.

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Laura DeMatteo; Richard Drake; Gene Huller; Sally Warren.

VISITORS PRESENT IN PERSON: None.

VISITORS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Matthew Roberson.

CALL TO ORDER:

The America250PA Chester County Commission meeting, held at the Chester County Government Services Center, Room 259 in Suite 270 and via Zoom video/audio on Thursday, June 1, 2023, was called to order at 4:02 PM by David Blackburn.

ACTION ITEMS:

Approval of Minutes.

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE APRIL 1, 2023 MEETING OF THE AMERICA250PA CHESTER COUNTY COMMISSION WAS MADE BY JAMES GARRISON, SECONDED BY JANE DORCHESTER, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

Review and Approval of Strategic Plan.

Mr. Blackburn turned the floor over to Karen Simmons to review the proposed America250PA Chester County Commission's Strategic Plan. Ms. Simmons acknowledged the task force who helped review and edit the plan over the last few weeks. Ms. Simmons reviewed the planning process which included a survey administered to Commission members and the strategic

planning session led by Krystine Sipple on April 4, 2023. Notes from Heritage Strategies' Peter Benton and meeting notes from Chesco 250 committees were also incorporated into the plan. Ms. Simmons formulated the strategic plan from this process and added graphics to highlight certain aspects. Ms. Simmons then began to go over the sections of the plan, asking for feedback. The plan opens with the missions from the national and state level, and the charge by the Chester County Commissioners in establishing the America250PA Chester County Commission.

Ms. Simmons incorporated suggested taglines sent over by Ms. Sipple and the Communications & Marketing Committee the same day as the Commission meeting. There was some discussion over the taglines, and it was agreed that the Communications & Marketing Committee would take another look at them.

The plan then presents the Commission's Desired Outcomes and Core Values. With the Core Values, the plan includes themes that resonate with Chesco 250 Commission members. There was some discussion about the language in this section. Beverly Sheppard reminded everyone that the language was taken directly from the AASLH Guide for America 250. Mr. Blackburn asked if this part could be moved into the appendices. Ms. Simmons replied that she had kept it in the plan to illustrate the thought process to Commission members for the approval discussion, but that it would be moved to the appendices once the plan was approved and finalized.

Ms. Simmons then shared other portions of the plan including Mr. Benton's synopsis showing how the Heritage Tourism Plan could mesh with the Commission's goals, as well as the Lasting Legacy, Overarching Goals, and Outcomes. Ms. Simmons then shared a section focused on Infrastructure, which defines Commission roles and the organizational chart. Brian O'Leary asked for clarification why the title of the Nominating Committee in its work plan section of the Strategic Plan also included Governance. Ms. Simmons explained that it was felt that the committee would also serve to offer recommendations on how meetings should be structured and run. Others felt that this was the role of the Executive Committee.

Ms. Simmons then reviewed the section of the plan that includes a survey that was taken by Chesco 250 Commission members in anticipation of the April 6, 2023 Strategic Retreat. It was reiterated that these process documents would be moved to the appendices once the plan was approved.

Ms. Simmons outlined the Commission's one-year work plan, as well as committee work plans. Simmons reminded the Commission that it would approve the over-arching Strategic Plan and work plans with the knowledge that the line items on Committee Work Plans would evolve as work moves forward and the committees update them based on changing needs. The Strategic Plan should be a living document.

Mr. Blackburn asked Ms. Simmons for clarification on what she felt the process was in terms of moving forward in approving the Strategic Plan. For example, once the America250PA Chester County Commission has approved it, will it need approval from the Chester County Commissioners? The Honorable Michelle Kichline stated that the County Commissioners would not need to approve the full Strategic Plan and would only want to see the Executive Summary. The County Commissioners will also want to be updated periodically on the Chesco 250 Commission's progress.

Randell Spackman inquired as to why Birmingham Hill and the Brandywine Conservancy was being singled out in the implementation of the Philadelphia Campaign. Mr. O'Leary stated that he is talking to Mr. Benton about updating this piece to make it broader and more inclusive of other heritage sites and organizations.

Mr. O’Leary addressed the point that the Strategic Plan is “evergreen,” and that it would be regularly revisited and updated as necessary based on new information and circumstances.

Ms. Simmons sought a motion for approval of the full Strategic Plan for internal use, with edits and amendments based on today’s session, as well as approval of an Executive Summary for public use to be posted on the Commission’s website and circulated as desired. An introduction will be added to the Executive Summary that is comprised of Background, Mission, Vision and Desired Legacy, Overarching Goals & Aims, a 2023 1-year Work Plan Summary, and a list of the America250PA Chester County Commissioners and Chester County Planning Commission staff.

MR. BLACKBURN ASKED FOR A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE FULL STRATEGIC PLAN WITH EDITS AND ADDENDUMS. WINIFRED MORAN-SEBASTIAN MADE THE MOTION, MR. SPACKMAN SECONDED. THE MOTION PASSED BY A UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

Mr. Blackburn asked Ms. Simmons to make the agreed-upon edits and addendums and recirculate, and shared that the Strategic Plan was a great step forward in sharing the Commission’s work with its constituents, thanking her for her work.

DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION ITEMS:

Chair Update.

Mr. Blackburn shared that on Friday, June 2, two proposals in response to the America250PA Chester County Commission’s management RFP would be considered. The Chester County History Center (CCHC) and the Chester County Community Foundation would be interviewed by Mr. O’Leary, Mr. Blackburn, Mr. Garrison, and Ms. Hamley. A recommendation would be made based on these interviews and subsequently presented to the Chester County Commissioners.

Committee Reports.

Heritage Sites Legacy Projects – Mark Slouf reviewed a written report he drafted to outline the Committee’s Philadelphia Campaign-focused work plan. He has moved forward with meeting with the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force, and acknowledged the help of Jeannine Speirs, Wade Catts, and Matthew Roberson.

Regional 250 Opportunities – Mr. Spackman shared what was now listed on his committee work plan in the Strategic Plan, including the local and America250PA versions of the Liberty Tree Project and Pennsylvania Day.

Partnership – Ms. Simmons shared that the Partnership Committee was working on refining the document titled “A Star-Spangled Invitation” that had been drafted by Ms. Sheppard to be sent out to members of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network and the Chester County Association of Township Officials, as well as circulated to other potential partners. It has been passed on to the Communications & Marketing Committee for comment and sign-off.

Communications & Marketing – Ms. Dorchester reported that the committee has developed a style guide for writing Commission news releases and other communications. Members of the Commission indicated that the document did not need their approval. Ms. Sipple mentioned that Commissioner Kichline had recorded a video to introduce the America250PA Chester County

initiative. Heather Reiffer inquired when the Commission could expect social media to launch. Ms. Hamley replied that the intention was to launch social media on July 1st.

Education – Ms. Sheppard reported that they have three people reviewing existing materials for educational programming. They are currently looking at CCHC’s materials. Ms. Sheppard reported that engaging high schools has been difficult. She is attempting to reach curriculum coordinators. She cited a great deal of politics occurring at schools which is creating an obstacle to discussing civics education. Ms. Sheppard is working on a survey to send to active heritage sites about their educational programs. She is also working with Dr. Charles Hardy and West Chester University to develop content for listening sessions. They are looking at Phoenixville as a pilot group.

Fundraising – Ms. Simmons referred to the work plan in the Strategic Plan regarding current strategies for fundraising. Ms. Sheppard pointed out that applications for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) education grants are due in November, and that we should be mindful that it takes a year from application to implementation if the grant is awarded.

Nominating – Ms. Simmons referred to the work plan. She suggested that the committee share some suggestions for new Commission members with Mr. O’Leary before bringing them to the full Commission. It was noted that new members should reflect greater diversity.

Mr. Blackburn requested that going forward, all reports should be sent in advance of the Commission meetings so that they could be circulated and reviewed. Ms. Simmons noted that committee reports should respond to committee work plans, and that the work plans should be updated as needed.

Public Comment.

There was no public comment.

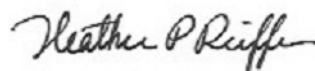
The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 6 at the Chester County Government Services Center in Room 351 East.

It was announced that the Chester County Town Tours & Village Walks schedule and brochure were now available and the program kickoff would take place on Thursday, June 8 at the West Chester United Methodist Church.

ADJOURNMENT:

A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:52 PM WAS MADE BY MS. SHEPPARD AND SECONDED BY MS. DORCHESTER, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

Respectfully submitted,



Heather P. Reiffer, Secretary