



**America250 PA Chester County Commission
Meeting Minutes of 2/1/2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Mary Sue Boyle, Fernando Fonseca, Jim Garrison, Jennifer Green, Dr. Larycia Hawkins, Susan Hamley, Conor Hepp, Michelle Kichline, MaryFrances McGarrity, Laura Manion, Winifred Moran Sebastian Esq., Bruce Mowday, Beverly Sheppard, Krys Sipple, Randell Spackman, Dr. tonya thames-taylor

MEMBERS PRESENT IN-PERSON: David Blackburn, Jane Dorchester, Brian O’Leary, Mark Slouf, Rob Williams

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Barbara Cohen, Nicole Flamer, Paul Kahan, Alex Parham, Dr. Jim Scanlon, Jim Ziegler

CC250 MANAGEMENT TEAM PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Beth Krallis, Connie Carter, Heather Reiffer, Angela Scully, Karen Simmons, Corrine Sylvia

CCPC STAFF PRESENT IN-PERSON: David Blackburn

CCPC STAFF PRESENT VIA ZOOM: --

INVITED GUESTS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Lisa Doan-Hawley, Brandi Levine

PUBLIC VIA ZOOM: Unidentified Guest

1. CALL TO ORDER:

A. WELCOME

The America250PA Chester County (CC250) Commission Meeting, held via Zoom and in-person at the Chester County Government Services Building, Suite 270 on Thursday, February 1, 2024, was called to order at 4:02 PM by Chair David Blackburn.

2. ACTION ITEMS:

A. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Blackburn asked for the approval of the meeting minutes. A correction was noted to reflect that Cliff Parker was not absent on 12/7/2023, as he had submitted his resignation prior to the meeting.

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE DECEMBER 7, 2023 MEETING OF THE AMERICA250PA CHESTER COUNTY COMMISSION AS CORRECTED TO REFLECT PARKER’S ATTENDANCE WAS MADE BY BRIAN O’LEARY, SECONDED BY MARYFRANCES MCGARRITY AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

3. REPORTING & DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Nominating Committee

David Blackburn noted that Krys Sipple is the chair of the Nominating Committee. In Sipple’s absence, Nominating Committee member Randell Spackman presented the slate of officers.

A MOTION TO ELECT THE SLATE OF OFFICERS: MICHELLE KICHLINE, CHAIR, WINNIFRED MORAN-SEBASTIAN ESQ., 1ST VICE-CHAIR, JIM GARRISON, 2ND VICE-CHAIR, AND MARYFRANCES MCGARRITY, SECRETARY/PARLIAMENTARIAN WAS MADE BY RANDELL SPACKMAN, SECONDED BY BRIAN O’LEARY, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

Blackburn noted that while Kichline is now technically the Chair, he could, if she desired, lead the remainder of this meeting to ease the transition. Kichline agreed. Kichline shared that she is the newest member of Lamb McErlane, PC. (1st Vice-Chair Moran-Sebastian is also a member of Lamb McErlane, PC.)

B. CC250 Commission: Shifting, Evolving Roles

Blackburn overviewed the new CC250 Commission functional organization chart developed by the management team and reviewed by the Officers and Committee Chairs. There are three main programmatic committees:

- #1-Heritage Sites Legacy Projects
- #2-250 Regional Opportunities, and
- #3-Community Partner Outreach

The focus is largely on outreach, aligning Commission members to serve as ambassadors to specific target groups identified by Committees. Blackburn emphasized that this is an evolving functional organization chart that will continue to be refined as opportunities and needs are identified. Sheppard applauded the revised functional organizational chart as it supports the Commission's future evolution, growth and reach into the community.

Kichline asked for clarification as to whether with the approval of the re-structure, the Commission would be approving the overall organizational structure and committees, but not the individual committee assignments. This was answered affirmatively: that approval is for the overall structure, and that individuals can modify their subcommittee/outreach assignments by contacting the CC250 Management Team.

It was suggested that an Editorial Board or Heritage Writing Work Group be established as a committee to review articles and submissions for a possible future newsletter or other media. This was tabled.

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED CC250 RESTRUCTURED FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURE WAS MADE BY BRIAN O'LEARY, SECONDED BY SUSAN HAMLEY, AND PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE COMMISSION.

C. Community Partner Outreach Committee

Simmons shared that the Partner Outreach Committee is amidst a leadership transition: Moran-Sebastian has agreed to serve as chair, and McGarrity is considering serving as Co-Chair. Simmons hopes Manion might co-chair as well and is scheduling a follow up meeting to discuss.

Simmons reported that the "250 Is Coming!!!" Awareness Phase is underway. To date, 29 people/groups have taken the Pledge to be involved in 250 activities; they are listed on the CC250 website. Pledge brochures and CC250 informational business cards are being distributed throughout the County. Commission members are welcome to stop by and pick them up at the Lincoln Building in West Chester or contact the Management Team to arrange for delivery.

Simmons reviewed the "250 is Coming!!!" powerpoint that has been presented since October, noting that it is online at <https://america250chesco.org/Partners.html>. To date, it has been reviewed with the majority of Chester County's state legislators and federal legislators; the Chester County Funders group; the IDEA Council; Exton, Southern Chester County & West Chester Chamber of Commerce leadership (with other Chambers being scheduled); and soon to be scheduled at CCEDC and CCCBI.

This was also the focus of the Fri., 1/26/24 "Zoom in to Make History" session, attended by 75 participants. Blackburn asked about the response to the Zoom Session. Simmons shared that 9 most recent CC250 pledges came directly after the 1/26 Zoom session. CC250 staff is following up with groups, highlighting the CC250 media kit resources to them <https://america250chesco.org/News.html> so they can spread the word with their constituents.

Simmons also noted in meeting with legislators, it is clear that the idea of CC250 is new to most everyone. Once the legislators understand the focus of CC250, they are eager to help amplify the message. Spackman agreed that during the meetings he participated in, the legislators became very engaged once they understood the core concepts. Simmons noted that Spackman's participation demonstrates how each CC250 Commissioner can readily serve as an ambassador: join in on a "250 is Coming" presentation, learn the typical flow of the presentation, help answer questions, and show passion about Independence, Liberty and Justice for all.

Blackburn suggested a training session for Commission members. Upon discussion, it was agreed to schedule Ambassador sessions monthly on the 4th Monday at 4 PM. Reiffer also suggested that Commission members view the 1/26 "Zoom in to Make History" powerpoint and recording, on the CC250 website at <https://america250chesco.org/CommunityConversations.html>

Simmons reviewed the spreadsheet listing Commission member affiliations known to date, to help the CC250 Management Team organize outreach. Simmons will email it directly following this meeting for updates.

Simmons shared plans for an in-person "250 is Coming" Summit on Friday, June 7, 2024 from 8:30 am – 1:30 at Thornbury Farm. It include a panel discussion and break-out sessions. A second session is tentatively in the words for northern Chester County. Simmons asked for volunteers to help plan this event. Sheppard, Hawkins, Moran-Sebastian, Mowday and Hamley volunteered to serve on the "250 is Coming" Summit planning committee.

Hamley suggested creating a video to get people excited about 250. Simmons shared plans for a "sizzle reel" with Spackman-recruited re-enactors for this purpose. Kichline suggested that Chester County's videographer might be available. Simmons shared that she had been talking to Becky Brain, Chester County's Communications Officer, about this idea.

D. Education Outreach

Next steps for Education Outreach have been delayed. A February meeting is scheduled with Co-Chairs Jenn Green and Lisa Doan-Harley. It was noted that Jim Scanlon recently started a 6-month Interim Superintendent's position, limiting his availability.

E. Heritage Sites Legacy Projects

Philadelphia Campaign: Slouf reported that the focus is working with the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force to determine high, medium and low priority projects. Williams continues to reach out to Valley Forge to advocate for more enhanced interpretation re: Philadelphia Campaign at the Park.

Iron & Steel continues with the process to get more members involved. Blackburn reported that there is an exhibition in Britain with direct ties to Chester County, and that there are plans for their team to visit Chesco, and possibly a traveling exhibit, in the future.

Pathway to Freedom is progressing with the participation of John Haedrich and Bertha Jackmon of the Harriet Tubman Byway extension, and Chester County's Vision Partnerships grant. There is now a structured committee of 15 members throughout the county with a focus on two time periods: 1780 – 1865, and 1865 to today, to include interpretation of Civil Rights.

Agriculture Committee now includes Brian O'Leary, Mark Slouf, Jane Dorchester and Steven Gimber. In the process of formulating a new structure that includes native agriculture, early agriculture, continuing agricultural development in the county, and agritourism.

Slouf underscored that Heritage Sites Legacy Projects Focus overall is on engaging existing organizations, making connections, and co-promotion. Not reinventing the wheel, doing their place-based work, nor offering resources that don't exist.

F. Fundraising Committee

Angela Scully reported that CC250 is one of 159 of the original 168 applicants invited to submit a Round 2 application due 2/2/24 to the America 250 PA Infrastructure Improvement & Projects Committee (IIPC). The Round 2 focus is to demonstrate wide public support and outline other possible funding. Reiffer thanked all who gathered letters of support from the heritage sites and PA legislators in a very quick timeframe.

Scully and Simmons shared recent work to meet with Chester County's state senators and representatives, noting that Senator Comitta offered to form a delegation of our elected officials to show support of and seek funding for CC250's projects. Scully and Reiffer are working with Planning Commission mapping staff to display proposed project costs in relation to senate/representative districts. Scully emphasized that the more awareness that CC250 creates among constituents will help gain support from our legislators.

Sylvia and Carter are focused on foundation and corporation funding research. A letter of intent for \$100,000 was submitted to the Philadelphia Funding Collaborative for the Semi-Q; it was reported at yesterday's SEPA250 meeting that DelCo250 received \$40K from the Philadelphia Funding Collaborative Semi-Q for a similar initiative. Also, during January's meeting with Chester County Funders, the idea of Chester County's funders cooperating to create a mini-grants pool was suggested by a funder. Sylvia and Carter are following up.

Simmons reported that she and Kichline, who is also serving as CC250's Honorary Fundraising Chair, are meeting to discuss next steps.

G. Heritage Tourism Plan

Blackburn reported that the draft Heritage Tourism Plan, along with the marketing plan and graphic identity are available for review and comment at <https://www.chescoplanning.org/Historic/HeritageTourism.cfm>

Blackburn went over the Heritage Tourism Plan themes and how they are central in linking the plan to the CC250 Heritage Sites Legacy Projects Committee's work. CC250 is part of the first phase of implementation of the Heritage Tourism Plan. Blackburn shared that he and O'Leary recently presented the Heritage Tourism Plan in an Executive Session of Chester County's Commissioners, and that Chester County Commissioners' adoption of the Heritage Tourism Plan is aimed for March 2024.

There will be a public meeting on Thursday, February 22 at 5:30 – 7 pm at the Government Services Building, 601 Westtown Road, Room 171, West Chester. This is an in-person meeting with no zoom arrangements currently planned. Reiffer will forward information to CC250 Commission members and the CC250 Management Team will circulate electronically.

Hawkins asked for more information regarding the theme "Evolving Values," expressing concern about the title and its meaning. She noted that it could be interpreted that stories regarding under-represented groups are hidden under this theme. She asked for more background on how the plan and themes were developed.

O'Leary asked Reiffer to offer more background on the planning process. Reiffer explained that Heritage Strategies was asked to frame themes that had been previously determined by the County through Landscapes 3. The "Evolving Values" title was already a revision to the original title, and Heritage Strategies and the Steering Committee have grappled with it.

She also shared that Heritage Strategies' role was to flesh out the theme presentation, identify heritage sites related to those themes, and make recommendations for next steps in how the County could best leverage those themes in its heritage tourism efforts.

Blackburn expressed that this is now the comment period for the Heritage Tourism Plan, comment can be made on-line, at the in-person presentation meeting on 2/22/24, and 1:1 conversation with him. Reiffer also invited Commission members to reach out to her with questions about the process.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Blackburn asked for public comment. No public comments.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Blackburn asked if for announcements. No announcements.

6. MEETING ADJOURNED

Blackburn asked for a motion to adjourn. O'Leary thanked Blackburn for his service as Chair since the Commission's formation.

A MOTION TO ADJOURN WAS MADE BY JANE DORCHESTER, SECONDED BY BRIAN O'LEARY, AND PASSED BY A UNANIMOUS VOTE BY THE COMMISSION.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.



Respectfully submitted: Heather P. Reiffer, Senior Program Associate,
CC 250 Management Team 2/4/2024

Approved by: MaryFrances McGarrity, Secretary/Parliamentarian, CC250 Commission, as of 4/4/2024