



## Maine Semiquincentennial Commission 250

### Meeting Minutes

August 14, 2024

3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Location: Zoom

**Commission Members Present:** Kate McBrien, Gregory Pierce (for Governor Mills), Julia Gray, Kirk Mohny, Bernard Fishman, Marcia Minter, Earle Shettleworth, Peter Merrill, Abbe Levin, Robin Talbot, Lori Fisher

**Commission Members Absent:** Senate President Troy Jackson, Secretary Shenna Bellows, Richard Labelle, Kelli Deveaux

**Members of the Public in Attendance:** Pat Claus, Kim Smith, Janice Teasenfitz, Harper Batsford (Maine Humanities Council)

**Staff in Attendance:** Sarah Hansen

### Introduction

Shenna cannot attend today's meeting due to a mandatory hearing, which she is required by law to attend. Despite her absence, enough commission members were present to make quorum, so the meeting could proceed as scheduled. Once the meeting concludes, Kate and Sarah will ensure that Shenna is updated on key decisions or discussions. Kate welcomed the Commission and the public attendees and acknowledged a quorum.

### Approval of June 12, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Marcia Minter moved to accept the meeting minutes, and Abbe Levin seconded; the Commission unanimously approved.

### **Executive Committee Formation**

Kate announced the formation of a five-person Executive Committee, as mandated by the commission's legislation. The Committee, which includes Shenna Bellows, Katherine McBrien, Marcia Minter, Julia Gray, and Gregory Pierce, will handle urgent issues and review minutes. The Committee's work will be reported to the commission to ensure everyone stays informed. Kate thanked the members for their service and invited any questions or discussion.

### **Federal-level Updates**

Sarah reported on her trip to D.C., where she connected with representatives from several states. She learned that the Federal America 250 initiative advises against signing their own contract, as they are shifting to a licensing model and attempting to copyright the term "America 250." As a result, we have decided not to sign the contract and will monitor the situation to determine our next steps.

Kate clarified that they had not signed the Federal Level America 250 contract. They decided to explore it with the Attorney General's office, received their review, and raised some concerns about certain parts of it. Kate suggested leaving the contract and waiting to see their next move.

Sarah is scheduled to attend the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH) conference in Mobile, Alabama in mid-September. America 250 is one of the conference's main focuses.

### **Biennial / Supplemental Budget Requests**

Kate and Sarah discussed the biennial supplemental budget for the Semiquincentennial Commission, aiming to balance state funding with private fundraising due to a status quo budget forecast. Kate proposed requesting \$250,000 in state funds in FY 25-26, to be potentially matched by private funds, with the Governor's office showing interest in this approach. The request will be submitted to the Department of Administrative and Financial Services for presentation to the Governor and legislature.

The team discussed the challenge in developing programming with uncertain funding sources due to timing and budget constraints. State agencies like the Department of Education and the Arts Commission could be involved in promoting existing educational programs. Julia Gray suggested creating a clearinghouse of funding opportunities to help organizations across the state access funds.

The Commission discussed the idea of a "one stop shop" for budgeting to avoid asking for too much and risking no funding, emphasizing the need for a balance between fiscal

years and considering deadlines. The Commission agreed on a program budget request of \$275,000 for the first year and \$50,000 to \$75,000 for the second year, with some flexibility to adjust if needed. Bernard suggested including a flexibility clause for the Executive Committee to handle issues as they arise. The budget was deemed reasonable, with no significant objections from the team. Bernard Fishman motioned to request from the legislature \$275,000 in the 1st year of the program and \$75,000 in the next. Earle Shettleworth seconded the motion; the Commission unanimously approved.

### **Referendum Question #3**

After brief comments from the Commission, it was decided not to spend time on discussing the endorsement of the bond as the mission of the Commission is the Semiquincentennial. It was agreed by the Commission to cease discussion and move on.

### **High-level Planning Overview**

The discussion revolved around the three pillars of the project: educate, connect, and learn. The discussion aimed to ensure that the Commission is moving in the right direction and that the proposed program aligns with the Commission's goals. The Commission is considering changing the word to "educate" or "share" instead of "learn". The committee discussed amending the three pillars, changing them to "connect, share and learn". Lori Fisher made a motion to amend the pillars and change the 'learn' description by removing 'exploring' and inserting 'examining'. Marcia Minter seconded the motion; the Commission unanimously approved.

The Commission discussed creating a shared document for the commission to outline specific programming and goals, and the next step is to send out schedules for the Executive Committee and other relevant topics.

### **Adjournment**

Marcia motioned to adjourn the meeting; Peter seconded. The meeting adjourned at 4:13 pm. The next meeting is October 9, 2024.