



Maine Semiquincentennial Commission 250

Meeting Minutes

June 12, 2024

3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Location: Maine State Archives offices (17 Elkins Lane, Augusta, ME) and Zoom

Commission Members Present: Secretary Shenna Bellows, Kate McBrien, Gregory Pierce (for Governor Mills), Julia Gray, Kirk Mohney, Bernard Fishman, Marcia Minter, Earle Shettleworth, Ekhlash Ahmed, Peter Merrill, Richard Labelle, Abbe Levin, Kelli Deveaux, Robin Talbot, Kim Smith, Sarah Hansen, Alison Maxell (for Lori Fisher)

Commission Members Absent: Senate President Troy Jackson, Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross, Chief Sabattus

Members of the Public in Attendance: Janice Teasenfitz, Pat Claus

Introductions

Secretary Bellows welcomed the Commission and the public attendees and acknowledged a quorum. She asked each attendee to share a special moment from a commemoration celebration they had attended.

Approval of April 10, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Peter Merrill moved to accept the meeting minutes, and Kirk Mohney seconded. The Commission unanimously approved the minutes from April 10, 2024.

Legislative update for LD2145 to expand Commission membership.

Secretary Bellows discussed LD 2145, which would have expanded the Commission's membership. Due to timing and competing priorities the bill did not advance this session and has

been carried over. The secretary suggested a special session between now and the end of the year to move forward with the original membership is unlikely. She also mentioned the appointment of a member representing all Maine's tribal nations, Chief Clarissa Sabattis. The appointment is made through the Speaker's Office and will be brought forward under the original statute.

Secretary Bellows acknowledged the significant work put into LD 2145 and other bills that faced similar challenges and emphasized the importance of considering the interests of all parties involved in the process.

Update from National America250 Commission

Kate reported that Maine has a student in the running for a top prize in the America's Field Trip program sponsored by the America 250 Commission. We must sign a release confirming our ability to retain personally identifiable information securely by state regulations. Once confirmed, the Commission will work with use to share the news.

Sarah will be attending the America 250 State & Territory convening in Washington, DC, July 9-11. She will meet people from other communities at this event, get inspired, and make connections. Sarah reviewed the questionnaire each attendee is being asked to submit outlining its aims for 2026.

The Commission then moved into a brainstorming session to focus on developing top priorities. Notes from previous sessions were reviewed alongside examples from other state. Three key themes have emerged: Storytelling; the relationship of people to place; revealing and embracing the hard history. After discussion, the Commission voted (Marcia motioned, Ekhlis seconded) unanimously that the pillars of Engage, Connect, Learn as the three pillars that will form the basis our work moving forward. Sarah will work on expanding these ideas for discussion at the next meeting.

Project Goal Brainstorming Session

Kirk emphasized the importance of LD 912, the \$10 million bond issue to provide funding for the restoration of historic buildings owned by nonprofits and governmental entities. Peter suggested that the commission formally endorse the bond proposal, highlighting its approval by the governor and legislature and its alignment with the commission's goals. Secretary Bellows will look into the possibility of the commission endorsing the bond, which will be discussed at the next meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 14th. Commission members will let Sarah know if this meeting date and time work.