



TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

October 18, 2024

The Tennessee Historical Commission (THC) met in person at the Maryville College Downtown Center Room in Maryville, TN for its regularly scheduled meeting. *The attachments referenced herein were sent to the Commission along with the agenda, prior to the meeting date.*

Members present were Ambassador Victor Ashe, Beth Campbell, James Kay, Jr., Dr. Warren Dockter, Sam Elliott, Loni Harris, Doris McMillan, Reggie Mudd, Dan Pomeroy, Ray Smith, Dr. Tim Smith, and Susan Williams. Ex-Officio members present were State Archeologist Phil Hodge; TDEC Representative, Hobart Akin, Governor's Representative, Ben Silverman and State Historian, Dr. Carroll Van West. Members absent included Beverly Robertson, Laura Todd, Kelley Wolfe, and Ex-Officio member Jamie Ritter.

Staff present were Executive Director and State Historic Preservation Officer, Patrick McIntyre; Attorney, Miranda Christy; Historic Preservation Specialist Program Director, Dan Brown; Historic Sites Program Coordinator, Bobby Cooley, Tennessee Heritage Protection Act (THPA) and Outreach Coordinator, Caty Dirksen; Cemetery Preservation Program Director, Graham Perry; Administrative Secretary Barbara Grissom, and Fiscal Officer and Grants Administrator, Laura Ragan.

A. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Patrick McIntyre called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the Fall meeting in Maryville. He expressed appreciation to Dr. Bryan Coker, President of Maryville College for hosting the Commission and invited Dr. Coker to address the group. Dr. Coker welcomed the Commission to Maryville College and gave a brief history of the school and discussed the just completed renovation of the new Downtown Center. Mr. McIntyre conveyed how wonderful it was to see a packed room. He expressed hope in having an efficient and productive meeting. Mr. McIntyre made a few comments and introduced the staff who were in attendance.

Mr. McIntyre asked for a roll call. Ms. Grissom called the roll, and a quorum was deemed present.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. McIntyre noted there were several people signed up for public comments in advance of the meeting. He noted they will have three minutes to speak. Tom Bennett from American Battlefield Trust and Dr. Anthony Hodges, President of the Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association addressed the Commission. Mr. Bennett stated he was here to thank the Commission for everything they have done with the American Battlefield Trust. He noted that they have been very successful in Tennessee because the Tennessee Civil War Sites Preservation Fund was enacted in 2013. He discussed that the fund received money from increases in the real estate transfer tax. For many years as the tax revenue increased the fund was getting money. This year there was no increase. Mr. Bennett noted that the American Battlefield Trust provided matching funding with the American Battlefield Protection program in Washington, DC. He noted that approximately \$2 million was left unallocated in the Tennessee Civil War Sites Preservation Fund, and that the Trust had identified some 2,000 acres that currently need protection.

C. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIRS

Mr. McIntyre explained that “while the membership of the board was vacated and reconstituted with the passage of the legislation this summer, this is not a new entity” and that the bylaws remained in place. Mr. McIntyre then read Section One of the bylaws, stating that the officers of the Commission shall be the chair and two vice chairs and that of these three officers, one shall reside in each grand division of the state. Each officer shall be elected by this Commission to take office in February of odd years. The term of office is two years, and an officer may be reelected for two additional two-year terms, which includes serving an unexpired term after vacancy, after a term of not serving and said former officer, a former officer may be reelected to the same office for no more than two additional terms. In the event of a vacancy in these offices, the Commission will vote at its next meeting to fill the unexpired term created by such vacancy. Mr. McIntyre then stated, “Today, the board will need to elect a chair and two vice chairs. The board will now hear nominations for the chair position.”

Motion

Ambassador Ashe made a motion to nominate Sam Elliott as Chair. Susan Williams seconded. Mr. McIntyre asked if there was any discussion, and there was none. The motion passed unanimously. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Harris, McMillian, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, Williams. Abstain: Elliott. At this point Mr. McIntyre handed the gavel over to Chair-Elect Elliott, who thanked the Commission for the nomination and the election. He noted he has served as chairman once before and looked forward to serving again.

Chair-Elect Elliott asked for nominees for the Vice Chair for West Tennessee.

Motion

Ray Smith made a motion to nominate Loni Harris as Vice Chair for West Tennessee. Susan Williams seconded. Mr. Elliott asked if there was any discussion, and there was none. The motion

passed unanimously. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith. Abstain: Harris. Loni Harris thanked the Commission for the nomination and the election.

D. MINUTES

Chair-Elect Elliott referred to the meeting minutes of June 21, 2024 (Attachment D₁). The minutes were provided prior to the meeting. Ambassador Ashe recommended roll call votes be added to the minutes. This correction was made to the June 21, 2024 minutes, and the roll call votes were added to the minutes prior to the meeting. Chair-Elect Elliott asked for a motion to accept the June 21, 2024, meeting minutes as given. Ambassador Ashe requested the minutes reflect he abstained from voting on the minutes because he was not there.

Motion

Beth Campbell asked for a motion to accept the June 21, 2024, meeting minutes. Doris McMillian seconded. Chair-Elect Elliott asked if there was any discussion or questions. The motion passed. Yeas: Campbell, Elliott, Harris, McMillan, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, Williams. Chair-Elect Elliott requested that the minutes reflect Ambassador Ashe, Dr. Warren Dockter, Jim Kay, and Dr. Tim Smith abstained due to them not attending the June 21, 2024 meeting.

E. FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. McIntyre informed the Commission that all committee reports today are being provided as staff reports due to there being no committees in place between the vacating and reconstituting of the Board on June 30th and the meeting today. (Attachment E₁). Mr. McIntyre presented the financial statement from July 1 to August 31 with expenses and encumbrances. He asked if the board had any questions regarding the report. Reggie Mudd asked a question about the real estate transfer taxes that are allocated to the Commission for the Civil War Sites Preservation Fund and Historic Property/Land Acquisition Fund. Mr. McIntyre responded that there has been no growth in two years and so it is not receiving an infusion of funds beyond the baseline \$250,000 allocation the Civil War Sites Fund receives each year from what formerly went to the State Lands Acquisition Fund. He noted that the funds are also receiving interest in both accounts because the funds for pending projects have not yet been paid out. Mr. McIntyre next reported on the 2024-2025 Budget (Attachment E₂). He relayed that in the June meeting certain elements of this budget were approved, and that the Commission typically approves the full budget at the Fall meeting. The budget for FY 24-25 for \$4,809,900 was then presented. Mr. McIntyre also reported the budgeting process for the upcoming year is underway. He has an upcoming internal hearing with the Department of Finance and Administration, in addition to the budget hearings that come in the spring. Mr. McIntyre noted the longtime need for a supervisory position for the State Programs division of the office, and that there is a request for a supervisor position. Discussion was held.

Motion

Mr. Pomeroy motioned to approve the 2024-2025 budget. Mrs. Harris seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Elliott, Kay, Dockter, Harris, McMillian, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, Williams. Motion passed unanimously.

F. PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Mr. McIntyre informed the Commission about this year's Tennessee History Book Award, an annual program between the THC and the Tennessee Historical Society. The application is up on the Tennessee Historical Society website. Deadline for applications is December 2nd. He noted that there were two commission members present (Mr. Elliott and Dr. Tim Smith) who had been prior recipients of the award.

G. HISTORIC SITES

1. Report of Site Activities

Chair-Elect Elliott introduced Dan Brown, Historic Sites Program Director, to provide the Historic Sites update. (Attachment G₁). Mr. Dan Brown recognized the site representatives present at the meeting and reviewed his report. Those present included the president of Sam Houston Memorial Association, Bill Cabbage, representing the Sam Houston Historic Schoolhouse State Historic Site; Matt Frye, Co-Director, Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site, and Tipton-Haynes Board Member, Zach Miller; Executive Director of Burra Burra Mine State Historic Site, Mitchell Hicks; Kyle Dickson, Marble Springs State Historic Site; and representing Rocky Mount State Historic Site Director was Chairman Don Davis and Education Coordinator, Jeff Vokey. Each site represented gave brief updates on their management of these THC sites. Mr. Brown reminded the Commission these sites all generate their own funds, noting that this is an “extraordinary public private partnership here in Tennessee.”

2. Historic Sites Report

Dan Brown reported the news that the Carter House State Historic Site Visitor Center received a bid within budget for \$6.6 million on a \$6.8 million project, and that the new building is now moving towards construction. He said to anticipate shovels in the ground by February. This is the culmination of an approximate 14-year effort. Mr Brown then reported on capital projects in design development. The \$8.8 million Cragfont project is still in the design phase, but it is moving forward as expected. The \$11.3 million Rock Castle Visitors Center is well underway. Sabine Hill State Historic Site has a new \$2.5 million visitors center that has been designed, and contract documents are in development. Mr. Brown then reported that the Sparta Rock House State Historic Site building repairs contract has been finalized. The HVAC system at Alex Haley State Historic Site in Henning was replaced after a mold infestation. Mr. Pomeroy suggested that with the Sam Houston Schoolhouse and Marble Springs being under the umbrella of the Commission and the proximity of the meeting that we should have arranged tours of those sites while in the area. Mr. Pomeroy also asked about the status of the Rock House land acquisition. Mr. Brown replied that we are in communication with Bill Avant and have begun the process to have state negotiation with the county there to have that purchased. Mr. Pomeroy then asked if historic sites put in requests on projects for HVAC systems. Mr. Brown responded yes, and that everything we do with capital development is coordinated very closely. Bobby Cooley, Historic Sites Program

Coordinator reviewed his report. He stated since the last meeting, the top planning projects are taken care of. He indicated that the report given to the Commission is reported maintenance by site. The biggest project was replacing some stairs and ramps. Chair-Elect Elliott asked if there were any questions for Mr. Cooley. Hearing none, Mr. Elliott asked Mr. Cooley for an overview of HPLAF (Attachment G₃). Discussion ensued. Chair-Elect Elliott asked if there were any specific questions about the applications reflected. There were no questions.

Motion

Beth Campbell motioned to approve the grants reflected on Attachment G₃. Doris McMillian seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Elliott, Kay, Dockter, Harris, McMillan, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, S. Williams. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion

Reggie Mudd made a motion that Commission staff evaluate the feasibility of installing HVAC at Cragfont State Historic Site and Wynnewood State Historic Site. Ambassador Ashe seconded. Discussion ensued. It was noted that there may be a reason to install HVAC, but that should be based on an evaluation.

Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Elliott, Kay, Dockter, Harris, McMillan, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, Williams. Motion passed unanimously.

H. MONUMENTS AND MARKERS COMMITTEE

Chair-Elect Elliott commented, “We normally have a committee to review the markers before the full Commission meeting. Mr. Pomeroy and Dr. West have done yeoman’s work in parsing over the proposed markers.” Chair-Elect Elliott noted that he wished to go through the proposed markers as a committee so there was not a backlog for the February meeting. (See October, 2024 Proposed Markers for THC Members – Action Items.)

I. TENNESSEE WARS COMMISSION

With Ms. Scall being absent from the meeting, Mr. McIntyre directed the Commission to the extensive activities report provided by Nina Scall, Tennessee Wars Commission Program Director (Attachment I₁).

J. CEMETERY PRESERVATION

Graham Perry provided a brief overview of the Historic Cemetery Program (Attachment J₁). He noted that he had success with St. Jude doing the right thing as far as the Winchester Cemetery in Memphis, as they committed to relocate 45 graves to Elmwood after they had an archaeological survey done. Mr. Perry attended and brought concerns to the Shelby County Land Use Approval Board in Memphis, and suggested they have an archaeologist on site. He then announced that on November 8th and 9th, the Historic Cemetery Program is having a workshop with Johnathan Appell at the Willow Springs Cemetery in Shelbyville, Tennessee. Mr. Appell is a nationally recognized cemetery preservation specialist from Texas. Mr. Perry reported he had made multiple site visits and is continuing with public speaking events as requested.

K. FEDERAL PROGRAMS REPORT

Mr. McIntyre submitted the Federal Programs Report compiled by Holly Barnett, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer. He noted the hiring of a new certified local government staff member to cover the western portion of the state. Mr. Stevie Malenowski is from upstate New York and has a master's degree in Historic Preservation from the University of South Carolina. He then pointed out the information on the Federal Historic Preservation Fund grants. On the National Register side, properties that were added during this period include the Ell Persons Lynching Site. Mr. McIntyre noted that this recognizes a terrible site of racial violence in Shelby County, and to the staff's knowledge, it is the first lynching site in America that has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. There is also a Multiple Property Nomination Form approved for the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, Tennessee, 1942 to 1969. He noted that there are now 2,273 entries in the National Register in the state, which include 302 districts for a total of 45,718 resources listed on National Register in Tennessee. He then recognized Peggy Nickell and the survey program, noting her work on getting slides and archival boxes, with each box containing 625 slides, for a total of 180,000 slides that have been put in boxes from years of survey work. Mr. McIntyre then noted recent federal tax credit projects that have come through the office, a total of almost \$1.6 billion in certified projects since the program was instituted. Kern's Bakery in Knoxville was a recently completed \$35 million project.

Chair-Elect Elliott informed the new board members that Mr. McIntyre is both the executive director of the Historical Commission, and the State Historic Preservation Officer, which means that he runs two programs out of one office.

L. Other Business

1. Memorial Resolution for Governor Winfield Dunn

Ambassador Ashe proposed a memorial resolution of the Tennessee Historical Commission on behalf of former Governor Winfield Dunn, who died recently. Ambassador Ashe read the resolution. He asked for a motion to adopt.

Motion

Ambassador Ashe motioned to adopt the Memorial Resolution for Governor Winfield Dunn with a copy given to his wife and three children. Beth Campbell seconded. Discussion on the impact Governor Dunn had on the state of Tennessee followed. A roll call vote was taken. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillan, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, Williams. Motion approved unanimously.

2. Resolution of Thanks for Derita Coleman Williams

Dan Pomeroy proposed a resolution of thanks by the Tennessee Historical Commission to former chairman Derita Coleman Williams for her years of service to the Tennessee Historical Commission. Mr. Pomeroy read the resolution. He asked for a motion to adopt.

Motion

Mr. Pomeroy motioned to adopt the resolution. Ambassador Ashe seconded. Discussion ensued, with a question if the resolution set a precedent for long term members. Numerous members and former chairs served on the Commission for long terms and were not recognized with a resolution, and resolutions were typically passed upon the death of a former member. It was suggested that before a new practice was instituted the Commission should look to see what they have done in the past. A roll call vote was taken. Yeas: Ashe, McMillian, Mudd, Pomeroy. Nos: Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, R. Smith, T. Smith, Williams. Motion did not pass.

Chair-Elect Elliott asked for a motion to ask the staff to research the issue of Commission resolutions going back 20 years.

Motion

Susan Williams moved to request the staff to research resolutions of thanks for long years of service of previous members of the Tennessee Historical Commission. Ray Smith seconded. Discussion followed. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillan, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, Williams. Motion approved unanimously.

3. Report of State Historian

Dr. West provided a brief overview of his report (Attachment L₃) citing two of several new projects underway. One project concerned the USS Tennessee Museum in Huntsville in Scott County, and Dr. West explained that the museum is an important local site that does not have much awareness beyond the community. The museum was started by Senator Howard Baker, who brought artifacts from that ship back to the county from where many of the original sailors originated. The other project he mentioned was the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. Dr. West noted there is finally guidance from the National Park Service about how it can be listed as a National Historic Landmark. Dr. West explained that he serves on the National Historic Landmark Board and was stepping aside from the board to help Memphis get this through. He believed that the listing for the Lorraine Motel as a National Historic Landmark, is long overdue and is hopeful that at the February meeting or maybe in 2025, that he can share some good news on that project.

4. Report of State Archaeologist

Mr. Hodge shared with the Commission a copy of the Tennessee Archaeology Awareness Month poster that came out in September for Archaeology Awareness Month. He noted that the celebration was created in 1996 by the General Assembly to recognize archaeological sites across the state and advocate for their protection. Pinson Mounds, celebrating its 50th anniversary as a state park, is featured this year. Mr. Hodge stated that the poster is funded in part each year by a Federal Historic Preservation Grant from the THC. Mr. Hodge also recognized that Pinson has a much deeper history of over two thousand years, when it was built by the Middle Woodland culture of Native American prehistory. He also pointed out that the Tennessee Division of Archaeology maintains its centralized artifact repository at Pinson. Mr. Hodge reported on his work with Hurricane Helene relief efforts, working with TEMA and FEMA to identify locations for debris

managements that do not affect archaeological sites. Mr. Hodge then noted that the Archaeological Advisory Council, which is a government appointed board that advises TDEC's Commissioner on archaeology on matters of policy and personnel has a representative from the Commission on the Council. With the passing of Commissioner Toplovich, an appointment from the THC to the Council was needed. Chair-Elect Elliott asked Jim Kay if he would represent the THC on the Council. Jim Kay agreed.

5. Audit

Patrick McIntyre provided an update on an audit the Historical Commission is undergoing. Mr. McIntyre reported that every six or seven years, depending on the cycle, the Commission goes through a Sunset Review. We are in that process now. The last Sunset Review was in 2018. The focus is on the state historic sites. The report will be issued in the next couple weeks. Commission staff will go before the House Government Operations Committee, chaired by Representative Ragan. The Sunset Review is set for December 12, 2024. Chair-Elect Elliott reminded the board we do not have an Audit Committee in place due to the reconstitution of the Commission. The preceding Audit Committee gave a report to the Commission in April or June of this year.

6. Foundation

Chair-Elect Elliott shared background history of the Tennessee Historical Commission Foundation with the four new commission members. It was originally created in 1987 in connection with the moving of the [damaged] Battle of Nashville Monument from its location near I-440 to Granny White Pike. The Foundation has approximately \$30,000 in it. He recounted that he had investigated putting it with a larger community foundation and determined it would not work, and that he had asked Mrs. Miranda Christy to look at getting the Foundation dissolved. Mrs. Christy shared that the set of bylaws for that entity are unique, and that she had been in contact with the Attorney General's Office and has drafted paperwork to enable the dissolution of the Foundation. However, the bylaws say that the chairman of the Historical Commission is the chairman of that entity. There was a committee of the former board that investigated this issue, and it was under the umbrella of that committee that our approach was made to a non-profit. Now that the Commission has elected a chair, the process can move forward. At the February 2025 meeting, a plan for the dissolution of the Foundation and for the distribution of the assets will be presented.

7. Certificate of Merit Awards 2025 Application

Caty Dirksen, Outreach & Tennessee Heritage Protection Act Coordinator, reported applications are being accepted for the 2025 Certificate of Merit Awards. These are for projects completed during 2024 that promote and preserve historic preservation in Tennessee. Ms. Dirksen previously provided the requirements and the applications. She encouraged everyone to reach out to their local community to encourage applications. A slate will be presented in February and the recipients will be announced in May during Historic Preservation Month.

8. February 2025 Meeting

The next scheduled board meeting is February 21, 2025. Chair-Elect Elliott noted that the Commission typically goes to Middle Tennessee in the winter, East Tennessee in the fall, and West Tennessee in the summer. He suggested a change for the coming year, since in July of 2025, there is the 100th anniversary of the Scopes Monkey Trial in Dayton. He observed that as a very significant case in American legal and social history it would be a good idea to go to Dayton for the June meeting, and if possible meet in the historic courtroom. Mr. Elliott then suggested Paris Landing State Park for the location of the February, 2025 meeting. There were no objections to having the February meeting at Paris Landing. Chair-Elect Elliott then remarked that we should do away with the April and August meetings in 2025, since these were instituted in connection with the Tennessee Heritage Protection Act.

Motion

Susan Williams made a motion to cancel the April and August meetings. Loni Harris seconded. The motion was moved and properly seconded. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillan, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, Williams. Motion approved unanimously.

9. Nominating Committee

Chair-Elect Elliott noted that according to the bylaws, the chair and two vice-chairs elected today will not take office until February, 2025. Chair-Elect Elliott noted without objection that he acted in a pro-tem basis today as chairman. He also stated that he would have Mr. McIntyre or Ms. Grissom send out an inquiry about committee preferences.

P. ADJOURNMENT

Jim Kay, Jr. asked the minutes to reflect he is not a doctor. Mr. Kay stated he is excited to work with the Commission. He noted he has spent his whole life on the battlefields of Nashville, and the Battle of Nashville Trust with whom he worked to take down the statue of Nathan Bedford Forrest on I-65 in 2020 and to remove all the Confederate battle flags.

Before adjournment, Blount County Archivist Mark Bennett was recognized and spoke to the Commission. He noted the city is having him document deeds, court records and tax records of every lot downtown. He is working on various projects and has documented some of the African American history.

Motion

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Susan Williams motioned to adjourn. Loni Harris seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

E. Patrick McIntyre, Jr.
Executive Director

Sam D. Elliott
Chair-Elect