



TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

June 20, 2025

The Tennessee Historical Commission (THC) met at the Rhea County Courthouse in Dayton, TN for its regularly scheduled meeting. *The attachments referenced herein were sent to the Commission along with the agenda, prior to the meeting date.*

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

Staff present included Executive Director and State Historic Preservation Officer, Patrick McIntyre; Assistant Director for Federal Programs and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Holly Barnett; Historic Sites Program Coordinator, Bobby Cooley; Tennessee Wars Commission Program Director, Nina Scall; Tennessee Heritage Protection Act (THPA) and Outreach Coordinator, Katy Dirksen; Cemetery Preservation Program Director, Graham Perry; Section 106 Review and Compliance staff members Casey Lee and Kelley Reid, Staff Attorney, Miranda Christy Montgomery; and Administrative Secretary Barbara Grissom.

Chairman Elliott called the meeting to order. Ms. Grissom called the roll. A quorum was deemed present. The Chairman noted for the record that Beverly Robertson had an irreconcilable conflict that came up and Laura Todd had a family emergency.

A. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Sam Elliott opened the meeting by welcoming attendees to the historic courtroom in Dayton, Tennessee. He introduced Rhea County Mayor Jim Vincent, who greeted the Board and shared that recent window restorations in the courthouse were funded in part by a \$250,000

grant. Additional funds will support further renovations, including updates to the woodwork and restrooms.

Chairman Elliott then expressed his appreciation to Tom Davis for facilitating the use of the courthouse as the meeting venue. He also extended thanks to Mitchell Hicks, the executive director of the Ducktown Basin Museum/Burra Burra Mine State Historic Site, and to Chairman David Brooks, and their staff and volunteers for their warm hospitality towards the board during the tour in Polk County the prior day. This was the first time that the Commission had visited this THC site in conjunction with a meeting.

Chairman Elliott then introduced Representative Ron Travis, who offered warm and welcoming remarks to the Commission.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Elliott noted that this portion of the meeting is dedicated to public comments, with each speaker allotted three minutes. Tom Bennett from the American Battlefield Trust (ABT) addressed the Commission and reported that the Governor included \$3,000,000 in his budget amendment for the THC's Civil War Sites Preservation Fund and that this had passed. He expressed his appreciation to the commission for their work and efforts.

C. MINUTES

Chairman Elliott referred to the meeting minutes of February 21, 2025 (*Attachment CI*). The minutes were provided prior to the meeting.

Motion

The Chairman asked for a motion to accept the February 21, 2025, meeting minutes, Loni Harris seconded. No discussion ensued. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried. Yeas: Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillian, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, and Williams. Abstained: Ashe. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Elliott expressed gratitude to his spouse Karen for hosting the Commission for dinner at their home the previous evening. Patrick McIntyre then introduced the staff, including Stevie Malenowski, who began as the new Technical Preservation and CLG Coordinator for West Tennessee last September. Mr. McIntyre highlighted that the Rhea County Courthouse is one of the state's 31 National Historic Landmarks (NHL.) He further noted that Tennessee is home to over 45,000 locations listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but as one of just 31 NHLs this property is truly among the most important. He also relayed that THC has had a permanent protective covenant on the courthouse since the 1970s.

D. FINANCE COMMITTEE

Susan Williams, Chair of the Finance Committee, presented the financial statement for the fiscal year beginning July 1 through April 30, 2025 detailing expenses and encumbrances (*Attachment*

DI). As mentioned, \$3,000,000 was allocated to the THC Civil War Preservation Fund grant. Pass-through direct appropriations included \$6,000,000 for the Hermitage, and \$3,000,000 for the Scarborough 85 Monument. Mrs. Williams stated that approximately \$40,000 was reduced from the maintenance budget due to legislative cuts, while \$750,000 was reallocated from the THC's Historic Property/Land Acquisition Fund for the Graham-Kivette Home in Tazewell, Tennessee.

Motion

Committee Chair Susan Williams motioned to approve the financial report. Dan Pomeroy seconded. Motion carried. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillian, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, Williams.

Patrick McIntyre presented the Budget Update for FY 2025-2026. Mr. McIntyre stated Commissioner Williams highlighted key aspects of the forthcoming budget. The full budget is scheduled for a vote in October. Certain components, such as the sites grants and the publications grants, will be voted on for approval today.

E. PROPOSED BYLAWS REVISIONS

Chairman Elliott acknowledged that the Bylaws Committee undertook significant work to update the bylaws. The Committee convened in February 2024, and the majority of recommendations adopted or proposed are detailed (*Attachment E1*). The Executive Committee subsequently reviewed and approved these revisions, formally presenting them for consideration. Two key distinctions by the Executive Committee include expanded provisions regarding committee actions and a broader definition of the chairman's duties compared to previous versions.

Motion

Beth Campbell motioned to approve the Bylaws as written with three revisions: 1. In Article 6, Section 2, "The Selection Committee shall identify up to the three best qualified candidates". 2. In Article 6, Section 3, the excision of the word general. 3. In Article 7, Section 3, "The duties of the Historical Commission are to assure a reliable, accurate and professionally managed Historical Markers program." Reggie Mudd seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillian, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, Williams.

F. LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS

Chairman Elliott reported that Miranda Christy Montgomery contacted Governor Lee's office about authorization to hire legal counsel. The office responded that hiring lobbyists is not permitted and that TDEC is unable to provide legislative support. Responsibility for government relations resides with either the Executive Director or the THC staff. Discussion ensued. The chairman suggested forming a special legislative committee. The committee will consist of Jim

Kay, Beth Campbell, Susan Williams, Ben Silverman, and Reggie Mudd. Jim Kay agreed to serve as chairman.

G. AUDIT COMMITTEE

Reggie Mudd, Chairman of the Audit Committee reported that on May 29, 2025, he and Chairman Elliott received an anonymous complaint from several staff members regarding culture, management, and administrative concerns within the department. The Committee, along Miranda Christy Montgomery, requested support from TDEC Human Resources. This matter will be discussed further, and it is likely that a formal request will be submitted by the Audit Committee. A virtual meeting has been scheduled for June 24, 2025, with employee interviews anticipated as part of the plan of action and a completion target date of August 1. While these situations are uncommon, Mr. Mudd noted he remained committed to adhering to the Sunshine and Open Meeting Laws and regards this initiative as an opportunity to strengthen both the culture and operations of the Tennessee Historical Commission for sustained improvement. A report will be presented at the October meeting.

H. PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Chairman Elliott reported in the absence of Publications Committee Chair Beverly Robertson. He noted that the committee is responsible for submitting annual grants for historical society publications and grants for the Presidential Paper Projects, and funding for the History Book Award, now included in the Tennessee Historical Society grant. (*Attachment H1*). Chairman Elliott noted that in accordance with the THC conflict of interest policy if anyone needed to abstain from voting on any of the grants then they should do so.

Motion

Ambassador Ashe motioned to approve the presidential papers project. Susan Williams seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Dockter, Kay, Elliott, Harris, McMillian, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, Williams.

Motion

Doris McMillan motioned to approve the East Tennessee Historical Society grants. Victor Ashe seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Kay, Elliott, Harris, McMillian, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith. Abstain: Dockter and Williams.

Motion

Susan Williams motioned to approve the Tennessee Historical Society grants. Victor Ashe seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Elliott, Harris, McMillian, Mudd, R. Smith, T. Smith, Williams. Abstain: Kay and Pomeroy.

Motion

Reggie Mudd motioned to approve the West Tennessee Historical Society grants. Beth Campbell seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, McMillian, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, Williams. Abstained: Harris

I. HISTORIC SITES COMMITTEE

Beth Campbell, Chair of the Historic Sites Committee, presented the report. (Attachment I1) She provided a summary of the progress of Historic Sites by region. The Historic Sites Program Coordinator, Bobby Cooley, contributed to her report. The projects discussed have been approved, with the report emphasizing staff oversight. Administered funds are allocated statewide and are having a significant impact. Historic Site staff present were recognized and invited to say a few words. Among those who spoke were Katie Edwards from the Chester Inn State Historic Site in Jonesborough, who appeared and reported on activities at the site. Kyle Dickson from Marble Springs State Historic Site in Knoxville was present and gave an update on the school tours at the site and expressed appreciation to the Commission members. Mitchell Hicks from the Ducktown/Burra Burra Mine was present and spoke.

J. MONUMENTS AND MARKERS COMMITTEE

Ray Smith, Chair of the Monuments and Markers Committee, presented the report. (*Attachment J1*) He expressed his gratitude to the committee members for their dedication. They successfully convened the committee and reviewed three markers, which were approved with valuable input from both the staff and committee members.

Motion

Ray Smith moved to accept the three markers that have been recommended by the committee with revisions to Colonel Sidney Post and General John Bell Hood at Lofti Hill November 29, 1864, and the “w” capitalized in Dewitt Clinton Senter 1830-1898. Loni Harris seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillian, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, Williams.

K. TENNESSEE WARS COMMISSION COMMITTEE

Nina Scall, Tennessee Wars Commission Program Director, presented the report in the Committee Chair’s absence (Attachment, K1). Mrs. Scall reported that several projects are in various stages of initiation and completion, noting that all Wars Commission grant-funded projects have a July 1 start date and the corresponding contracts have been finalized. She is currently awaiting four contracts from TDEC. Mrs. Scall presented the proposed budget for fiscal year 2025-2026, highlighting an allocation of \$69,700 for the Wars Commission Grant Fund and approximately \$75,000 for the Path Divided brochure reprint, which serves as a heritage tourism brochure. Myers Brown and his team have been contracted to update the content and site information. The budget also includes \$5,000 for conferences, professional development, travel, and signage, bringing the total proposed budget to \$149,700.

Motion

Susan Williams moved to accept the report and budget proposed. Ray Smith seconded. Motion moved and properly seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillian, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, Williams.

L. TENNESSEE CEMETERY PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Graham Perry provided his report (*Attachment L1*) prior to the meeting for review. He provided an overview of the Historic Cemetery Program, noting that this quarter an increased volume of calls and emails. The number of cemeteries included in the Historic Cemetery Register continues to grow, now totaling approximately 34,000, with 27,000 mapped. Perry stated he is meeting with the Cemetery Committee on the new five-year report for the legislature, focusing on potential legal streamlining. The committee is actively discussing recommendations for inclusion in the forthcoming five-year report. Two workshops have been conducted, one led by Johnathan Appell in Union City, and another by Mike Alexander in Adamsville. Perry also reported multiple site visits and ongoing public speaking engagements this year.

M. FEDERAL PROGRAMS REPORT

Mr. McIntyre submitted the Federal Programs Report compiled by Holly Barnett, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer. (*Attachment M1*) Mrs. Barnett and Mr. McIntyre jointly presented the report. Mr. McIntyre indicated that nearly 1,000 Section 106 review projects were evaluated between January 1 and April 30, 2025, aligning with the annual average of 2,000–3,000 reviews. Loudon, TN, has become the 51st enrolled Certified Local Government, bringing Tennessee's total to 51. There are currently 56 to 57 communities in the state with some form of historic zoning. The National Register of Historic Places continues to grow, with 2,274 entries representing 303 districts and 45,714 listed resources. Additional data is being incorporated into the GIS Viewer.

Approved rehabilitation tax credit projects now total almost \$1.6 billion, including the Daughtry Furniture Building in Clinton. The Federal Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) remains a concern, as this year's budget has not yet been released and is pending review by the Office of Management and Budget. Mrs. Barnett reminded the board that the Tennessee Congressional delegation is educated annually in Washington by members of the THC staff on the importance of the HPF in our state. Ordinarily, a press release would have been issued by now announcing approval of 35 to 40 grants dedicated to survey planning and restoration projects throughout the state. However, due to budget delays, follow-up correspondence, calls, and meetings have occurred with the delegation. The HPF has been zeroed out of the President's budget for State Historic Preservation Offices nationwide, presenting two challenges. So in addition to obtaining the release of already-approved funding for this year, and the elimination of next year's funding for State Historic Preservation Offices is a major concern.

N. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Memorial Resolution for Joanne Moore

Chairman Elliott proposed a memorial resolution of the Tennessee Historical Commission on behalf of former Commission Board member Joanne Moore, who died recently. Chairman Elliott read the resolution. He asked for a motion to adopt.

Motion

Victor Ashe motioned to adopt the Memorial Resolution honoring former Commission Board member Joanne Moore. Ray Smith seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Dockter, Kay, Elliott, Harris, McMillan, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, Todd, and Williams.

2. Report from State Historian

State Historian Dr. Carroll Van West was unable to attend the meeting but submitted his report in advance. (*Attachment N1*).

3. Report from State Archaeologist

State Archaeologist Phil Hodge gave his report. He reported that the 2024 poster highlighting Pinson Mounds State Archaeological Park in Jackson, Tennessee, was awarded first place in the national poster competition organized by the Society for American Archaeology. This poster is funded in part annually by a grant from the THC using Federal Historic Preservation funds. Mr. Hodge reported the passing of Dr. Kevin E. Smith. He was a major figure in Tennessee archaeology, the Chair of the National Register State Review Board and the world's expert on Mississippian archeology and Middle Tennessee River Valley.

4. Report from State Librarian

State Librarian Jamie Ritter gave his report. He reported that the State Library accommodates thousands of school field trips from Rhea County and expressed appreciation to Laura Travis of Rhea County in facilitating these visits. Statehood Day on June 1st was a success, drawing over 450 attendees. Each year, a junior archivist camp is held, with up to 25 students participating. At the end of September, a Research Roundup event will be hosted in partnership with the Tennessee Historical Society. Additionally, a workforce development initiative is being piloted in West Tennessee, including Haywood County and surrounding areas. Through 16 hours of instruction, participants earn micro credentials recognized by local employers. He also noted the effort to to upgrade the Patriot Paths Mapping application.

5. October Meeting Date and Location

Chairman Elliott stated the current date for the October meeting is currently set per the bylaws for October 17, 2025. Some members have communicated with Patrick they're not available October 17th. Options to meet on October 10th or October 24th in Paris, TN were discussed.

Motion

Sam Elliott motioned to move the October 17, 2025, Commission meeting in Paris Landing, TN to October 24, 2025. Yeas: Campbell, Dockter, Kay, Elliott, Harris, McMillian, R. Smith, T. Smith. Nos: Ashe, Pomeroy, and Williams.

Motion

Victor Ashe moved to reconsider the motion to move the October 17, 2025 Commission meeting in Paris Landin, TN to October 25, 2025. Susan Williams seconded. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Dockter, Kay, Elliott, Harris, Pomeroy, McMillian, R. Smith, T. Smith, and Williams.

Motion

Susan Williams motion to move the October 17, 2025 Commission meeting in Paris Landing, TN to October 10, 2025. Doris McMillian seconded. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Dockter, Kay, Elliott, Harris, Pomeroy, McMillian, R. Smith, T. Smith, and Williams

P. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chairman Elliott thanked everyone for their time and attention.

Motion

Victor Ashe motioned to adjourn. Doris McMillan seconded. Motion passed. Yeas: Ashe, Campbell, Dockter, Kay, Elliott, Harris, Pomeroy, McMillan, R. Smith, T. Smith, and Williams. Motion approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:56 a.m.

E. Patrick McIntyre, Jr.
Executive Director

Sam D. Elliott
Chairman