



TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

October 10, 2025

The Tennessee Historical Commission (THC) met at the Old Paris Five and Ten Event Center, in Paris, Tennessee 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 Chairman Sam Elliott, Beth Campbell, Dr. Warren Dockter, James Kay, Jr., Loni Harris, Doris McMillan, Reggie Mudd, Dan Pomeroy, Ray Smith, Dr. Tim Smith, Beverly Robertson, Laura Todd, and Susan Williams. Ex-Officio members present were TDEC representative Jenny Howard, and State Historian, Dr. Carroll Van West. Members absent included Ambassador Victor Ashe and Kelly Wolfe. The ex-officio members absent were State Archaeologist Phil Hodge, State Archivist Jamie Ritter, and Gov. Lee's Representative Ben Silverman.

Staff present included Executive Director and Deputy 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; Outreach Coordinator, Caty Dirksen; Cemetery Preservation Program Director, Graham Perry; Staff Attorney and State Historic Preservation Officer, 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.

A. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Sam Elliott opened the meeting by welcoming attendees to the Old Paris Five and Ten Event Center in Paris, Tennessee. He introduced Mayor Kathy Ray, who offered warm and welcoming remarks to the Commission.

Chairman Elliott expressed his appreciation to Commissioner Dr. Tim Smith for the tour of Civil War sites, Fort Donelson and Fort Henry.

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

1. Approval of June 16, 2025, Minutes

Chairman Elliott referred to the meeting minutes of June 16, ,2025 (*Attachment C1*). The minutes were provided prior to the meeting.

Motion

Dan Pomeroy moved to approve the minutes from the June 16, 2025, meeting, with the amendment changing the term "representative monitoring legislation" to "liaison." Susan Williams seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried. Yeas: Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillan, Mudd, Robertson, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, Todd, and Williams. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of September 26, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes

Chairman Elliott referred to the meeting minutes of June 16, ,2025 (*Attachment C2*). The minutes were provided prior to the meeting.

Motion

Reggie Mudd moved to approve the minutes from the September 26, 2025, Special Meeting, incorporating the revision to add "Governor's Representative" after Ben Silverman's name. Loni Harris seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried. Yeas: Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillan, Mudd, Pomeroy, R. Smith, T. Smith, Robertson, Todd, and Williams. Motion passed unanimously.

D. FINANCE COMMITTEE

Susan Williams, Chair of the Finance Committee, provided the financial statement for the period July 1 to August 30, 2025, outlining expenses and outstanding commitments (*Attachment D1*). Mrs. Williams clarified that while the state appropriated \$16,665,000, not all of these funds are designated for the Tennessee Historical Commission's direct use.

Of the appropriated amount, \$6,000,000 is specifically allocated as a pass-through for the Hermitage, and \$3,000,000 is designated for the Scarborough 85 Monument. Mrs. Williams also reported that there was a reduction of approximately \$40,000 in the maintenance budget due to

legislative budget cuts. In addition, \$750,000 from the Commission’s Historic Property Land Acquisition Fund was redirected to support the Graham-Kivette Home project in Tazewell, Tennessee.

During the State Historic Sites Committee meeting held on September 22, 2025, we reviewed capital improvement projects planned for FY 2025-2026. The legislature identified two main priorities: a \$4.9 million request for the Carter House and a \$1.3 million request to upgrade the parking lot at the Alex Haley State Historic Site. There are no capital maintenance projects scheduled for this fiscal year, and all required documentation has been submitted to STREAM.

Motion

Committee Chair Susan Williams motioned to approve the financial Statement July 1 – August 30, 2025. Dan Pomeroy seconded. Motion carried. Yeas: Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillan, Mudd, Pomeroy, Robertson, R. Smith, T. Smith, Todd, Williams.

Chairman Elliott expressed appreciation to Mrs. Campbell and Mrs. Williams for their dedicated efforts in clarifying the budget figures. The complete budget document was distributed to members ahead of the meeting. (*Attachment D 1*). Certain sections of the budget, such as those for State Historic Sites and Publications grants, received Board approval in June. However, the full budget is not officially adopted until the October meeting, with a total allocation of \$17,245,400.

Motion

Dr. Warren Dockter motioned to approve the full Budget for FY 2025-2026. Loni Harris seconded. Motion carried. Yeas: Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillan, Mudd, Pomeroy, Robertson, R. Smith, T. Smith, Todd, Williams.

Patrick McIntyre provided updates on the budget for fiscal year 2026-2027. We have a couple of capital improvement project requests for the Carter House State Historic Site, a little over \$4M to implement the next phase and the Alex Haley State Historic Site parking improvements of \$1.3M.

E. PUBLICATIONS

Chairman Elliott reminded the Board that “The Tennessee History Book Award is a collaborative initiative between the Tennessee Historical Commission and the Tennessee Historical Society.” He announced that the nomination period is now open, with submissions due by December 1st. Chairman Elliott then inquired of Mr. McIntyre regarding the committee responsible for selecting the award’s recipient. Mr. McIntyre explained that the committee’s membership changes annually, including representatives from the Tennessee Historical Society and the Tennessee Historical Commission on the selection panel. The process is highly respected and conducted with confidentiality, utilizing a double-blind review method like academic review.

F. HISTORIC SITES

Beth Campbell, Chair of the Historic Sites Committee, presented the report. (*Attachment F1*) She provided a summary of the progress of Historic Sites by region. The Historic Sites Program Coordinator, Bobby Cooley, contributed to her report, highlighting capital projects. Administered funds are allocated statewide and are having a significant impact. Discussion ensured.

In the latter portion of the State Historic Chair's report, the committee addressed the remaining \$332,000 in Transfer Tax funds. It was noted that, in previous years, any unspent funds were reclaimed by the Legislature. Determined to prevent this from happening again, the committee emphasized the importance of allocating these resources to support Historic Sites. Members engaged in a discussion focused on strategies for using the available funds effectively.

Motion

Beth Campbell, Historic Sites Committee Chair, motioned to encumber \$342,000 from the Historic Property Land Acquisition Fund to Cragfont Historic Site, James K. Polk Historic Site, to future acquired properties, and structural engineering at Old Mill State Park. Reggie Mudd seconded. Motion carried. Yeas: Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillan, Mudd, Pomeroy, Robertson, R. Smith, T. Smith, Todd, Williams.

Motion

Beth Campbell, Historic Sites Committee Chair, motioned to approve Historic Sites Committee Report pages 8 – 9. Reggie Mudd seconded the motion. Motion carried. Yeas: Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillan, Mudd, Pomeroy, Robertson, R. Smith, T. Smith, Todd, Williams.

G. MONUMENTS AND MARKERS

Ray Smith, Chair of the Monuments and Markers Committee, presented the report. (*Attachment G1*) He thanked the committee members for their hard work and commitment. The committee met as scheduled, reviewed sixteen marker submissions, and recommended eleven for approval. Mr. Smith discussed the process regarding the markers that were not approved, suggesting that these be reconsidered by the Commission in accordance with eligibility criteria. These criteria require that proposed markers recognize a significant person, place, object, or event, ideally reflecting themes of importance to Tennessee or national history. The primary reason for the rejections was the committee's conclusion that these submissions did not clearly demonstrate statewide significance. The committee acknowledged that they did not assess the markers' value at the local level.

Motion

Ray Smith motioned to approve the 11 markers recommended and send the rejected markers back through the process to be reviewed at the Monuments and Markers Committee meeting. Loni Harris seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Yeas: Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillan, Mudd, Pomeroy, Robertson, R. Smith, T. Smith, Todd, Williams.

H. TENNESSEE WARS COMMISSION

Laura Todd, Chairwoman of the Tennessee Wars Commission, delivered the report (*Attachment H1*). She noted that the committee convened on September 16, 2025. In Mrs. Todd's remarks, she mentioned that Nina Scall, the Tennessee Wars Program Director, was unable to attend the meeting. There were no action items for the group's consideration at this time. Chairman Elliott encouraged anyone with questions to contact Ms. Scall directly. Chairman Elliott accepted the report as information.

I. HISTORIC CEMETERY PROGRAM

Graham Perry provided his report (*Attachment I1*) 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 Historic Cemetery Register continues to expand, with about 36,000 cemeteries now listed and 27,000 already mapped. Perry reported that the five-year review has been finalized and is currently undergoing legal evaluation. He expressed interest in holding one final meeting with the Cemetery Committee before submitting the report to the legislature. This semester, three workshops are planned in addition to several site visits and ongoing public outreach efforts. Additionally, Perry requested input regarding the open position on the Historic Cemetery Committee, seeking recommendations especially from individuals in northeastern Tennessee, including Knoxville and surrounding areas.

J. FEDERAL PROGRAMS REPORT

Mr. McIntyre submitted the Federal Programs Report compiled by Holly Barnett, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer. (*Attachment J1*) Mr. McIntyre presented the report. Mr. McIntyre indicated that nearly 1,000 Section 106 review projects were evaluated between May 1 and August 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.

K. CERTIFICATE OF MERIT AWARDS 2026

Outreach Coordinator Caty Dirksen delivered her remarks. Chairman Elliott emphasized that the program is designed to engage constituents directly, inviting nominations from the public to recognize individuals involved in grassroots initiatives. Ms. Dirksen reported that the application for the program was made available earlier in the year, encouraging those currently engaged in qualifying projects to submit their entries. To date, one application has been received, and a press release is scheduled for distribution in the coming weeks. She urged members to connect with their communities and nominate any projects completed during the year. Additionally, Laura Todd suggested that, subject to budget availability, the Committee consider hosting a special event, such as a luncheon or reception, to raise awareness and celebrate the program's accomplishments. Chairman Elliott directed Mrs. Todd and Ms. Dirksen to meet and discuss to see if it's doable in May.

L. INTERIM DIRECTOR APPOINTMENT

The Chairman announced that this meeting marks the Executive Director's final appearance, as he is set to retire effective November 15, 2025. Emphasizing the ongoing responsibilities of the Commission, the Chairman noted the necessity of appointing an interim executive director. He indicated that he had consulted with Miranda Montgomery, Senior Associate Counsel and State Preservation Officer, regarding her willingness to serve in the interim role. The Chairman then opened the floor for additional nominations, at which point Dr. Warren Dockter put forward the name of Holly Barnett, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer. To allow for an open discussion, both nominees were excused from the room. A lengthy discussion ensued.

Motion

A roll call vote was conducted regarding the appointment of the Interim Executive Director. Miranda Montgomery received ten votes: Campbell, Kay, Elliott, McMillan, Mudd, Pomeroy, Robertson, R. Smith, T. Smith, and Todd. Holly Barnett received three votes: Dockter, Harris, and Williams. With a majority, Miranda Montgomery was selected as Interim Executive Director.

M. RESOLUTIONS

1. Memorial Resolution for Dr. Kevin Smith

State Archaeologist Phil Hodge introduced a resolution recognizing Dr. Kevin Smith (*Attachment M1*). Dr. Van West then offered remarks on Dr. Smith's legacy.

Motion

Susan Willaims motioned to adopt the Memorial Resolution honoring Dr. Kevin Smith. Loni Harris seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Yeas: Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillan, Mudd, Pomeroy, Robertson, R. Smith, T. Smith, Todd, Williams.

2. A Resolution Expressing Appreciation for Patrick McIntyre

Chairman Elliott presented a resolution to honor Patrick McIntyre (*Attachment M2*), recognizing his significant contributions to Tennessee and the field of preservation. Following the reading, Commission members shared their reflections, expressing gratitude for Patrick's dedicated service and the positive impact of his work. Chairman Elliott noted that Mr. McIntyre wished to address the Commission, after which Patrick delivered his response, offering his thoughts and appreciation.

Motion

Loni Harris motioned to adopt the Resolution Expressing Appreciation for Patrick McIntyre. Beth Campbell seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Yeas: Campbell, Kay, Dockter, Elliott, Harris, McMillan, Mudd, Pomeroy, Robertson, R. Smith, T. Smith, Todd, Williams.

N. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Report from State Historian
State Historian Dr. Van West submitted his report in advance (*Attachment N₃*).
2. Report from State Librarian and Archivist
No report. State Librarian and Archivist Jamie Ritter was unable to attend the meeting.
3. Report from State Archaeologist
State Archaeologist Phil Hodge was unable to attend the meeting. He submitted his report in advance. (*Attachment N₃*).
4. February Meeting
Chairman Elliott reminded the Commission the February meeting will be held at Clover Bottom, in Nashville, Tennessee, February 20, 2026.

O. ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion

Loni Harris motioned to adjourn. Beth Campbell seconded. Motion passed. Yeas: Campbell, Dockter, Kay, Elliott, Harris, Pomeroy, McMillan, Mudd, Robertson, R. Smith, T. Smith, Todd, and Williams. Motion approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Miranda Montgomery
Interim Executive Director

Sam D. Elliott
Chairman