

Meeting Minutes

Douglas Henry State Museum Commission

Quarterly Meeting

July 8, 2019

The Douglas Henry State Museum Commission (DHSMC) met at 10:00 a.m. on July 8, 2019 in the Tennessee State Museum Conference room with Chairman Thomas S. Smith presiding.

**Members Present**

Thomas S. Smith, Chair

Nancy Baker DeFriece, Vice Chair

Harbert Alexander, Sr.

Ambassador Victor H. Ashe

Tina Hodges

The Honorable Steve McDaniel

Deanie Parker

Scott Price

Laura Travis

Chairman Bo Watson (phone)

Eleanor Yoakum (phone)

***Ex Officio:***

Robert Buchanan, Tennessee Historical Society Chair

Ashley Howell, TSM Executive Director

**Members Absent**

Walter Knestrick

Chairman Susan Lynn

**Participating Guests in Attendance**

Janet Kleinfelter, Deputy Attorney General

**Participating TSM Staff**

Mary Jane Crockett-Green, Deputy Director/Director of Administration

Sharon Dennis, DHSMC Liaison

Dan Pomeroy, Chief Curator/Director of Collections

**Call to Order**

Chairman Thomas S. Smith called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and proceeded with roll call. He verified that a quorum was present following roll call and presided over the following business.

**Welcome and Introduction**

Chair Smith welcomed everyone present and members on the phone.

**Water Leaks Report**

Chair Smith began by acknowledging that he and Director Howell met at the museum with members of the Department of General Services (DGS) staff including Commissioner Christi Branscom and Deputy Commissioner John Hull. Discussion included media coverage of roof leaks in the new museum, water leaks with ongoing temperature and humidity control deficits in the Military Branch Museum housed in the War Memorial Building, ongoing water leaks in the James K. Polk Building where TSM's collection storage remains and the proposed collection storage facility earmarked for renovation in the former Cook Chill facility owned by the State in Cockrell Bend.

Chair Smith reported that Commissioner Branscom and her staff are well aware of the necessity to expedite the process and move the collection as soon as possible and to help mitigate Polk water leaks. It is understood DGS oversees the maintenance of the Polk and War Memorial Building and that water leaks in both along with humidity and temperature control issues in the Military Branch Museum are out of the TSM purview. In view of the present concerns, the Chair commended Director Howell's leadership and commitment to protecting the State's artifacts noting she will share numerous initiatives in the upcoming Executive Director report.

The chair recognized that the new museum building has not experienced a water leak since March of this year, both the roofing contractor and the building contractor have worked to remedy roof drain system installation issues and repair from the leaks, and the building holds a one-year contractor warranty and a 30-year roofing manufacturer's warranty.

**Approval of Minutes from the April 8, 2019 Quarterly Meeting**

Chair Smith entertained a motion for approval of the minutes from the Quarterly meeting on April 8, 2019. Ambassador Ashe moved to approve the minutes; Laura Travis seconded the motion. There being no discussion, the Chair called for a vote and the motion carried unanimously with no abstentions.

**Government Operations Joint Subcommittee Hearing Report**

Chair Smith reported the Douglas Henry State Museum Commission was reauthorized for another five years by the Government Operations Joint Subcommittee at a Sunset Hearing on June 19. When asked if there were particular issued dwelled on, the following were noted:

The 2019 Performance Audit Report served as the backbone for discussion

The TSM's ability to fundraise

The TSM/TSMF relationship

The status of TSMF alcohol inventory on TSM premises.

Chair Smith closed his report by thanking DHSMC Audit Committee Chair Harbert Alexander and Commissioner Laura Travis for their support and attendance at this hearing.

**Audit Committee Report**

Committee Chairman Harbert Alexander in attendance on the telephone deferred to Chair Smith to present the Audit Committee Report. The Committee met on June 4 to discuss the 2019 Performance Audit Report released on May 20 for which the TSM issued a Corrective Action Plan on behalf of the museum and the commission on June 28.

The Chair presented an overview of the three repeat findings and two observations noting the Director Howell's corrective actions and called for questions. There being none, Chair Alexander assured members that Director Howell's strong responses on each issue represented a very thorough effort.

**Collections Committee (CAC) Report**

Chair Smith recognized CAC Chair Deanie Parker who offered no formal report but encouraged members to make sure to carefully review the Artifact/Acquisitions report provided in advance and included in meeting books. Chair Parker then asked Chair Smith to frame the content of discussion in the Carousel Committee meeting earlier this day to allow Ambassador Ashe to raise his question about acquisitions from the meeting.

Chair Smith explained discussion ensued about the process of accepting donated artifacts like the Carousel and real property like the William Baker house that was bequeathed to the museum. The suggestion that artifacts large in size and or value; and or real property in the form of donations/bequests/gifts should be approved by the full commission before accepting or declining. TCA 4-12-303 empowers the museum Executive Director to accept donations of funds and objects. Furthermore, TCA requires that gifts or bequeaths of real property be approved by the State Building Commission. [[1]](#footnote-1)

Chair Parker thanked Chair Smith for navigating members through the discussion stating the CAC stands ready to help the Executive Director to make an appropriate determination or decision if there is a need.

**Budget Report**

Chair Smith recognizedDeputy Director Mary Jane Crockett-Green who began her report anticipating a very significant year-end return to the General Fund of $400,000 consisting primarily of unused personnel salaries. This is a result of attrition and the fluctuation of vacant positions for which management is actively pursuing via State registers and advertisement. This reversion does not impede or affect the FY 2019-20 budget.

Ms. Green highlighted favorable increases in the trial balances for donation boxes, current services; combined revenue for the gift shop and event rentals, inter-departmental for staff expertise to other State agencies and ad-hoc staff professors who primarily serve State Colleges and Universities.

Director Howell's response to questions about rental space revealed a couple of holiday events served to pilot the event protocol with January, 2019 as the venue rental launch date. While the Director of Operations continues to work with contractors to correct building and systems kinks, the Event Manager is receiving more venue inquires for rental than there is space. In addition to the creation of a revenue stream, venue rental is proving to serve as an extension to exposing guests for the first time to the museum.

Chair Smith and Director Howell responded to questions about the building fund explaining that it is not a part of the museum budget.

**Carousel Committee Report**

Chair Smith called upon the Carousel Committee Chair, Laura Travis to report on the Committees meeting earlier this day who began her report directing commissioners to the Red Grooms Fox Trot Carousel brochure in the meeting books. Chair Travis reported the committee is working on the process of reassembling the artifact and gathering information from a variety of sources along with the need to develop a formidable business plan that is both desirable and achievable. In closing, the Chair called for all commissioners to share with the committee their comments and input.

**Executive Director Report**

Director Howell opened by directing members to her report which was submitted prior to the meeting and included in the meeting books. Drawing from the Strategic Plan, this report is an overview of the last three very busy months. With a great deal going on including processing through the building punch list, the public's reaction to the new building remains stellar with over 142,000 museum visitors, with Capitol tours adding 26,000 visitors totaling 168,000. Management is very busy and eager to properly fill the budgeted open positions.

This Summer visitors are enjoying gallery demonstrations, walk-up programs, arts and crafts, gallery highlights, gallery demonstrations, living history games, story time, and talks with museum program staff with all promoted on the museum website and social media.

Building Punch List

Working through the tedious process in the form of a master spread sheet with General Services and vendors there remains two items for which there is not yet resolve.

1. The Children's Gallery has had items de-installed due to design safety issues; some of which are being redesigned and remanufactured. In the meantime, furniture has been added and activities have been increased.
2. The Great Depression, New Deal area has two kitchens on display wherein visitors are touching the ovens and opening the refrigerator doors endangering these artifacts in spite of *Do Not Touch* signs and alarms. As a result, the space must be redesigned and artifacts de-installed.

Upcoming Temporary Exhibitions

Temporary exhibitions are designed to present more of the collection over time whereby visitors can make connections with their own lives, their own families and their family's stories via education.

* August 9, 2019 - - Let's Eat: Origins and Evolutions of Tennessee Food

This exhibition explores how Southeastern Indian, Western European and West African food cultures continue to influence Tennessee's signature foods. TSM is sponsoring bus trips throughout the State highlighting different food establishments. With the new press model established with "Quilts" to service specific press releases around exhibitions highlighting different stories across the State.

* March 2020 - March 2021 - - Tennessee Women's Fight for the Vote - - TSM will

Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Tennessee's role in the 19th Amendment with a year-long 8,000 sf Women's Suffrage Exhibition. Nashville Public Television is producing a Suffrage documentary with TSM that will premier this November. TSM will have a shortened version of the documentary for its exhibition and will make it available to teachers as a resource on the website.

Statewide Collaborative

The Legislature passed an appropriation of $250,000 to fund a state-wide collaborative with the TSM, Tennessee Historical Society (THS), Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA) and the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development. As a private 501(c)(3), the THS will manage and serve as a pass through for the funding. Initiatives include a website designed to promote statewide scheduled events, access to school curriculum, TSM Suffrage trunks, TSLA Doc Boxes, a traveling Suffrage exhibition and more. Two joint TSM/TSLA initiatives are underway:

1) A low-cost traveling exhibition designed to give libraries, museums and local historical societies the opportunity to pull from their own collections and tell their stories in all 95 counties as Suffrage organizations across the State helped this vote happen in 1920.

2) An initiative to provide more access to school curriculum on this topic both online and by increasing the TSM Women's Suffrage Traveling Trunk fleet from 4 to 20 and TSLA Doc Boxes.

August 19, 2020 -- Kickoff Event at War Memorial - details pending

Strategic Plan Updates

* Developing greater access to the collection is one of the strategic initiatives in the strategic plan. The online collection search function on the TSM website is close to launching with STS working to ensure the database is secure.
* The paid internship program is underway with six undergraduate/graduate students representing Vanderbilt, Belmont, Middle Tennessee State University, Wake Forest, Austin Peay and California State University, Long Beach. These students are working with exhibitions, curatorial planning, collections management, communications, public programs and K - 12 education.
* In reviewing the data from April thru June, TSM tours were given to visitors from 52 counties; Capitol Tours were given to visitors from 48 counties; and Traveling Trunks distance learning programs were shipped to 24 counties. With the opening of the new museum there is an increase of K-12 and high school student visitation allowing a shift in program offerings.

Reporting Systems

The new forecasting model targets where money is spent, how money is spent and how much money is being returned to the General Fund specific to positions. Management is examining how positions are posted, how to retain the positions, and in considering job descriptions whether positions should be changed or reclassified.

TSM is continuing to work with Gateway and Strategic Technology Services (STS) to create and improve on the reporting systems. Increased inventory training for store staff is underway. Agency-wide Outlook calendar training is underway.

An additional reporting module for fundraising has launched whereby TSM has begun accepting checks written to the Tennessee State Museum while finalizing credit card processing with the State in order to accept gifts online and in person. TSM will be able to request gifts for specified programs on the website.

This is not to be confused with any donations made to the Building Fund that is handled by the TSMF.

Upcoming Projects

**Collections Storage Facility**

Planning for the renovation/construction for the new Collection Storage facility and moving the collection to the new facility is a General Services project which goes before the State Building Commission Thursday, July 11 for approval of the funds to continue the next phase of the project with additional funding secured through General Services. However, General Services informed Director Howell that there is no provision for the cost of the move itself and has requested the figure by October 1 of this year. TSM has engaged two consultants to determine the budget amount including organization of the move during the next two years. For the next two years the museum staff at Polk must focus on the logistics of moving approximately 160,000 artifacts about ten miles. In order to do so, Director Howell has requested a step-back from acquiring acquisitions.

**Military Branch Museum**

The Military Branch Museum is housed in the War Memorial Building which is slated for large-scale renovation by 2022-2023. The permanent exhibits have remained on exhibition for several decades with ongoing environmental issues regarding water, temperature and humidity. These issues have made their way to the 2019 Performance Audit. Director Howell's action plan calls for deinstallation/conservation of artifacts while expanding the interpretation of this space with technology to maximize the visitor experience.

Tennessee State Museum Civil War Flag Book

When asked about the Flag Book, Director Howell announced the publication of a twenty-year project is near. This book chronicles the TSM's Civil War Flag Collection and will serve as a 1,000 page resource for Civil War Flags specific to Tennessee. The projected release date by the University of Tennessee Press is late Fall, 2019.

Strategic Plan

The three-year Strategic Plan approved by the DHSMC on July 10, 2017 is due a refresh in 2020. Director Howell met with Trish Holliday, the Chief Learning Officer for the State, who proposed a nine-step strategic planning process workshop. The current plan concentrated on the planning, move and opening of the new location. The new plan will shift to the planning and move to the new collection storage facility, the Military Branch Museum refresh, the continuous self-examination of programs and staff training. Director Howell stressed the importance of commission involvement with respect to member's aspirations for this agency. Commissioners expressed interest in planning for:

* Expanding the Traveling Trunk fleet including the number of subjects and the associated educational programs and teacher workshops to the rural counties statewide.
* Initiatives moving forward to fund student visitation to the TSM and Capitol from rural counties statewide.
* A satellite program for East and West designed to loan exhibits to existing museums for one year.
* Celebrations surrounding the 100th Anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment and Women's Suffrage. Vice Chair DeFriece invited the DHSMC to hold its April quarterly meeting at the Rocky Mount Living History Museum and the night before attend "Winter Wheat" by Tennessee playwright Catherine Bush at the Barter Theatre. The play chronicles the ratification of the 19th Amendment and Febb Burn's influence on her son Harry, a 23 year old state congressman from Niota TN.

**Ad-Hoc Committee Appointments/Reappointments**

Chair Smith reappointed all members currently serving on ad-hoc committees adding Scott Price to the Best Practices Committee and Steve McDaniel and Scott Price to the Bylaws Operating Policies Committee and the Collections Committee.

The Chair established a Development Committee and appointed commissioners Ashe, DeFriece, Knestrick, McDaniel, Price, Travis and Yoakum.

**Annual Conflict of Interest Forms**

The Operating Policies were emailed to all commissioners prior to this meeting and included in the meeting books. Chair Smith asked everyone to fill out and sign the annual Conflict of Interest form on page 7 and pass them in.

**Media Coverage**

Chair Smith invited members to review at their leisure the Media section in the meeting books that includes many of the museums accomplishments in this quarter.

**Other Business**

For the record, Commissioner Travis acknowledged that the Executive Director and her staff are very busy and commended Director Howell on her vision and execution of her Strategic Plan including oversight of the building process, staffing and move to the new museum along with comprehensive updates in the Director's Reports both orally and written that chronicle the implementation of this plan. With a crucial tool recently added by the Legislature[[2]](#footnote-2), Ms. Travis added her belief that it is the responsibility of the commission without equivocation to provide the Director the tools necessary to sustain the museum in a positive and forward thinking way. Ms. Travis concluded by asking Director Howell to share needs and aspirations of how the Commission and the Foundation may help her accomplish new objectives for the next three year Strategic Plan.

Commissioner Buchanan gifted each commissioner a copy of *Biographical Directory of the General Assembly Volume VII*. This volume is the first publication of the Tennessee Historical Society in this series of directories dating back to 1956. It was funded through an appropriation by past Senate Majority Leader, Mark Norris.

Chair Smith reported the following other business:

* There is no update on the new museum honoring opportunity
* Former Commissioner Pete Claussen responded with appreciation to a letter of thanks for his service on this Commission
* October 9 at 6:00 p.m. Commissioner Laura and Representative Ron Travis will host a reception at the Lucky Star Ranch in Dayton
* October 10 at 9:30 a.m. the DHSMC Quarterly meeting will be at Bryan College in Dayton.

**Public Comments**

Chair Smith called for public comment. There was none.

**Upcoming Meeting Dates**

Chair Smith announced the upcoming Quarterly meeting dates of October 10, 2019 in Dayton, TN, January 13, 2020, April 13, 2020 and July 13, 2020.

**Adjournment**

Chair Smith echoed Commissioner Travis's comments thanking Director Howell for an exceptional job and adjourned the meeting at 12:06 p.m.

**Main Motions Summary**

**Motion #1:** Moved by Ambassador Ashe to approve the April 8, 2019 DHSMC Quarterly Meeting minutes. Chair Smith called for a vote on the motion which carried unanimously with no abstentions.

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Thomas S. Smith

Chairman Douglas Henry State Museum Commission

1. **TCA 4-15-102 (d)** **(1)** The following transactions shall be subject to approval by the state building commission, in addition to the other approvals required by law:

   **(A)**  The acquisition of any interest in real property by the state or any of its departments, institutions or agencies, except for the acquisition of any interest in real property by the department of transportation for highway rights-of-way; [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Specific Fundraising initiative (April 8, 2019 Quarterly Meeting Minutes)

   With the passing of Public Chapter 81 in March of this year, TSM will launch online Annual Giving before the end of the fiscal year to target support directly to museum programs including education programs like traveling trunks, the paid internship program and the upcoming women's suffrage traveling exhibition. Discussion followed on various types of rural initiatives including the opportunity for the DHSMC to have granting ability. General Kleinfelter agreed to craft the language which may be incorporated in the DHSMC Bylaws. As a result of this discussion, Chair Smith suggested that upon incorporating language in the Bylaws, the chair will consider appointing a Development Committee. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)