

## **North Carolina Historical Commission**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**September 17, 2024**

The North Carolina Historical Commission (NCHC, Commission) met in the Archives & History Building on Tuesday, September 17, 2024. Present were commissioners: David Ruffin, Chair; The Honorable Newell Clark; Shana Bushyhead Condill; Dr. David Dennard; Samuel B. Dixon (via Zoom); Barbara Groome; Susan Phillips; and Barbara B. Snowden. Absent were commissioners Dr. Valerie A. Johnson, Dr. Susanna Lee, and W. Noah Reynolds.

Others in attendance were: Dr. Darin Waters, Deputy Secretary for Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR); Sarah Koonts, Director, Division of Archives & Records (DAR); Michelle Lanier, Director, Division of Historic Sites and Properties (DSHSP); Ramona Bartos, Director, Division of Historical Resources (DHR); Ansley Wegner, Supervisor, Office of Historical Research (OHR); Chris Meekins and Carly Beehler, Research Historians in the OHR; Parker Backstrom, Office of Archives and History (OAH) administrative assistant and Recording Secretary for the NCHC; and Matt Zeher, Information Technology facilitator.

The meeting was livestreamed on the DNCR website. Copies of all cited written materials can be found in the file for this meeting.

#### **Call to Order and Conflict of Interest Statement**

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 AM and the chairman called roll to establish the presence of a quorum. He then asked any member who was concerned about a conflict of interest pertaining to any of the business to be discussed to so state. No such concerns were expressed.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

The chair asked that the minutes from the June 18, 2024, meeting be amended to change the reference to it being a virtual meeting to it being a regular meeting and asked that all future regular meeting minutes be labeled as such. Commissioner Snowden then moved approval of the minutes with this edit. The motion was seconded by Dr. Dennard and carried unanimously.

#### **Resolution Honoring Former Commissioner Millie M. Barbee**

Dr. Dennard, having had a chance to review the draft resolution honoring the late Millie Barbee, as all the commissioners did, asked that a few small edits be made. The drafter of the resolution, Ms. Snowden, voiced no objections to the suggested edits, so a motion to approve the resolution with the edits was made by Ms. Phillips and seconded by Ms. Groome. The motion was carried.

#### **Division of Archives and Records Deaccessions**

Ms. Koonts referenced the list of items her division has requested be approved for deaccessioning, a list that had been made available to the commissioners in advance of the meeting. She summarized the contents and explaining the rationale for the requests. With no questions about the proposal, Ms. Condill moved approval, Mr. Clark seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

### **Division of Archives and Records Division Director Report**

Being that Ms. Koonts had plans that would require her early departure from the meeting, her report was moved up on the agenda to accommodate her. She began by offering a status report on America250 (A250) planning, describing a \$2.1 million small grant program appropriated by the North Carolina General Assembly that A250 staff will oversee. Thus far 37 North Carolina counties have applied for and received \$10,000 grants for A250 planning. Other A250 initiatives have included a teacher workshop, ongoing development of a wayside marker program, and the publication by the OAH of a children's book about the Edenton Tea Party—a copy of the book was given to each commissioner by Ms. Wegner—with another children's book in the works. Ms. Koonts highlighted other news from her division as presented in her written division report, a copy of which was made available to the commissioners prior to the meeting.

### **Accessions and Deaccessions of Items in State Collections**

At the chair's invitation, Dr. Waters referenced a list of items recommended by the Office of Archives and History Collections Committee (OAHCC) for accessioned into and deaccessioning out of the collections of the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh (MOH), the Museum of the Albemarle, and the North Carolina Maritime Museums (NCMM). This list was made available to the commissioners in advance of the meeting. He then opened the floor to questions. Commissioner Phillips requested that the name connected to one of the items, a University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill basketball jersey, be changed from the informal Charlie Scott to the more formal Charles Scott, which Ms. Phillips stated she knew to be his preferred form. Ms. Snowden moved approval of the list of deaccessions pending this change. The motion was seconded by Dr. Dennard and carried unopposed.

Dr. Waters then presented the list of items from the DSHSP requested by the OAHCC for accessioning. With no questions or comments coming, Ms. Phillips moved approval, Ms. Condill seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

Dr. Waters opened the floor to questions or comments about items recommended for deaccessioning from the collections of the MOH and NCMM. Hearing none, Dr. Dennard moved and Ms. Phillips seconded approval of the recommendations. The motion was thereby carried.

Finally, the OAHCC's recommendations for items to be deaccessioned from the collection of the DSHSP were presented for a vote by Dr. Waters. After Ms. Lanier addressed a question from Commissioner Phillips about one of the items, Ms. Groome moved approval. Ms. Snowden seconded the motion and the motion was carried.

### **Request for Placement of Markers at Polk State Historic Site**

On behalf of the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Ms. Lanier requested that the Commission grant approval of the placement of two markers at the James K. Polk Birthplace State Historic Site. She cited a written proposal made available to the commissioners prior to the meeting that specified the proposed material, dimensions, language, and specific location, the Polk Family Cemetery. The proposal, she said, has met with approval by division staff. She also noted that any approval by the NCHC would be provisional pending approval of the proposal by the national Daughters of the American Revolution organization. Commissioner Snowden moved approval of the request, Commissioner Phillips seconded the motion, and the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

### **Update on the North Carolina Civil War Roster Project**

Research historians and project coordinators Carly Beehler and Chris Meekins provided an update on the highly acclaimed North Carolina Civil War Roster Project, a comprehensive list of the North Carolinians who served in the American Civil War. Having finished the 22 volumes of series one, the most robust and textual Civil War rosters in existence, said Mr. Meekins, they have just started working on series two, currently planned to be seven volumes. Ms. Beehler and Mr. Meekins described the type of information that is included in the rosters and addressed questions about how OHR staff uncover information about the subjects, from combing through service and pension records to ship rosters, in the case of Naval servicemen. In addition to Naval records series two will also include rosters of United States colored troops and white Unionist troops.

### **Break**

The Commission took a break from 11:10 to 11:23.

### **2025-2034 State Historic Preservation Plan**

Ms. Bartos addressed the commissioners, citing a 94-page draft state historic preservation plan to cover the period 2025-2034, a copy of which was made available to the commissioners in advance of the meeting. She appeared before the Commission to ask for approval of the proposed draft, which she admits is aspirational but is required to guide staff duties over the next decade. She described the public listening sessions held in conjunction with planning and stated that much of the plan is based upon the feedback received. The main points of emphasis were “defining a sense of place,” stressing public education about historic preservation issues, and acknowledging peoples’ history. Other concerns that were voiced by members of the public included the risks facing farms and rural landscapes resulting from development and whether development harmonizes with preservation efforts, while suggestions received included development of a more robust technical support infrastructure, including more digitization of materials, and greater efforts to record and archive oral histories.

Ms. Bartos asked the commissioners to read through the proposed plan and provide any feedback to her by October 15. The State Historic Preservation Office plans to bring the final draft of the proposed state historic preservation plan back to the Commission at its December 2024 meeting for final approval.

### **Reports from Division Directors**

**Division of Historical Resources** – Ms. Bartos cited a written division report she prepared and shared with the commissioners prior to the meeting but touched upon a few notable issues. These included some personnel and National Register grant updates, and a note that Commissioner Reynolds is the new NCHC representative member of the National Register Advisory Committee, which will meet in person on October 10 and again virtually on October 24. Ms. Bartos’ full, written report about division news and activities can be found on the NCHC website.

**Division of State Historic Sites and Properties** – Ms. Lanier noted that the division staff summit is being held in Raleigh today. Among the bits of news shared with statewide staff in attendance is that the last fiscal year saw visitation to state historic sites hit 1.6 million people. Similarly encouraging, the division’s website saw 30 million hits during the same period. The division received a \$2.5 million grant from the Duke Endowment, the division’s largest ever such gift, to help reimagine the Duke Homestead State Historic Site and create an endowment that will support the site well into the future. Ms. Lanier’s full, written report about division news and activities can be found on the NCHC website.

**Division of State History Museums** – A written division report was made available to the commissioners and can be found both on the NCHC website and, like all division reports, in the paper file for this meeting, which resides in the administrative office of the Office of Archives and History.

### **Deputy Secretary’s Report**

Dr. Waters offered a very brief report on the pending two- to three-year closure of the MOH as renovation plans move forward.

### **Chair Announcements**

The chair reminded the commissioners and staff that the next meeting of the NCHC will take place on December 11 and is scheduled to be virtual. He also said that he would like to visit the idea of moving Commission meetings to locations around the state from time to time, an idea that was met with support. Mr. Backstrom will be in touch with the commissioners to poll them on their ideas on this question.

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Phillips moved adjournment of the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Snowden, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*[A final, post-edit version will be  
presented for a signature]*

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Darin J. Waters