

# **RI 1663 Colonial Charter 350th Anniversary Commission**

## **DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting of**

**April 23, 2012**

**EDC Office, 315 Iron Horse Way, Providence, RI**

**Chairman Ted Sanderson called the meeting of the RI 1663 Colonial Charter 350th Anniversary Commission to order at 3:17 P.M at the Offices of the RI Economic Development Corporation. EDC Director and Commissioner Keith Stokes welcomed the Commission to EDC and Commissioner Jon Stevens introduced newly appointed member Dr. Patrick Conley and original members not in attendance at the first meeting in Newport. These members include Mr. Ted Widmer from the John Carter Brown Library, Camelin Keith of the RI Department of Education, Jennifer Wood, Chief of Staff to the Lt. Governor and Ray Rickman from the Black Heritage Society.**

**Chairman Sanderson asked for comments and approval of the minutes of the first meeting held on March 23, 2012 in Newport. Commissioner C. Morgan Grefe suggested that the Secretary of State's comments be changed to reflect reference to the "State Archives" rather than simply "Archives." Commissioner Paul Caranci, who made the original comment, offered no objection to the amendment. Commissioner Grefe moved approval of the amended minutes. Commissioner Caranci seconded the motion, which carried**

**unanimously.**

**Chairman Sanderson noted that the Executive Committee would be meeting subsequent to the full Commission meeting and suggested that Committee Chairs call meetings of their committees as required.**

**As a result of a request by Chairman Sanderson, the Co-Chairs of the various Committees of the Commission offered reports of their respective Committee meetings as follows:**

**Conservation and Preservation Committee Report was provided by Committee Chair Jon Stevens. He noted that the Committee identified various grant possibilities. The Champlain Foundation grant, for the purpose of encasing the Royal Charter, requires only a letter request initially. Commissioner Stevens requested a resolution of support to seek such funding. Commissioners Caranci and Conley moved and seconded the motion to provide a resolution of support for an application seeking preliminary funding. A discussion of the motion ensued in which it was revealed that the Secretary of State was involved in the discussion concerning the encasement of the Charter. The House and Senate Leadership have not been updated on the Commissions activities as of this date but will be brought into the discussions at the end of the legislative session unless there is a compelling reason to do so earlier. It was also suggested that the next agenda of the full Commission include authorization for the Executive Committee to make these type decisions in the future. Following discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.**

**Chairman Sanderson and Commissioner Stevens also updated the Commissioners on the status of the Visitor's Center legislation, the plans for the Charter Room and the potential availability of the wall space in the halls outside the Charter Room for displays.**

**Anniversary and Celebration Planning Committee Report was provided by Committee Co-Chairs Betty Cappozzi and Mark Brodeaur.**

**Commissioner Cappozzi noted that the Committee discussed the potential for several events including an evening celebration, similar to the 200 event called "An Evening to Remember," to be held on Saturday July 6, 2013. It would be anticipated that 500 tickets could be sold to a State House dinner with additional tickets sold for dinner under a tent set up on the State House South lawn. This could be followed by a Water fire lighting and a dance at the skating rink. Perhaps we can convince someone with stature from Britain to attend the event. A separate lecture event could be held the preceding week. Potential speakers might include Caroline Kennedy, Doris Kearns Goodwin, and David McCullough. The potential venues for the lecture include the Veterans Auditorium or a College Campus. In addition, smaller events might be held at each "old State House." Finally, an annual lecture can be held commemorating the events.**

**Commissioner Brodeaur added that we could work with the existing events planned on National Smithsonian Day, as these are free events that can offer exposure for little money. It is critical to have the VIP event with more affordable public events. Educationally, it would be significant to build a 350th curriculum with a timeline.**

**Chairman Al Klyberg offered the following report from the**

**Interpretation and Education Committee. Because of Clark Greene's (Dept. of Education) absence from the Committee meeting, the group focused on interpretation rather than education. It was decided to develop a statement of historical context of the King's Charter giving appropriate credits to Roger Williams and John Clarke. A focus should be on the evolving and enduring nature of the impact of the Charter, which was very liberal in the 17th Century, but became oppressive by the 19th Century leading to Dorr's Rebellion. Despite that, several items remain significant 3½ centuries later. The Charter should be used as a way to engage Rhode Islanders, utilizing current videos, books, etc. The Anniversary events provide a possibility to apply prior things written about the Charter to this Commission and expand into future events.**

**Chairman Sanderson raised the issue of the extent to which the Commission should become involved in "church and state" issues that have been prevalent in the news of late. Many Commissioners voiced an opinion on the issue. The consensus seemed to be that while the Commission should not formulate an official interpretation of the Charter with respect to the current issues, it should not pass up the opportunity to use the issue as an educational tool. Commissioner Stokes suggested that we might use the issue to reach a broader audience through storytelling.**

**Chairman Sanderson adjourned the meeting at 4:07 P.M.**