

1696 Historical Commission Meeting

Minutes of July 27, 2015

The members of the 1696 Historical Commission met on July 27, 2015, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 203 of the Rhode Island State House.

Commission members present:

Secretary of State Nellie M. Gorbea, Chairperson

Keith Stokes, Mayforth Group

Julia Jordan-Zachery, Providence College

Valerie Tutson, RI Black Storytellers

Theresa Moore, T-Time Productions

Joanna Doherty, RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission

Rochelle Lee

Geralyn Ducady, Haffenreffer Museum, Brown University

Elyssa Tardif, RI Historical Society

Marcia Ranglin-Vassell

Commission members absent:

Mary Ann Snider, RI Department of Education, Vice Chairperson

Barrymore Bogues (out of the country for the month of July)

Joyce Stevos, RI Black Heritage Society

Mary Gwann

Paul Gaines, Retired Educator

Staff present:

Ken Carlson, Reference Archivist

Tom Evans, State Librarian

Jason Martiesian, Director of Legislative Affairs

Guests:

There were no guests in attendance.

I. Welcome & Introductions

Secretary Gorbea called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m. The members in attendance introduced themselves.

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by and seconded by to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2015 Commission meeting. The minutes were approved by a vote of 10-0.

III. Subcommittee Report

Rhode Island African American History Curriculum Guide Draft:

There was discussion of the Curriculum Guide outline that was revised by the subcommittee. The guide will serve as a template to direct the Commission's work going forward around the design of a curriculum. The Commission discussed if fourteen is the appropriate number of units. It was agreed that this could be determined at a later date based on input from the Department of Education and other organizations focused on curriculum design and teaching. After discussion several changes were made to the curriculum guide. In

addition, Secretary Gorbea will contact the Rhode Island Indian Council to determine the correct reference with regard to persons “native” to the country.

A motion was made by Rochelle Lee and seconded by Theresa Moore to approve the Curriculum Guide based on the revisions made by the commission. The motion was approved by a vote of 10-0.

Curriculum Consultant:

The Commission discussed the possibility of retaining a curriculum guide to assist in designing the curriculum and advancing the commission’s work. Theresa Moore and Keith Stokes had discussions with the Choices Program at Brown University. Choices expressed interest in speaking further and that it does fit with the work of their organization. Keith Stokes will speak with Choices to determine availability to talk further with them in late August. It is important that the Department of Education be in attendance for this meeting.

In addition, Theresa Moore will speak with Linda Newton from the Black Philanthropy Initiative and Valerie Tutson will talk with Judge Walter Stone from the Black Philanthropy Fund regarding their interest in supporting the Commission’s work. There may also be an opportunity to discuss this project with the Rhode Island Foundation.

The Rhode Island Historical Society is able to serve as fiscal agent for

the Commission if needed. A memorandum of understanding between the Commission and the Rhode Island Historical Society might need to be drafted.

IV. Commission Work Plan – Next Steps

There was discussion of the Commission holding a public meeting to hear from persons across the state and that this also might be an opportunity to learn about what is already taking place around African American history. Julia Jordan-Zachery agreed to lead the work on the public meeting with assistance from Theresa Moore, Valerie Tutson and Marcia Ranglin-Vassell. Dr. Jordan-Zachery will contact the Secretary's office to determine her availability.

The Commission also discussed the importance of ensuring that the work that they do is acted upon and incorporated in the state's education curriculum. The Department of Education hosts an Innovation Summit that might be a good opportunity to get feedback from teachers regarding the curriculum. There was discussion on the importance of preparing teachers, administrators and students for this curriculum.

A report on the Commission's work to date is due to the General Assembly and the Governor by August 1, 2015. Secretary Gorbea will prepare a draft of the report to the Commission for their review this week.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Thursday, September 10 at 4 p.m.

V. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

Hand-outs:

Rhode Island African American History Curriculum Guide Outline