

400 Years of African American History  
Commission November 28, 2018  
Fort Monroe National Monument

Welcoming remarks from Glenn Oder, Fort Monroe Authority

Mary Fugere, Hampton Convention & Visitors Bureau, speaks on potential partnerships and the City of Hampton's commitment to the 2019 commemoration

Terry Brown remarks on his goals of increasing diversity, youth engagement, partnerships, telling relevant and factual stories as superintendent of FOMR.

Commission members introduce themselves:

- Dr. Joe Green
- Mr. Terry Brown
- Ms. Kenya Cox
- Dr. Myron Pope
- Mr. Ted Ellis
- Mr. Bob Kendrick
- Dr. Rex Ellis
- Mr. Glenn Freeman
- Mr. Ron Carson
- Mr. Lewis Rogers
- Rev. Anyanwu Cox
- Mr. Ken Johnson (partial attendance)

Ethics Overview with Margaret Bradley:

Overview 14 general principles of ethics and conduct (commission members were given a detailed handout).

Will help think through any potential conflict before individuals take action, here to protect members of the commission and the integrity of NPS.

Any matters that come before the commission which create a financial conflict of interest can not be pursued by that member.

Concerns were raised about conflict of interest for members. Many commissioners identified that they will have to navigate through many personal conflicts of interest throughout this term.

Press Releases: State reps can submit press releases, The Department of the Interior and office of Governor have already covered this in the news.

Advantageous to share all communication/news material. Christine will keep members updated on all media coverage of this commission.

Coverage of gift exceptions. No issue with gifts given to members in their private, NGO sector. However, they are limited to federal employee gift exceptions in their role on this commission.

Can reference being a commission member during presentations or speaking in a personal capacity so long as it is not the sole or primary fact about them.

Members are prohibited from engaging in grassroots lobbying, Margaret summarizes the Anti-Lobbying Act.

Commission has authority to fundraise. Cannot lobby but can educate.

Review of by-laws:

Charters need to be reviewed by DOI

OPI decided to forgo charter to expedite process, not subject to FACA. Bylaws will be used instead to assist and guide work.

Looking to fill vacancy in commission.

Christine added a treasurer to bylaws, since there are no funds the commission would benefit from a treasurer.

If members of the public or NGOs want to address the commission in future meetings, they should register with Christine first.

It is through the current legislation that an executive director can be hired.

The commission sunsets July 1, 2020. Final report due then. Christine's detail ends in September of 2019.

Members can send designees in their place at future meetings, but that individual cannot vote.

Can commission vote to confirm Lewis as a full member? Lewis will stay on as the NPS alternate for Terry and attend meetings without voting authority. Lewis can serve on subcommittees.

Question made by group members of the possibility that this commission is just getting started in 2019, is there an option available to continue work beyond 2020? It would be another act of Congress to continue.

If commission members choose to re-create this team as a non profit or advisory group, that is an option but that group would be subject to the rules of FACA.

The commission has 581 days to operate.

Need to work on strategic plan to send to Congress, no timeline there but this should be done in coming months.

Acknowledgement of the need to aggressively work to establish this strategic plan as well as a mission for what the commission hopes to accomplish. What is the intent moving forward?

Anniversary date of African arrival in August needs to be acknowledged via public event. Key event will be Aug 25, but a more national buzz will be created and sustained all 2019.

Need to acknowledge that African American history is beyond slavery.

This commission is going to cover a lot of things, but 1619 will be highlighted

Point Comfort becomes a placeholder for the significance of the historical experience, keep a major point of discussion of multiple people and stories.

Work with HBCUS as well as other colleges and academic institutions to partner with to provide education and funding.

1619 is a focal point instead of a starting point

Changes to bylaws:

No changes were made during this meeting.

Strategies for fundraising/potential donors:

Sarah from the National Park Foundation shares values of partnerships.

Utilize parks as places of learning for youth and adults.

Think broadly about partnerships.

How to connect with young people who aren't associated with schools, perhaps those who are considered at risk.

Outdoor Afro and Latino Outdoors are examples of organizations to collab with.

Local community groups are the ones that know their kids and should be included moving forward.

Sarah was asked to make a list of programs and orgs to share with the commission.

What are the legacy programs that will be associated with this initiative?

How to build inclusive community engagement into the strategy?

Build a network that will move forward with exchange of ideas beyond 2020.

Glenn Oder speaks after lunch to overview the history of Fort Monroe to members.

Claude Vann speaks on the history of Hampton and the city's 1619 Commission.

Kathy Spangler, Executive Director of American Evolution: Virginia to America 1619-2019 presents on the state commemoration.

Put the commission on the state platform so people can be updated on their work.

Committees:

Strategic Plan: Ted Ellis, Ken Johnson, Ms. Cox, Dr. Pope

Mission: Kenya, Rex Ellis, Glenn Freeman

Fundraising: Terry, Ms. Cox Grant criteria: Dr. Pope

Marketing: Dr. Green, Terry, Bob Kendrick

Need to better connect with state commission since they have far more resources. The main objective is to represent our community.

National platform, we can amplify what is already happening in our communities.

Need to have at least one meeting open to the public and create a way for the nation to talk to us via social media or video call space to cast coherent messaging, create a platform for others to share their stories.

What is there was a project to make Aug 25 a national day of healing?

All states represented have National Parks. Can leverage this with the #LoveYourPark campaign.

Express the desire of humanity to feel free.

African American history is American history, there is a need to convey that to the nation.

Start to release message of healing in Jan and Feb, see if it is possible to work along with state commission.

Clearly state what communities are challenged to do.

Are their marketing/ad communities who could do pro bono work to get the message out?

Dr. Ellis shares that over 45,000 oral histories have been collected by the Museum of African American History. Would like to get permission to use some of the tapes collected to use for this mission.

Could we call for people to visit local African American museum or establishment to support on August 25th?

Future advertising could notify people to keep August 25th in mind and connect this as an anchor.

Committee to draft a letter for media to submit on their outlets and announce the importance of 2019 in early January.

Need to pull a strategic plan together to use as a road map. Need to consider economic reality as we move into January and February 2019.

Christine volunteers to write first press release, will be passed by commission followed by the NPS public affairs office.

What happens between today and next meeting? Meeting summary will be sent to all members. Everyone here has a network, continue to share info in your networks. See if the committee's press release can be used by the state too.

Committee already has a webpage. How do we collect info about what we are doing and keep getting the message out? Need criteria to manage coordination and speak with “one voice.”

Get a commemorative bell made. Many different people can connect with the bell. Ms. A. Cox suggests use of drums in addition to bells.

An extensive conversation about social media develops. Start hashtagging #400COMMISSION and #400YAAH with @400COMMISSION as the account name. Simple is better!

Next meeting date:

Have a meeting in DC to establish a presence there. Ron Carson offered to look into a room on the Hill and Dr. Ellis could look into museum engagement.

Have a call of action for a year of “Learn Our Story” and visit local African American museums, cultural institutions, and historical landmarks and commission should provide a state-by-state list for people to know where those are.

An active conversation about representation and inclusion ensues. How can we present this to be American history so people can see themselves in it? Some parts are painful and some parts link us all together. There are so many accomplishments to share.

We can do the best that we can when script writing, to make inclusive messages use imagery of different ethnicities so that people can see America. Talk about issues and themes that relate to all experiences. “Tell Our Story” in which the “our” includes “everyone.”

Helping people cross the threshold and get people who aren’t Black to better understand.

There is a reason this is so important, there were 400 years and more of challenges, and we have come a long way towards healing.

Experiences that touch all people, find ways to get people to connect with different groups.

Elections results:

Chair: Dr. Green

Vice Chair-Glenn Freeman

Treasurer- Dr. Pope

There will be an in person meeting in DC in January.

Send out a doodle to confirm dates, Dr. Green will send an email for a conference call first.

Meeting adjourns at approximately 5:45 PM.

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I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

Christine Lucero  
Commission Liaison  
National Park Service

Dr. Joseph Green  
Chairman  
400 Years of African-American History Commission