

Draft Minutes
Oregon Heritage Commission
January 28, 2008
Room 124, North Mall Office Building
725 Summer St. NE, Salem

Present: Carole Astley, Constance Beaumont, Donald Ivy (by phone), George Kramer (by phone), Jan Mitchell, Roger Roper, E. John Rumpakis, Layne Sawyer, Jim Scheppke, Jon Tullis (by phone), Irene Zenev (by phone), Kyle Jansson.

Visitors: Karen Estlund, Normandy Helmer, Lesli Larson, Mark Watson (all by phone from the University of Oregon)

Meeting was called to order by George Kramer at 9:08 a.m. Members present at the time introduced themselves. A quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda:

After a brief discussion noting that some presentations may not take place due to the inclement weather, Mitchell moved to approve the preliminary agenda, Rumpakis second, motion approved.

Approval of Minutes:

After a brief discussion, Mitchell moved to approve the minutes of the November 25, 2007 meeting, Rumpakis second, motion approved.

County Historical Society Funding:

Jansson reported there were no federal forest funds approved by Congress for Oregon counties since the last meeting. Congresswoman Hooley's office had hoped to get them included in the new economic stimulus package, and would continue trying to insert them into legislation. He also said the Lincoln County Historical Society was uncertain about next year's funding levels. Zenev reported that Benton County voters last year approved a special levy that will probably maintain its historical society funding through 2009. Kramer reported on the lack of Jackson County funding and the heritage district campaign there. He said the Heritage Commission could help counties by actively informing and promoting with the public the importance of history and heritage and its benefits for communities. Roper said that gathering data from such places as Travel Oregon could be done. Kramer said this would be most beneficial if tailored to each community. Roper and Jansson said they will put something together by the May meeting.

Public Comments: None

Historic Newspaper Digitization Project:

The University of Oregon staff leading the effort to establish a historic newspaper digitization project for the state briefly described their project, adding some information to that sent out to commissioners during the past week. Helmer said that because the UO began collecting newspapers early and Oregon is a moderately young state, it has a more complete collection than many states. It wants to make them available so people can sit at home and look at them free of charge. Estlund said a new server is needed for the project because newspapers take up a lot of disk space. Larson said duplication of some of the microfilm is needed because of redspotting related to the initial 1950s processing. The 1,000 reels proposed for duplication are about one-quarter of the affected newspaper microfilm rolls. Estlund said future funding for the project could come from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Library of Congress and communities. Helmer said the UO wants to begin with newspapers in rural communities because the national programs have primarily done the urban dailies. Estlund said commercial companies have bought up the rights to some Oregon newspapers, but she found in working on the Utah digital newspaper project that the gems were often found in rural newspapers.

Estlund said the budget was built wanting to get the most bang for the buck. It provides an economy of scale.

Sawyer asked if duplication was the only way to do the treatment for redspot. Larson said it was.

Estlund said the long-term goal is to do all Oregon newspapers prior to 1923. Tullis suggested that they could begin with newspapers around the period of statehood. Helmer said Oregon newspapers began in 1849, and that other periods besides statehood have been important to the state. Estlund noted the database would be keyword searchable.

Watson asked about getting a program option package in the State Parks budget proposal for 09-11. Roper said the Legislative Fiscal Office has heartburn over new heritage projects in Parks budget. Watson said that a broad coalition might convince them otherwise. Roper suggested the possibility of using Heritage Grant funding for all of it. Kramer said he was loathe to do that. Scheppke said the LFO opinion could block all future Commission initiatives, and wondered if an Attorney General's opinion could be obtained.

Mitchell suggested using some Cultural Trust grant funds for it. Roper said that perhaps the Cultural Trust funds could be used to match donations from local communities.

After further discussion, Rumpakis made the following motion:

1. That the Oregon Heritage Commission supports and strongly endorses the Oregon Digital Newspaper Project.
2. That the Oregon Heritage Commission request that the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission adopts it as an OPRD Sesquicentennial Project;

3. That because of the statewide usability of digital newspapers and the fragility of microfilm, that the Oregon Heritage Commission asks the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission include it in its 09-11 budget request
4. That if this funding does not succeed, the Commission encourages OPRD to help find appropriate funders and partnerships to carry it out.

Mitchell seconded the motion. Approved without dissent.

Old Business:

Oregon Museum Grants: The grant review committee's recommendations were included in the packet. Zenev described the committee's selection process involving discussion and a numerical ranking. Commissioners noted some of the recommended grants were to organizations unsuccessful in the Heritage Grant process. Scheppke said the list contained some great projects, and were certainly better than the \$250 checks that previously were sent out.

Mitchell made a motion to approved the grant review committees recommendation. Rumpakis second. Approved without dissent.

Centennial Horizon: Because of the difficulty of commissioner traveling, this item was postponed until the next Commission meeting.

Information:

Oregon 150: Kramer reported that a hard launch of the Oregon Stories and Oregon 150 will take place on Feb. 14. Many of the details of the Oregon 150 projects have been worked out during recent months. It has been unable to get county planning funds from the Legislature so far. Rumpakis said with Oregon Stories and Oregon 150 there should be an effort made to involve immigrant groups in the effort.

Oregon Heritage Conference: Jansson said he was excited about the planning of this year's conference in Eugene, and was so excited he didn't really say a lot. Commissioners are encouraged to invite people to the conference and encourage sponsorships. Rumpakis offered to be a sponsor.

Oregon Heritage Fellowships: Jansson said that since the last Commission meeting, the three students have been selected from the University of Oregon (taking classes at OSU Cascades), Reed College and Willamette University.

Oregon Heritage Excellence Awards: Jansson said about 15 applications have been received, and that a mixed committee like a year ago was planned. Jim Renner of the Travel Information Council has agreed to serve. Beaumont and Mitchell also offered to serve. First Lady Mary Oberst has agreed to give the awards.

Legislative Update: Roper reported on developments related to the legislative sessions. The most comprehensive map of the Oregon Trail in Oregon was being developed. The

committee to recommend changes to the special assessment program will begin meeting soon. The Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries is looking at two changes: changing the age definition of a historic cemetery and dealing with volunteers' liability on abandoned sites. The Oregon Main Street program has a coordinator.

Roper also suggested that the Commission may want to look at establishing an Oregon Heritage Cities Program based upon a similar program set up in Idaho.

Commissioner Reports

Sawyer said she has proposed that the '09-'10 Oregon Bluebook highlight Oregon's century farms.

Beaumont said the Oregon Department of Transportation is gearing up for awarding transportation enhancement grants

Astley said welcome center and visitor centers will be gathering in March in Bend for training. She also noted the Governors Tourism Conference will be in Portland and she invited any involvement by heritage.

Mitchell said that because of the storms that hit the Astoria area, the public hearings on the proposed heritage area have been postponed until March. She said the storms damaged some roofs, as well as trees at the Flavel House.

Rumpakis noted the article in the packet on Norse Hall. He encouraged the Commission to inventory the cultural ethnic organizations and involve them in its activities such as the Heritage Conference.

Kramer adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.