

Approved Minutes
Oregon Heritage Commission
February 5, 2007
North Mall Office Building, Room 124
Salem, Oregon

Present: Carole Astley, David Coughlin, Charlotte Fugate, Donald Ivy, George Kramer, Jan Mitchell, Andrea Morgan, Roger Roper, E. John Rumpakis, Layne Sawyer, Jim Schepke, George Vogt, Kyle Jansson.

Guests: Julie Beehler (St. Helens Chamber of Commerce), R. J. "Bob" Brown (Historical Society of Columbia County), John Enders (Southern Oregon Historical Society), James Hamrick, Bob Hart (Lane County Historical Society Museum), Todd Kepple (Klamath County museums), Julie Reese (Heritage Station Museum and Oregon Museums Association), Ross Sutherland (Marion County Historical Society).

Meeting was called to order by George Kramer at 9:42 a.m. Members introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes of November 6, 2006 Meeting: Rumpakis moved to approve draft. Mitchell seconded. Commission approved unanimously.

Approval of Agenda: Mitchell moved to approve draft. Fugate seconded. Commission approved unanimously.

Funding Crises for County Historical Societies: Jansson described the historical background of funding for county historical societies in Oregon. He highlighted county historical funds approved by counties, and how those which approved became viewed as leading organizations in the state. Ballot measures 5, 47 and 50 effectively eliminated these tax levies, even though a majority of residents in some of the counties voted against the property tax limits.

He said that at the same time, the timber economy in these counties began to suffer, only to be helped out by federal forest dollars. Now, those dollars are potentially on the way out. Many county historical societies will reduce their operations or even worse, close.

Museums in Oregon already are making due with below average taxpayer support, as is partly illustrated by the funding challenges of the Oregon Historical Society. The Heritage Commission's museum survey in 2004 reported that for every dollar of taxpayer support, they raised or earned \$8 of private support. That amount is double what the typical American museum raises, according to a December 2006 report from the American Association of Museums.

Hart reviewed the history of the Lane County museum, noting that 80 percent of its budget is now from hotel-motel tax receipts, which could be changed if federal forest funds are discontinued. Kepple said Klamath County voters approved using some tourism-tax dollars for the museum, and that the definition of a ‘tourism-related facility’ is unclear in the statute. Enders reviewed his organization’s history, and that his organization has been zeroed out of the county’s budget. He said SOHS is working to amend ORS 198.010 to create a historic district. Its goal is to provide stable funding for SOHS and 14 other historical organizations in the county, and to create a new preservation and restoration fund for Jackson County.

Jansson read information provided from Tillamook, Benton and Douglas county historical societies. A discussion followed their presentations that delved into niche taxes, Goal 5, the Oregon Historical society’s funding challenges, coalitions, and library districts,

At 11:03, the Commission took a 12-minute break.

Kramer asked the Commission what it should do. Kepple said the big question is who’s going to take care of local history, and that county’s need to hear from the state that county collections are important. Enders noted that privatization of the public’s heritage does not work. Kramer said that somehow collectively we need to show how heritage is important to the quality of life. Coughlin suggested approving a resolution. Vogt noted that if county special districts are approved, then there is less likelihood of a statewide solution. Ivy encouraged commissioners to do their own outreach on the issue, and that the statehood sesquicentennial could use this as a legacy issue. Vogt noted the opportunity to create synergy with the Main Street program, tourism, and the governor’s CHAMP program. Commissioners said they wanted to see the proposed historic district legislation and wanted to have a special teleconference meeting to discuss it. Enders said he would provide the Commission the legislation when it is ready. Jansson will track the bill for the Commission.

At 11:55, the Committee took a 20-minute break.

Reports

Legislative Update: Roper reviewed the OPRD heritage legislative issues, and other cultural issues. Vogt said the Governor’s office wants to keep its cultural package together. Roper also mentioned a bill related to designating an Ice Age Museum in Oregon mentioned the Heritage Commission, but that its mention has been deleted.

Oregon 150: Hamrick said Oregon 150 president Barbara Sidway is making committee appointments. A February 14 rollout of Oregon 150’s plans is planned. He has written a “lessons learned” document about other centennials and sesquicentennials for the Oregon 150 board to read. Schepke said two other projects, Oregon Reads and the Oregon Encyclopedia for History and Culture, are also sesquicentennial related. Sawyer said

State Archives is planning an exhibit on the state's Constitutional Convention and is trying to create a database of Oregon pioneers.

Heritage Excellence Awards: Jansson said the nomination forms are now available. Mitchell volunteered to serve on the selection committee.

Technical Assistance Project: Jansson reported that contracts are being offered to the Southern Oregon Historical Society and Tamaátslíkt Cultural Institute for regional work.

Old Business

Oregon Heritage Conference: Jansson said planning is underway with the Red Lion Hotel in Pendleton the site. Sawyer said Dan Cantrell of the State Historic Records Advisory Board could do an archives workshop. Jansson said that commissioners at their November meeting expressed their desire to have the conference in 2008 in Eugene, but did not vote on it. Coughlin made motion to have 2008 conference in Eugene. Ivy seconded. Commission approved unanimously. The Northwest Archivists is preparing to invite the conference to be in Portland in 2009.

Mitchell said that Astoria celebrates its Bicentennial in 2011 and that might be a good time to have the conference there.

New Business:

Action Plan Review and Update: Jansson said he would like to present a 2007-2009 Heritage Action Plan to the Commission at its May meeting and wanted some direction from the Commission on what to include. Morgan noted that the social studies requirement in high school graduation is staying the same. Ivy said it's important for the Commission to keep the Action Plan in front of it in making its decisions. Scheppeke said the Commission has always had bigger eyes than its stomach, and maybe should focus on 3-4 items to show results. Rumpakis said that more could be done with the special recognition item. Ivy said getting the Commission to agree on an Action Plan might be like herding cats. Commissioners suggested a town meeting at the Heritage Conference to get input on important key issues.

Grant Programs Review: Jansson said few changes have been suggested to the Heritage Grant and Museum Grant programs. He said he hoped to be able to develop a coordinated rollout of the grant programs with the new coordinator of the Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries. Revised grant applications will be presented to the Commission in May, and he would welcome any suggested changes from commissioners. Hamrick noted he is presenting language to the OPRD Commission related to mentioning the sesquicentennial in grant programs.

Commissioner Reports

Morgan said the Lehrman Oregon History Teacher of the Year Program will be limited to grades K-6 this year.

Astley said the Governor's Tourism Conference in April in Bend will include sessions on heritage tourism, including the sesquicentennial.

Ivy said the Coquille Tribe, the Coos Indian Education Program, and the Coos Historical & Maritime Museum are cooperating on a youth education program.

Mitchell said an effort has been started to establish a Lower Columbia National Heritage Area that would involve both Washington and Oregon.

Rumpakis said the Greek Orthodox Church in Portland will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in May. Also, this is the 100th anniversary of organized real estate in Portland.

Adjourn

Ivy made motion to adjourn. Mitchell seconded. Commissioners approved. Meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.