

250th Anniversary Commission

# Arts & Cultural Heritage Committee Meeting

January 18, 2pm ET Via Microsoft Teams

The meeting commenced at 2:04 pm ET

Attending: Eileen Corcoran, Vermont Historical Society  
Tom Hughes, Historian  
Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup, Vermont Humanities  
James Lockridge, Big Heavy World  
Laura Trieschmann, State of Vermont

## I. Land Acknowledgement

James shared the following land acknowledgement: We wish to acknowledge that in Vermont, we are within the unceded territory of the original inhabitants of N'dakinna (en-DAH-kee-NAH), the Abenaki, and in the southwest portion, the Mohican people. Their traditional and ongoing relationships with the land call us to learn to be better caretakers of the land as well. We offer respect to their ancestors, their elders, and their relations: past, present, and emerging. We recognize and wish to honor the responsibility that accompanies this acknowledgement of those relationships.

## II. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved unanimously.

## II. Approval of the minutes

Minutes from the previous two meetings were approved unanimously.

## III. Public input

No public was present for comment.

## IV. Outreach Strategies

Several components of outreach to creatives and cultural heritage stakeholders were discussed: The goal of messaging; the strategy and process of messaging; and incentivizing participation.

James proposed that members gather and provide their thoughts for other networks within Vermont, outside of the institutions that employ them, which might be activated to share ACHC messaging with their constituents. The long-form, formal message created by the ACHC for the VT 250th website should be adapted (shortened and given a conversational tone) for use within our institutional and external communication channels.

Eileen suggested that prompts be created and shared with creatives in the state, inspiring directed engagement.

Laura reminded the committee that she welcomes input about budget needs, for a summertime request that could lead to 2025 funding from the legislature. Related to this, she reminded members that \$15,000 had been allocated to distributing children's books to libraries.

The funding topic led to discussion about potential grant funding. It was unanimously accepted that any grant funding specific to creatives or cultural heritage stakeholders should travel through existing grant management infrastructures, like those at Vermont Humanities, the Vermont Historical Society, or the Vermont Arts Council.

Expanding available grant funding from what the legislature might provide could be done from other sources. One source suggested by Christopher was the Mellon Foundation, with the context being that a national collaboration is formulating a request to the Foundation for support of 250th programming. That larger collaborative request would have priority over a request from Vermont alone, even if it were collaborative among Vermont institutions, because the scale of the national request would be more effective for securing funds that would partially travel to Vermont.

James suggested that incentives could be the discussed grant funding, and could also be inclusion in a permanent product that commemorates the 250th, such as a book of images and writing with a soundtrack, produced collaboratively by several of Vermont's arts and cultural heritage institutions.

Christopher said that it was conceivable that the statewide civics initiative of Vermont Humanities and the Secretary of State could adapt and include messaging that inspires forward-looking engagement with themes of examining the current status of democracy and changemaking, the core of the ACHC message to creatives and cultural heritage stakeholders.

Christopher pointed to the Vermont Dept. of Tourism and Marketing campaign of outreach related to the total solar eclipse of April 8, 2024. He noted that it was very broad and inclusive and might provide a helpful example for outreach by the ACHC. Laura will invite the VDTM Commissioner, Heather Pelham, to discuss this with the ACHC at the next meeting.

## V. Candidates for Committee Membership

Tom proposed that a Shelburne Museum staff person responsible for collections or interpretation be sought as a new ACHC member. He also suggested that the Vermont Folklife Center might provide a member.

Laura communicated that Melody will be seeking a replacement for herself on the 250th Commission and ACHC.

## VI. Old business

No old business was discussed.

## VII. New business

Tom proposed the adoption of the term, “250th Anniversary” to replace “Semiquincentennial” as the commonly used name of the event because the word “Semiquincentennial” is clumsy and somewhat elitist. It means “half of a 500th anniversary,” rather than simply what it is, a 250th anniversary. Tom welcomed that this proposal be considered by the full Vermont 250th Commission; this was noted by Laura.

## VIII. Confirm next regular meeting date

The next meeting will be Thursday, February 29 at 2pm ET via Microsoft Teams. It’s noted that Christopher will be away on sabbatical at that time.

# Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:54pm.