

September 24, 2024
State Building Naming Committee
Meeting Notes/Minutes

Members Present

Xusana Davis, State Racial and Equity Officer

Catherine Delneo, State Librarian

Kate Eberle, Buildings and General Services Designee

Stephen Perkins, Vermont Historical Society

Jessica Vintinner, Agency of Commerce and Community Development Designee

John Zicconi, Vermont Agency of Transportation Designee

Ted Brady *arrived 2:14pm

Other Staff Present

Lindsay Pacheco, Administrative Services Coordinator

Rachel Dimitruk, Vermont Agency of Transportation (taking over John's position)

Jennifer Finch, Buildings and General Services

Meeting Called to Order by Jessica Vintinner at 2:04pm.

I. August 29, 2024 Minutes

Motion made to approve minutes; John Zicconi seconded the motion.

II. State Colleges and State Building Naming Procedures

- Committee reviewed various state colleges and their processes for naming buildings
- Eberle: most colleges' naming procedures involve financial contributions, which would not be a contributing factor to naming BGS buildings.
- Trieschmann: noted the Penn State "expiration date," which may be a good thing to keep in mind.
- Perkins: agreed, non-profits often have an expiration date for building names.
- Reviewed some state facilities, but almost all require legislative approval. Washington receives recommendation from Commission. California can name buildings via executive order. Connecticut facilities are named through legislative action. Maine has a Board on Place Names, which includes members appointed by House and Senate, or are designees.
- Zicconi: found Maine's procedure interesting – felt that legislature wants to remove political process from this, but even if they are not involved, they can still pass a bill to name anything what they want.
- Delneo: This process takes away from the real work of departments, adds more work. We do not need more positions for naming buildings. Concerned that this could become a mandate for someone who may not even be in the room as we develop it. Staff should be focused on the important work that needs to be done.
- Zicconi: if we lay out a process or our recommendation, then the only logical place it runs through is BGS. Will Jennifer be opposed to a process that goes through BGS?

- Finch: BGS wasn't pulled in until the end, focus was originally on Historic Preservation. Expectation was that BGS would only put the signs on the building, not be involved in the naming. BGS does not have the resources currently to manage more than that, and a new position would have to be included.
- Eberle: this conversation is cultural and historical – naming a building is a cultural flag raising. BGS designs building based off who will be occupying the building. They are facilitators, they don't decide how something will look and function – this is based on their clients. Client is in charge.
- Delneo: has received mostly flora, fauna, and natural aspects of VT as naming suggestions. If policy denotes that this is preference, then it will have to be followed.
- Brady: this is ultimately legislatures responsibility, there will not be universal agreement in committee for what should be done. 1- BGS oriented, 2- don't name anything, 3- something more nuanced that committee comes up with.
- Zicconi: Perhaps committee should put more than one option together for legislature. List of limitations is good place to start. Committee can probably agree on what they don't want.
- Delneo: concerned about making the process so difficult that a Vermonter wouldn't be able to do it. It feels like committee is playing to the individual rather than Vermonters as a whole.
- Zicconi: important to make this process navigable, but most things probably won't make the cut if using similar restrictions as outlined in the US Board on Names slide.

III. Vermont Board of Libraries Naming Procedure

- Catherine Delneo presented on Board of Libraries naming procedures.
- Currently responsible for naming geographic locations, but previously was involved in transportation locations, state buildings, etc.
- Individual/Vermonters is in charge of petition, state library refers them to research assistance and does not partake in research.
- Board can provide feedback to improve applications/petitions, and then will add to agenda to approve/sign off on.
- Recommend that they reach out to civic organizations, state tribes – board encourages public engagement and involvement in process.

IV. Vermont Department of Transportation Naming Procedures

- John Zicconi presented on VTrans naming procedures for their transportation facilities.
- VTrans wanted to limit who could partake in process, but didn't want it to be overly onerous either.
- Rules require that there is a petition signed by at least 100 people, but for BGS buildings we would probably need more than that.

- Important that they be able to do research to vet the submittals, don't want to name something after someone with a checkered history. Never had any problem dealing with police, who would run criminal history checks.
- VTrans also holds hearings within area of proposed facility to get public feedback.
- The process all started with how to make this hard enough so they can easily say no to something, recommends this committee approach this in similar way.

V. Discussion

- Finch: Seems that BGS will need a board similar to VTrans and State Library. What are the cost implications for VT taxpayers?
- Zicconi: Cost is the time, board doesn't incur any cost aside from travel expenses if they need to travel to a community for a public hearing. Some people will have to have this added to their job description. Time is valuable though, so this does not have to be the option for BGS.
- Finch: BGS does not have the resources for this like VTrans does. They do not have the capacity to do any more – especially involving running a naming procedure.
- Delneo: Library provides per diem costs to Board. Even partner.gov emails for board members, costs were same that Delneo paid for herself as state employee. Recommends creation of job for BGS if this moves forward in their direction.
- Vintinner: recommends fiscal analysis be done for any potential costs incurred. Would like to have conversation about action items for work to be done before next meeting.
- Zicconi: happy to go through some of the examples that Jessica put together and pull things that he personally likes. If multiple committee members did this, they could move forward with some factors that overlapped between everyone.

VI. Next Meeting – October 28, 2024

1. Start discussing and identifying priority items to include in our naming process.
2. Assign members (and identify) work that needs to be done before next meeting, Oct. 28th (fiscal analysis, public engagement outline creation).
3. Decide what more is needed in terms of research, expert witnesses, etc. for the group to work towards decision making and draft recommendation formation.
4. Review of public engagement Microsoft Form draft (Xusana)

Meeting adjourned at 3:20pm.