

North Carolina Historical Commission
Conference Call Minutes

May 19, 2021

The North Carolina Historical Commission (NCHC, Commission) met via Zoom conference call on Wednesday, May 19, 2021. The following commissioners were in attendance: David Ruffin, Chair; Dr. Mary Lynn Bryan; The Honorable Newell Clark, Dr. David C. Dennard; Samuel B. Dixon; Dr. Valerie A. Johnson; Susan Phillips; W. Noah Reynolds; and Barbara B. Snowden. Commissioners Dr. Malinda Maynor Lowery and Dr. Darin Waters were absent.

Others in attendance included: Phil Feagan, General Counsel, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR); Parker Backstrom, Office of Archives and History (OAH) Administrative Assistant and Recording Secretary for the NCHC; Dr. Jeffrey J. Crow, former deputy secretary of the OAH, who headed up search efforts for position of deputy secretary of the OAH; and Matt Zeher, video producer for the DNCR, who facilitated the transmission of the video conference call.

Call to Order and Conflict of Interest Statement

Chairman Ruffin welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 2:33 PM. After calling roll and being assured that none of the commissioners had a real or perceived conflict of interest regarding the business to be discussed, the meeting proceeded.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Backstrom described changes made to the minutes from the March 25, 2021 meeting of the NCHC since they had been made available to the commissioners for their review. He described the minor changes requested by Sarah Koonts, acting deputy secretary of the DNCR and director of the Division of Archives and Records, Mr. Feagan, and Karen Blum, Special Deputy Attorney General, North Carolina Department of Justice, and General Council to the NCHC on matters dealing with relocation or removal of confederate monuments. Mr. Backstrom stated that some of the changes were technical corrections, but some consisted of newly inserted or changed language, though he described them as minor and not substantively changing the meaning of any portion of the minutes. He explained that he did not resend the minutes to the commissioners for additional review given that the changes were requested just hours before the meeting began.

Dr. Bryan moved approval of the minutes with the changes as described. The motion was seconded by Ms. Snowden. A roll call vote was taken which passed unanimously. Mr. Ruffin asked how quickly the changes could be made to the minutes, as described by Mr. Backstrom. After being assured that the changes had already been made, Mr. Ruffin asked that the final, approved minutes be posted to the NCHC website as quickly after the conclusion of the meeting as possible. Mr. Backstrom assured him that it would be so done.

Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Personnel Matter

Being that this meeting was essentially a continuation of the meeting from May 18, dealing exclusively with potential employment within the DNCR, considered a confidential matter, Dr. Johnson made the following motion: "I move that we go into closed session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute section 143-318-11(a)(6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of prospective public officers or employees." The motion was seconded by Ms. Snowden and a roll call vote was taken. The motion carried unanimously.

At 2:42 PM the chair announced that the Commission would immediately be going into closed session.

Closed Session

The NCHC entered into closed session to discuss candidates for position of deputy secretary of the DNCR. All those listed above as present at the meeting were in attendance, excluding Mr. Zeher.

Near the conclusion of the discussions, Mr. Reynolds moved that the Commission's two top candidates be forwarded to D. Reid Wilson, secretary of the DNCR, for his consideration. Although the candidates would remain unranked, Mr. Reynolds' motion indicated that the number of first place votes each received from commissioners should be included. This motion was seconded by Ms. Snowden. With no additional discussion, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Reynolds noted that although Mr. Dixon and Dr. Johnson had to depart the meeting prior to the vote, the seven remaining commissioners still constituted a quorum.

Mr. Clark moved and Ms. Phillips seconded a motion that the meeting be returned to open session. The vote was carried unanimously, and the meeting of the NCHC returned to open session at 4:00 PM.

Resumption of Open Session and Adjournment

Upon resumption of the open session, Dr. Dennard moved adjournment of the meeting. This motion was seconded by Mr. Reynolds and was carried unanimously by roll call vote. The meeting was adjourned at 4:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah E. Koonts