



**America 250 | CT Commission
Governance Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 17, 2023**

Attendees:

Arienne Orozco, Subcommittee Chair
(designated by the Secretary of the State, the Hon. Stephanie Thomas)
Steven Hernández
Jason Mancini
Cyndi Tolosa

Guests:

Michael Werner
Melvette Hill

The meeting started at 2:06 p.m.

Increase Public Engagement

It will be important to increase public engagement and civic engagement for the 250th. There was only a brief mention of America 250 at a recent National Association of Secretaries of State conference, and most people who know about it are more focused on history rather than looking both at the future and the past.

Reflecting on the [National Endowment for the Humanities \(NEH\) founding documents](#), as well as the nation's founding documents, shows that the authors have been celebrating the past but also looking ahead to the future and how to improve on the past.

Guiding documents will be essential to help shape conversations for local groups and organizations. The 250th is an opportunity for radical inclusion and expanding access to people all over the state and all over the world.

Commission Bylaws

The by-laws are borrowed heavily from Maryland, with inspiration from Rhode Island and Vermont, and infused with Connecticut [Executive Order 22-2](#). They will broadly cover everything to guide the commission.

- Article I is a broad statement of purpose.
- Article II is pulled from the Executive Order and includes membership, compensation, ethics, transparency, and commission duties. One question is whether this should list CT Humanities or the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development for staff.
- Article III outlines meeting requirements, Connecticut statutes, and requirements by Connecticut Freedom of Information Act.
 - There was discussion on whether removal or replacement should be in the by-laws, since the Commission will exist for six years.

- Connecticut by-laws will allow for wide membership in the advisory council for non-voting members; members of the advisory council will serve by the pleasure of the chair and/or vice chair. There was discussion for flexibility on voting when the entire Commission is not in one place.
- Article IV outlines information on subcommittees, including quorum and voting requirements for subcommittees.
 - The by-laws can create an Executive Committee, which for Connecticut would likely be the Subcommittee Chairs, in order to more quickly make decisions when the full Commission can not meet.
 - Subcommittees will serve in an advisory capacity, so decisions are non-binding and can vote to make recommendations to the full commission.
- Article V outlines finances, including the fiscal year and ability to fundraise.
 - This allows for gifts to the Commission but **not** individual commissioners.
- Article VI sets guidelines for amendments and limitations to what can be in the bylaws.

A preamble to the by-laws was proposed, inspired by the NEH founding legislation, Executive Order 22-2, and the conversations the Commission has had regarding its values. This will model the need to have discussions, build relationships, and the Commission's promise to Connecticut.

Additional Responsibilities

At the next subcommittee meeting, Steven will invite David Adams from Urban Assembly to discuss his October presentation to the Commission and decide on the focus for that conversation, as it could include civic engagement, democracy, and/or social-emotional learning.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- Monday, August 21 – 2 p.m. (to be rescheduled)
- Monday, September 18 – 2 p.m.
(in person or virtual – TBD)

The meeting ended at 3:08 p.m.