



America 250 | CT Commission
Community & Organizational Engagement Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 9, 2024
11:00 a.m. - 12: 30 p.m.

This meeting was held via Zoom. A recording of the meeting is available at the following link:
[America 250 | CT Engagement Subcommittee Meeting - May 9, 2024](#)

Attendees:

Present

Commission Representatives

Dr. Amrys Williams (CT League of History Organizations, Chair)
Dr. Andy Horowitz (Connecticut State Historian)
Douglas Lord (CT Library Association, Secretary)
Jonathan Slifka (Department of Aging & Disability Services)
Elizabeth Shapiro (Dept. of Economic & Community Development, CT Office of the Arts)

Staff

Scott Wands (Connecticut Humanities)
Cyndi Tolosa (Connecticut Humanities)
Rachel Gonzalez (Connecticut Humanities)

Absent

Merle McGee (Everyday Democracy)

The meeting was called to order at 11:06 a.m.

1. Updates

- a. Ms. Tolosa introduced Rachel Gonzalez, Administrative Assistant for America 250 | CT and announced that the CT General Assembly approved \$100,000 for the Commission and its work. CTH staff will be looking at how that will be spent.
- b. Ms. Shapiro provided an update on bonding funds for use in capital projects related to the 250th, with \$10 million slated to be placed in the Good to Great fund and used for investment in infrastructure projects - this money has not yet been allocated.
- c. Dr. Horowitz will be working on an exhibit on Connecticut in the Revolutionary War era that any CT institution can use and which can be modified and added to by the locality for minimal or low cost, with an intended launch date of January 2026.

11:17

2. Strategy screen draft for IDEA self-assessment

- a. The criteria, form, and format was discussed, especially what the terms 'diversity' and 'representation' will actually mean to various communities.
- b. The committee concluded that in addition to publishing the four criteria (planning, leadership & perspectives, engagement, accessibility) with a self-assessment

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grading scale, that proscriptive / suggested / aspirational questions will also be a useful approach for organizations to use as they develop ideas and programs.

- i. Find useful resources that America 250 | CT can refer planners towards¹
 - ii. It may also be prudent to develop variations of this documentation tailored towards differing types of events to ensure ease of understanding for organizations (i.e., considerations for planning a parade will be very different from considerations of planning a reading of the Declaration of Independence at a small historical society).
 - iii. It may also be prudent to develop a simplified version of this document which can help organizations align with themes of the 250th prior to engaging in full self-evaluation.
- c. Ms. Shapiro suggested the Commission insert language such as: “Should your event or project be funded (partially or wholly) with state or federal funds, ADA must be followed” with explanations, links, and all the things so that organizers are happy to follow ADA
 - d. The committee wants to help groups do better; they realize this looks different in different communities and that the process must consider the varying levels of skill that programmers and organizers bring to the process. There are some obligations surrounding ADA, for example, that must be followed. Mr. Slifka thought that, in general, good-faith efforts from organizers can be recognized and appreciated.
 - e. The committee agreed that America 250 | CT may be able to serve as a model organization by ensuring that any future events are as accessible & inclusive as possible.
 - f. The conversation concluded with the charge to Connecticut Humanities to refine notes and ideas into a more final draft that can be reviewed at the June meeting, with the intention of bringing a document to the full Commission in July for approval.

12:19

3. Apply screen to outreach list

- a. This item on the agenda was skipped due to time constraints.

12:20

4. Brainstorm

- a. a. Festival/fair/conference appearances and appropriate swag ideas.
 - i. Ms. Tolosa reviewed anticipated needs, with the hope of attending ~6 community events over the summer. Respondents from a prior survey could potentially be a pool of volunteers to assist in tabling at events. Will need to purchase America 250 | CT branded items, including table coverings and an item to give away to spread awareness. It was agreed that smaller, less expensive items that will allow for maximum visibility on minimum budget would be the best option (i.e., temporary tattoos, stickers).

¹ e.g., “All activities should be accessible to as many people as possible; please bear in mind and attempt to accommodate socioeconomic, physical limitations, language, and other potential barriers to access.”

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- b. Develop a list of organizations with money/funding and/or large/important constituencies that could be part of the “Central Planning Committee” or convening group discussed at the March meeting.
 - i. This item on the agenda was skipped due to time constraints.
- 5. Assigning our next inquiry fielder
 - a. This item on the agenda was skipped due to time constraints.
- 6. Other business as needed - N/A

The meeting ended at 12:33 p.m.

Next Meeting

Thursday, June 13, 2024

11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.