



America 250 | CT Commission
Community & Organizational Engagement Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 13, 2024
Virtual via Zoom
Meeting Recording

Attendees

Subcommittee Members

Amrys Williams, Chair

Liz Shapiro

Jonathan Slifka

Cathy Labadia

Jason Mancini

CTH Staff

Cyndi Tolosa

Mike Kemezis

Rachel Gonzalez

The meeting began at **11:04 a.m.**

Meeting begins with A. Williams assigning a provisional person to take minutes - R.Gonzalez was assigned the task.

1. Updates

- a. From CT Humanities staff:
 - i. C. Tolosa - The 250th event promotion criteria approved by the Commission has been adapted into a form which will allow organizations to submit their events to a Community Calendar, now live on ct250.org. The list of local municipal 250 contacts is also growing, and is up to date on ct250.org.
 - ii. M. Kemezis noted that the Digital Humanities team is working on highlighting 250th-related content and connecting resources to the commission's themes.
- b. A. Williams provided an update on the CT League of Museums' conference, which had some 250th-related panels and sessions.
- c. C. Tolosa provided an update on the Northeastern States 250 Commission gathering last week. Natalie Belanger from the CT Museum of Culture & History presented on Connecticut's progress & received updates from other state Commissions, including that Rhode Island plans to provide "Liberty Tree" seedlings to each town in the state.

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- d. C. Labadia provided an update on the Washington Rochambeau Trail. Christine Jewell has taken up the role of director and is doing a great job of being inclusive & getting different sites involved.

Shifted to item 2 on agenda at 11:19.

2. [IDEA Self-Assessment](#) and Commission Strategy Screen

- a. C. Tolosa shared draft updates, which were made based on feedback from the last subcommittee meeting, including the addition of a preface and updates to goal sections with introductions for the “considerations” to make the intent of each goal clearer. As previously noted, the intention for this document is to post on the ct250.org website for organizations to use as a starting point when planning, implementing, and evaluating events. The self-assessment guide was based on the internal Commission screening document. C. Tolosa posed 2 questions to the subcommittee, asking where they would like to see the illustrative examples added, and what resources they have that can be linked from this document.
- b. A. Williams posed the question of how we will help guide organizations to assign points to themselves.
- c. J. Slifka recommended making the questions more illustrative vs using the rating system. He noted that some organizations may have very specific audiences & it may not make sense for them to be going through checkboxes vs some organizations are more global and need to be doing additional outreach to other groups.
- d. C. Tolosa agreed, and noted that examples can help bring in the concept of intersectionality. A. Williams also agreed, and requested that the subcommittee work to get it out of “abstract noun” space and into more concrete examples.
- e. J. Slifka further noted that this document should look more like guidelines that can push organizations to be reflective and operate in the “best faith possible” vs feeling like “you’re doing a good/bad job.” L. Shapiro noted that small language updates can help with this (i.e., things to consider vs considerations).
- f. A. Williams questioned if the rating system should be removed entirely, in favor of providing a variety of examples. C. Tolosa noted that this would take the document more into a “guide” space vs a “self-assessment,” and asked if this is the direction the subcommittee would like to go.
- g. J. Slifka noted that IDEA is really about intersectionality, and some language pointing that out could be added to the preface.
- h. C. Labadia, J. Slifka, and L. Shapiro discussed the overall goal for the document, as well as the most useful tool for the subcommittee to share, noting that it will likely be used by organizations that are seeking resources to help plan a more inclusive event.

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- i. C. Tolosa agreed that CTH staff will update the document to remove ratings and make it feel more like a guide with resources to “click out” to. She and A. Williams requested that subcommittee members send over resources that they have access to that could be of use. A more final draft will be reviewed at the next subcommittee meeting, with the goal of sharing out the completed to the full Commission in July.
 - j. Apply to [outreach list](#) - tabled for later
 3. Other toolkit materials - base on events criteria?
 - a. C. Tolosa referred to the self-assessments listed on the agenda, asking if these are the guides that the subcommittee thinks make sense to put together or if there are other guides that should be considered.
 - b. ADA Self-Assessment
 - c. Historical Accuracy Self-Assessment
 - d. Non-Partisan Self-Assessment
 4. Public Outreach
 - a. C. Tolosa noted that the Commission needs to get out in the community more. To that end, CTH staff have developed a shortlist of places that will help us get to a broader audience around the state. The shortlist was shared on the meeting screen. C. Tolosa asked folks to weigh in on whether it looked like a good representative list, as well as availability to aid in tabling at these. Volunteers may also be sourced from the interest survey conducted last year.
 - a. C. Labadia, J. Slifka, and A. Williams noted that full commission members should volunteer as well, and asked for talking points.
 - b. C. Tolosa shared that the primary goal will be to share publicly just that the 250th is happening, and encourage the public join or start local group. Technical leaflet from AASLH is one option; CTH staff has also ordered sticker rolls of the commission logo and will have nicer stickers available for folks who give a \$10 or more donation.
 - c. R. Gonzalez will act as volunteer coordinator. In response to questions on the agricultural fairs, C. Tolosa shared that they had been removed from the list due partly to high cost, but also because they require continual staffing for 3-4 days.
 5. Brainstorm
 - a. America 250 | CT Conference - 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 for this and other events
 - b. C. Tolosa noted that the meeting is small today, so may need to table the full conversation for the next subcommittee meeting to get more input. She stated

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that we need to begin thinking about groups that the Commission could work with on a conference, noting the Yale Beinecke Library as an option. A. Williams suggested the subcommittee think about colleges/universities that may be willing to host with an in-kind donation provided for space, and table the full conversation for the next meeting.

6. Assigning our next inquiry fielder - tabled for next meeting
7. Other business as needed
 - a. C. Tolosa shared that the web inquiry form receives a lot of resources like performers, books for sale, lectures, etc. and asked for guidance on how to respond. A discussion with C. Labadia, J. Slifka, and A. Williams ensued, with the conclusion that if we are vetting events to share out, we really should be doing the same for resources - but that it is not feasible for us to do so. Possible solutions include a lightly moderated forum or checking in with the regional group of commissions to see if they have interest in developing a vetted resource list.

The meeting ended at **12:21**

Next Meeting

Thursday, July 11, 2024, 11:00 a.m.