



**Commission Meeting
February 21, 2024
9:00 AM - 11 AM**

In Attendance

Mindy Benson, Co-Chair
Christine Durham,
Co-Chair (online)
Ronald Fox, Co-Chair
Kathryn Asay
Steve Handy

Douglas McGregor
Darren Parry
Kristy Pike
Byron Russell
Brian Tarbet
Kim Wilson

David Clark (online)
Andrea Clarke (online)
Alan Hall (online)
Jani Iwamoto (online)
Luis Lopez (online)
Mike Mower, Governor's
Office (online)

CCE Staff

Donna Law
Katherine Potter
Nicole Handy

Jennifer Ortiz
Ellen Weist

Jami Van Huss
Sophia Riggs

Item 1: Call to order and introductions

Item 2: Approval of Minutes from November 8, 2023

Motion to approve the proposed minutes by Kim Wilson. The motion to approve the minutes was unanimous.

Item 3: Mindy Benson - Opening remarks

President Benson discussed setting a foundation for planning the commemoration and how Utah will rise to the challenge to accomplish our goals. Kathryn Asay talked about her experience going to the reenactment of the Boston Tea Party in December as a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Item 4: Introduction of Donna Law

Donna is the new executive director of the Utah Department of Cultural and Community Engagement (CCE). Donna has memories of the bicentennial when she was a young girl and remembers the service opportunities. As we celebrate throughout the state for

this coming commemoration, we hope to utilize each of the divisions in CCE, including libraries and UServeUtah.

Item 5: Financial Report

CCE and the commission requested \$250,000 with the legislature's BEADL Committee for FY2025 through the department's budget request and a separate RFA by Senator Vickers. The BEADL committee recommended \$500,000 as part of their reappropriation budget. In the coming week, we will know if the Executive Appropriations Committee will recommend that full \$500,000. Currently, CCE feels confident in that request but will let commission members know if additional outreach is needed.

Item 6: Staff Report

- **New Logo:** The federal commission unveiled a new logo. CCE determined that our state's commission would benefit by adopting this new logo and being identified as part of the national campaign. The style guide for the new logo has each state using the two-letter abbreviation.
- **Mission and Vision:** The commission's executive committee shared a proposed mission and vision. Feedback from commission members included the addition of several words, including "principles," "freedom and liberty," and "liberty and justice." Several commission members also mentioned reducing the length and wordiness of the mission and vision statements.

The executive team will look at these suggestions and work with Nicole and the CCE team to finalize the mission and vision statements. Commission members can email Nicole with any additional feedback.

- **Plans in Development:** The commission has chosen three pillars: Educate, Engage, and Unite. Each has a theme that CCE has worked to expand and proposed initiatives built from discussions with respective committees.

EDUCATE: The Educate pillar is focused on building an understanding of the past to recognize the history, civic responsibilities, and values that shape our nation. The Utah State Office of Education has helped connect the committee to UVU's Civic Thought and Leadership Initiative, which is currently training K12 teachers and supports a civics curriculum that was created for the bicentennial and is still being taught nationwide. There is an opportunity to help expand the capacity of these programs. Additionally, plans are being made to create a traveling exhibit. This will be done with the Utah Historical Society and Utah

Division of Arts and Museum's existing traveling exhibit program. There is also an opportunity to create an exhibit for the fourth floor of the Capitol.

ENGAGE: The Engage pillar is focused on building community to celebrate the unique traditions of communities throughout the state. A top priority for the Engage committee will be creating toolkits for counties and municipalities to utilize and participate in the celebration. The plan would be for communities to incorporate America250 into their current community celebrations rather than creating a new event. The toolkit would include graphics, soundtracks, and ideas for celebrations. There may be opportunities for stipends to help and encourage communities in their celebrations. Communities would also be encouraged to create a service opportunity as part of that toolkit. The committee has been working with UServeUtah, and they may be able to help direct some of those efforts.

UNITE: The Unite Committee is focused on building bridges and envisioning the future of our state and nation through conversation. Two initiatives proposed for this pillar are creating a Community Programming Guide, which will include ways for organizations to create their own programming with ideas, themes, and discussion questions. This can be used to promote the commemoration and encourage entities that are not official partners to participate. A speaker series was also proposed as an initiative to reach communities and facilitate discussions.

Feedback about proposed initiatives included hiring a professional marketing/media company to engage a younger audience, including creating short videos for social media to capture attention. Finding local celebrities or luminaries to share these messages on social media would reach a younger audience. Historically there was a campaign "I thought you ought to know..." that leveraged local celebrities and was memorable. The commission should try to utilize local social media influencers.

It was suggested that we ask the Jazz to make an announcement at the beginning of each game.

The Utah Historical Society has an advisory committee of college-aged young adults. The commission will be able to use that committee as a focus group in the coming months. It was also suggested that the commission invite interns to participate in the commission meetings to bring a younger perspective. The speakers series is a good idea, but it will not reach that younger audience.

Other commission members talked about finding a larger unifying moment or event to bring everyone together. The plans so far feel scattered. One idea included setting aside a special day in the schools with a statewide broadcast, and students are streamed making statements of "what it means to be an American." This could utilize social media and get the attention of the whole state.

- Timeline: An initial timeline for 2024 to 2026, created by CCE, was shared with the commission members. The initial kickoff of the commemoration would be July 2025 and culminate in July 2026. The timeline outlines the preparations for 2025 and the steps for the next three years. The timeline will continue to be refined and detailed as plans are finalized.
- Partners/Supporters: The commission's priority will be to partner with state and local agencies, including all of the divisions in CCE. Partnerships may include the Utah State Office of Education, school districts, Utah Charter School Board, UVU's Center for Constitutional Studies, counties, municipalities, military, paramilitary, and universities. Partnerships would receive funding or resources from the commission and be authorized to use the logo.

If there is money to help fund additional community programs, the commission may consider creating a simple stipend or scholarship fund. Those funds would be distributed through a committee to review all programming and organizations. Commission members also mentioned partnering with the Hill Air Force Base Air Show.

Other community organizations or individuals who want to participate in celebrating the anniversary may utilize the commission's Community Programming Guide to help create events that align with the commission's pillars and themes. They will not be authorized to use the commission's logo but may be able to post events on Now Playing Utah, a website created by the Utah Cultural Alliance. The Commission hopes to work with UCA to create and share events from around the state. Organizations that may fall into the "supporter" role include museums, social clubs, youth groups (BSA, GSU), and voter registration groups. Other groups mentioned by commission members include banks and private organizations, Silicone Slopes, Spy Hop, and the Utah Film Center.

Item 7: Historical Highlight

Ron Fox brought several historical documents for the commission to peruse, and in light of George Washington's birthday, commission members shared their thoughts on George Washington and his legacy.

Item 8: Upcoming 2024 Commission Dates

- May 8, 2024 @ 10 AM (Zoom)
- August 14, 2024 @10 AM (Zoom)
- November 13, 2024 @10 AM (Zoom)