



The Douglas Henry State Museum Commission (DHSMC) met at 2:00 p.m. on March 13, 2020 via an emergency Special Called telephone conference with Chairman Thomas S. Smith presiding.

Members Present on Telephone

Thomas S. Smith, Chair
Nancy Baker DeFriece, Vice Chair
Harbert Alexander, Sr.
Ambassador Victor Ashe
Tina Hodges
Walter Knestrick
Chairman Susan Lynn
Deanie Parker
Laura Travis
Chairman Bo Watson

Ex Officio

Robert Buchanan, Tennessee Historical Society Chair
Ashley Howell, TSM Executive Director

Members Absent

The Honorable Steve McDaniel
Scott Price
Eleanor Yoakum

Participating Guests

Janet Kleinfelter, Deputy Attorney General

Participating TSM Staff

Sharon Dennis, DHSMC Liaison

Call to Order

Chairman Thomas S. Smith called the emergency meeting to order at 2:00 p.m., proceeded with roll call, verified that a quorum was on the phone and presided over the following business.

Welcome and Introduction

Chair Smith welcomed everyone present and began by stating the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 Virus on the public, the security of the artifacts and displays and its influence on hours of operation.

COVID-19 Discussion

Ms. Howell reported that in monitoring this situation, twenty-two tour groups have cancelled this week. In discussions with state partners, sanitation is of paramount concern for the public, public spaces, the gallery spaces including the Children's gallery and the artifacts and displays.

Factors of grave concern should a visitor or staff member be diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus, the products required to disinfect this building would involve a chemical fog with chemical compounds. In addition, the regular cleaning of the gallery uses cleaning supplies that are not recommended to eliminate the COVID-19 virus because they are not strong enough to kill the virus. Stronger chemicals are unable to be used on the display surfaces.

In recognizing it is the duty of the DHSMC to set the hours of operation and oversee protection of the artifacts, Chair Smith moved to authorize Director Howell to close the State Museum to the general public until April 3, in order to make every effort to protect the public from the spread of COVID-19 and to properly protect the State's priceless artifacts.

Discussion of the motion focused on the safety of the public and the artifacts and displays with closure of the museums as a proactive measure.

This protocol includes notification to DOHR of the closing of both the State Museum and the Military Branch Museum followed by notification through the press to the public.

Following discussion, the Chair called for a roll-call vote and the motion carried unanimously with no abstentions by all voting members on the conference call. AYE: Alexander, Ashe, DeFriece, Hodges, Knestruck, Lynn, Parker, Smith, Travis, Watson.

Chair Smith thanked all commissioners assuring them that the draft of a proposed press release will be forthcoming for their approval.

Adjournment

Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

Main Motions Summary

Motion #1: Chair Smith moved to authorize Director Howell to close the State Museum to the general public until April 3, in order to make every effort to protect the public from the spread of COVID-19 and to properly protect the State's priceless artifacts.

Thomas S. Smith
Chairman Douglas Henry State Museum Commission