

North Carolina Historical Commission
Meeting Minutes

June 18, 2026

The North Carolina Historical Commission (NCHC, Commission) met via Zoom on Thursday, June 18, 2026. In attendance were commissioners: David Ruffin, Chair; Mayor Newell Clark; Shana Condill; Dr. Valerie Ann Johnson; Dr. Lawrence Locklear; W. Noah Reynolds; and Barbara B. Snowden. Absent were commissioners Dr. David Dennard, Dr. Sally Greene, Dr. Susanna Lee, and Susan Phillips.

Also in attendance were: Dr. Darin Waters, Deputy Secretary for Archives and History, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR); Michelle Lanier, Director, Division of Historic Sites and Properties (DSHSP); Ramona Bartos, Director, Division of Historical Resources (DHR); Kelly Policelli, Director, Division of Archives and Records (DAR); C.J. Roberts, Director, Division of State History Museums (DSHM); Leslie Leonard, Administrator of the North Carolina Highway Historical Markers Program, who represented the Division of Historical Research and Publications (DHRP); Elizabeth Reighn, Director of Curatorial Services, DSHSP; Michael Moore, Deputy Director of Curatorial Services and Chief Curator, DSHSP; Jay Martin, Executive Director of the U.S.S. *North Carolina* Battleship Memorial; Parker Backstrom, Office of Archives and History (OAH) administrative assistant and Recording Secretary for the NCHC.; and Greg Snider, information technology facilitator.

The meeting was livestreamed on Microsoft Teams. Copies of all cited written materials can be found in the file for this meeting.

Call to Order and Conflict of Interest Statement

After affirming that there was a quorum of Commission members, Chairman Ruffin called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM. Commissioners were asked to voice any concerns they may have regarding any actual or potential conflicts of interest pertaining to the scheduled business to be discussed but no such concerns were expressed.

The chair stated for the record that because this is a virtual meeting, roll call votes would be taken on all actionable items.

Approval of Minutes

The chair invited a motion to accept the minutes of the March 19, 2026, regular meeting of the NCHC. Mr. Clark moved approval as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reynolds and the motion was carried by unanimous voice vote.

Accessions and Deaccessions of Items in State Collections

Dr. Waters presented a list of proposed accessions and deaccessions on behalf of the Office of Archives and History Collections Committee (OAHCC). The annotated list of items, which were

shared with the commissioners in advance of the meeting, are accessions for the North Carolina Museum of History (MOH), the North Carolina Museum of the Albemarle (MOA), and the maritime museums in Beaufort, Southport, and Elizabeth City (NCMMs). All museum accessions were offered as a single slate.

With no questions or comments forthcoming, Ms. Snowden moved to accept the proposed accessions. Mayor Clark seconded the motion and the motion was carried by unanimous voice vote.

Next, items recommended for accessioning into the collections of the DSHS were submitted for consideration by Dr. Waters. With no questions or comments forthcoming, Ms. Snowden moved and Dr. Johnson seconded a motion to accept the OAHCC's recommendation. The motion was carried by unanimous voice vote.

Finally, Dr. Waters presented a list of items for deaccessioning from the collections of the MOH and NCMMs. Citing a fire extinguishing item called a fire grenade, Ms. Snowden suggested that the DSHSP and museums need to examine fire "extinguishers" in their collections for safety as these old style extinguishers can rupture and the chemicals therein actually cause fires. Dr. Johnson moved approval of the recommended deaccessions. Mayor Clark seconded the motion which was carried by unanimous voice vote.

State Archives Request for Approval to Raise "Box Fund" Fees

At Chairman Ruffin's invitation, Ms. Policelli addressed the Commission. She noted that as required by North Carolina General Statute 21, the NCHC must approve increases of fees charged by state agencies. The state archives, she said, have been undercharging other agencies for archival boxes for records they submit to the archives for many years, boxes that are customized to fit archival storage spaces. Ms. Policelli asked authorization to change the fee from \$1.12 per box kit to \$1.63 per kit. Mr. Reynolds moved approval of this request. Dr. Locklear seconded the motion, and it was carried by roll call voice vote.

Request to Relocate State-owned Artwork at UNC School of the Arts

Dr. Waters cited a proposal from the UNC School of the Arts in Winston-Salem to relocate several pieces of public art, three obelisks, from a site on its campus slated for redevelopment to a different site on campus. School administrators provided descriptions, maps, and diagrams clearly showing the items, their current location, and their proposed location, which the commissioners had a chance to review prior to the meeting. Mayor Clark asked Mr. Reynolds, a resident of Winston-Salem, if he had any comments or concerns about the request. Mr. Reynolds noted that the requirement to relocate the items is due to a pending straightening of a road and feels that the request is quite a straightforward matter. With no other comments forthcoming, Ms. Condill moved approval of the request. Mr. Reynolds seconded the motion and the motion was carried.

Request to Place A250 Memorial in U.S.S. *North Carolina* Battleship Park

Dr. Waters introduced Dr. Martin who was making his first appearance at a meeting of the NCHC. Dr. Martin briefly described his background, which includes training as a historian. He provided contextual information about the history and archaeology of Eagles Island, the site of the U.S.S. *North Carolina* battleship memorial, the island's role in the American Revolution, and why the proposed memorial being placed in Battleship Park is such an appropriate choice. He and his staff,

he said, spoke with the group requesting placement of the memorial, the Stamp Defiance Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (Daughters), and all agree that the memorial is a very good fit in the site. He cited the written materials made available to the commissioners in advance of the meeting, noting that the memorial, which he pointed out was funded by the Stamp Defiance Chapter, focuses on recognizing the contributions made by uncelebrated patriots of the war, especially women and African Americans. On behalf of the Daughters, Dr. Martin asked that the monument's placement be approved. Dr. Johnson pointed out that educators and students will be visiting the park next month and she thinks the stories told by the memorial are important for students to see. With no further discussion Dr. Johnson moved approval and Ms. Snowden seconded the motion. The motion was carried by unanimous voice vote.

Request to Place Commissioned Work at the Historic Stagville State Historic Site Visitor Center

Ms. Lanier was recognized and described the request to place a commissioned work of art — what she described as a mount — at Historic Stagville. The mount is a ceramic, sculpted pair of hands into which archaeological artifacts, such as beads, that have been found at the site can be displayed in a more creative way than a simple display box. The funds for the mount will come from within the division. None of the commissioners had questions about the request so Dr. Locklear moved approval and Mayor Clark seconded it. The motion was carried unanimously.

A Brief Report from the Deputy Secretary and Division Directors Reports

Dr. Waters expressed hope that a state budget will be forthcoming soon from the General Assembly and that once funds are appropriated, the next meeting of the NCHC can be held in person for the first time in a couple of years.

Dr. Waters updated the commissioners on plans for the America 250th (A250) celebration. He reminded the Commission that the DNCR has been charged by the North Carolina General Assembly with planning the state's participation in the national recognition of country's sesquicentennial anniversary. A list of over 1,000 activities associated with this celebration are listed on the department's website. A big event is forthcoming shortly, he said, with a large, day-long community gathering at the State Capitol on July 4 that will feature food trucks and exhibitors, activities for families and children — including a section featuring the Carolina Hurricanes organization as it celebrates its recent Stanley Cup championship — and a big parade in downtown Raleigh. Governor Stein, Secretary Cashwell, and other cabinet secretaries will be participating in the programming, and he extended an invitation to the commissioners to attend.

Chairman Ruffin explained to the newest commission members that at every meeting of the Commission the OAH's division directors provide written reports about their division's activities and achievements while at every other meeting they supplement those reports with verbal presentations touching on highlights.

Dr. Waters then introduced each director and asked each to share a highlight from their division.

Division of State History Museums – Mr. Roberts reported that the massive, three-year-long renovation project on the North Carolina Museum of History in downtown Raleigh is on track and on budget. While the construction team does its work the museum staff is developing exhibits. Expectations remain that the museum will reopen in the fall of 2028, as planned.

Division of State Historic Sites & Properties – Ms. Lanier reported that visitation numbers division-wide have suffered a small tick downward, which was expected given the number of capital projects ongoing at various sites, requiring occasional closures. What was not expected, however, was that youth engagement has increased, around six percent over the last quarter, but a surprising 33 percent in just the last month alone. She suspects this can be attributed in part to A250 activities. But she highlighted the contributions of director of the DNCR's Office of Education, Christie Norris, who has been partnering with division to develop groundbreaking K-12 initiatives across the state.

Division of Historical Resources – Ms. Bartos also highlighted the division's community outreach. She recognized local government preservation commission coordinator Kristi Brantley. Ms. Brantley, she explained, works with over 100 local, municipal, and countywide historic preservation commissions to plan and execute regional, day-long preservation training sessions, with members of the different HPO branches presenting on their specific areas of preservation expertise and sharing ways that the stakeholders can utilize the tools available to them to preserve their local architectural heritage. Four of these six training sessions have been completed, with the remaining sessions to take place in Wilmington and Waynesville. She invited commissioners to attend the remaining programs if they are able. Ms. Bartos expressed her reassurance and gratification that so many communities care so much about historic preservation in their communities.

Division of Archives & Records – While Ms. Policelli's staff has been heavily involved in A250 planning, her only note on her division's involvement is that archivists will be exhibiting several rare federal documents at the State Capitol on July 4 for attendees to see. Otherwise, she reported that the archives recently hosted a wonderful K-12 program that brought teachers into the archives to look through local records, especially county records, to give them an idea of the types of resources available to them and to explain to them the Docs Box program which provides lesson plans, including facsimile kits of historical documents for use by teachers.

Dr. Waters noted that Governor Stein has been holding cabinet meetings in various locations around the state with the last meeting being held recently in our building. Ms. Policelli's and her staff gave a tour of the vault and its contents to the governor and his cabinet members, which they really enjoyed.

Division of Historical Research and Publications – Standing in for division director Ansley Wegner, Ms. Leonard reported that with A250 planning gearing up, there has been almost a singular focus on sending division staff out around the state doing outreach in connection with those efforts.

U.S.S. North Carolina Battleship – Dr. Martin reported that the battleship is making a significant shift in its interpretation efforts away from the battleship itself to stories of the people who served upon it during its service. Since the battleship is the state's memorial for the state's 11,000 lives lost during World War II, staff have been researching the individual stories of those 11,000 lives and the 10,000 crew members who served upon the ship. Particular efforts have been made to reach out to those roughly 700,000 "kid heroes" from every county in North Carolina who help save the battleship from being scrapped by raising money through their "Dimes Campaign". Dr. Martin stated that those stories have been a great joy to learn and have inspired the memorial's volunteers to do even more in their honor.

Other Business

Commissioner Snowden extended an invitation to all meeting attendees to join a community gathering in Currituck County on June 20 starting at 11:00. It will feature the unveiling of statue recognizing an African American revolutionary war hero, the county's big A250 project.

Dr. Johnson reported that she's heard a lot of positive feedback about a program put on by the state archives on June 11. She encourages the archives team to hold more events pertaining to black communities during the American Revolution period. Lacking this type of programming, she fears that black communities will sort of "check out" of the A250 goings on. Ms. Policelli replied that in contrast to the interest in the June 11 program, a similar, late June program they are planning isn't getting nearly the same interest and the archives staff is working to pinpoint the right networks to use to get the word out about it.

Dr. Johnson concluded by commending the HPO team for its efforts to advance the nomination of the historically Black Broadell neighborhood near Fayetteville State University for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. It is a testament, she said, to the hard work that the HPO's National Register team puts into research and creating study lists and National Register nominations.

Chair Announcements

None.

Adjournment

With business concluded, Ms. Snowden moved adjournment. Dr. Johnson seconded the motion, and following a voice vote the meeting was adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*[A final, post-edit version will be
presented for a signature]*

Darin J. Waters